Opening address by
Her Excellency Ms. Paetongtarn Shinawatra,
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand
at the Opening of the 81st Session of the
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
on Monday 21 April 2025 at 09.00 hrs. at ESCAP Hall,
United Nations Conference Center, Bangkok

Madam Chairperson, /
Madam Executive Secretary, /
Excellencies, /
Distinguished delegates, /

01 It is my pleasure to join you at this 81st session / of the ESCAP (เอสแคป) Commission. / I wish to take this opportunity to warmly welcome you all to Bangkok. /

02 At the outset, / allow me to express our heartfelt **condolences to, / and solidarity with, the people of Myanmar / following the devastating earthquake last month**. / As a close neighbour of Myanmar, / Thailand has promptly provided humanitarian support / to relieve the plight of the affected population. / We stand ready to do more. / And here, / I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation / for the warm words of support from across the world / for Thailand's early recovery from the tragic situation. //

Excellencies, /
Distinguished delegates, /

03 We are meeting amidst numerous **global challenges / that cut across boundaries and regions /** — from natural disasters to geopolitical tensions; / from economic volatilities to climate change; / and from environmental degradation to transnational crimes. / These issues affect global peace, / stability / and security, / as well as international and regional developments, / which means that / they affect each and every one of us. /

/04 Solving these issues…

04 Solving these issues and addressing these disruptions / require us to strengthen cooperation at all levels and good leadership. / Especially in these trying times, / these must be based on forward-looking policies / grounded in international laws and norms / that enhance resilience / and lead to inclusive and sustainable development. / As such, / multilateral platforms such as the United Nations, / ESCAP, / ASEAN, / ACMECS (แอคเมคส์), / BIMSTEC (บิมสเทค), / and ACD (เอ-ซี-ดี), / as well as multilateral agreements, / are more crucial than ever in our collective pursuit of these goals. /

05 It is a matter of great concern that the Asia-Pacific region, / while contributing to more than half of the global growth, / is witnessing widening inequalities across the region. / Poverty is also increasing. /

06 If we look at the SDGs (เอส-ดี-จี), / we can see that **in 2024, / over 84 percent of the SDG targets / showed limited progress or even signs of reversal**. / This alarming statistic / calls for renewed efforts and innovative solutions / towards achieving the SDGs / and sustainable development in the region. /

07 In Thailand, / the **Sufficiency Economy Philosophy**, / our locally-driven approach rooted in people-centered / and planet-centric development, / has been our guiding principle / for the development of the country and SDG attainment. / We have shared, / and will continue to share, / our development approach and good practices / with all interested partners. //

Excellencies, /
Distinguished delegates, /

08 **Thailand aspires to be a regional development partner / and an engine for sustainable growth / across Asia and the Pacific**. / To achieve this, / we are advancing 3 strategic priorities: /

09 **<u>First</u> is to be the "Kitchen of the World".** / Thailand is committed to ensuring food security / through agricultural transformation using innovation, / technology, / and precision farming. / Our aim is not only to feed people and improve livelihoods, / but also to **contribute to strong and inclusive regional food systems**. /

/10 Second is to develop…

10 **Second is to develop a "Creative Economy". /** With our rich cultural heritage and assets / or "soft power", / Thailand is developing a people-centered economic model / through **cultural industries, / design innovation, / and wellness tourism**. / 'De-stress destinations' / and community-based tourism / are just some of the means we have devised / to generate jobs and support balanced **development beyond major cities**. /

11 **Third is to build advanced and sustainable industries / through "green transition". /** Thailand has adopted policies towards green and digital transitions. / Through our Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economy Model, / we are pursuing this goal by promoting **low-carbon / and eco-friendly solutions** / with the aim to **achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 / and net-zero emissions by 2065**. /

12 Together, / these 3 priorities / are not only shaping Thailand's path towards sustainable development, / but they are also contributing to stronger regional supply chains, / cross-border services, / and expanded cooperation in green technologies. //

Excellencies, /
Distinguished delegates, /

13 By the year 2050, / nearly 70 percent of the world's population would live in cities. **/** The **theme for this Commission session** / is therefore timely and essential / and reminds us of the vital importance of **sustainable urbanization** / in both theory and practice. / Urbanization is not only about the safety and well-being of the people; / but is also about shaping a resilient future. /

14 **Disaster risk reduction** must therefore / be integrated into urban planning. / Resilient cities must be equipped to withstand various risks and threats, / and must have infrastructure that can respond to natural disasters / and the impacts of climate change, / such as flooding, / drought / and heatwaves. /

15 At the same time, / cities must also be safe. / Habitants must be **safeguarded against transnational crimes, / such as drug and human trafficking, / and cybercrime**, / requiring enhancing law enforcement / and increasing digital access and literacy for all. /

/16 For our part, ...

16 For our part, / **Thailand is committed to fostering cities that are resilient / — where innovation and inclusion go hand-in-hand**. **/** Towards this end, / my government has initiated projects such as the 20 baht, / or about 0.60 US dollar, / flat fare for all of Bangkok's urban rail transit network, / to reduce economic disparity, / transportation costs, / and connectivity. / **And we will continue to do more.** //

Excellencies, /
Distinguished delegates, /

17 In closing, **/** let me leave you with a few points to take home. **/**

18 First, / Thailand believes that **regional cooperation** / must proceed in tandem with national action. /

19 Second, / **public-private partnerships / and multi-stakeholder collaboration** / are important to driving sustainable and inclusive growth. /

20 Third, / **ESCAP plays a vital role as a regional platform** / for sharing knowledge, / aligning strategies, / and forging regional cooperation to accelerate inclusive development. /

21 Along these lines, / Thailand affirms its readiness to collaborate with ESCAP and member states / to drive forward a more prosperous, / resilient, / and sustainable Asia-Pacific for present / and future generations. /

22 Thank you. / ขอบคุณค่ะ //

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