

Opening Remarks

Mr. Kulit Sombatsiri
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Energy, The Royal Thai Government

Third Committee on Energy

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

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Excellency, **Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjabana**, Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

Excellencies **Ministers** and **Ambassadors** from UN Member Countries.

Honourable UN Representatives and Experts, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good Morning

- On behalf of the Royal Thai Government, I would like to extend my warm welcome to you all with my great pleasure to open the **Third Session of the ESCAP Committee on Energy** today.
- May I recall, since the adoption of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** in September 2015, many countries are making progress in realizing their effort to meet the targets of SDG by 2030, with attempt to incorporate it in national policy and planning, however challenges and difficulties in implementation still continue to persist.
- Particularly at present, as we all have noticed, the global health and economic crisis set off by the **COVID-19 pandemic** underscores the need for reliable energy access, affordable and modern energy. As a result, urgent action is needed to ensure sustainable energy as a part of COVID-19 response. Of course, we need stimulus and recovery measures to provide a unique opportunity where energy will come into play. For the region, I believe accelerated uptake of clean and renewable energy both *on-grid* and *off-grid* would boost economic growth and bring broader socio-economic benefits.
- Comparing to other sectors, in fact, the **COVID-19 pandemic** only provides a limited number of impacts to the energy sector. For this reason, it is important to transform these challenges into *opportunities* – by revolutionizing our energy systems to become more resilient and sustainable in order to align with the global trends toward a low carbon economy. Renewable energy represents a huge investment opportunity in our region. In addition, digitalization will play a critical role to accelerate the energy transition in the region by implementing sustainable technologies, such as smart grids, renewables integration, and high-performance energy efficiency.

- For **Asia-Pacific region**, its energy needs are growing faster than anywhere else in the world. However, we are facing some challenges. While we need to meet increased demand, to secure energy supplies and to ensure that the energy system is sustainable, affordable and low carbon, at the same time, we all need to adapt to the '*new normal*' situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Therefore, the **Third Committee on Energy** organized today under the theme "*Energy transition for a greener, more resilient and inclusive energy future in the Asia-Pacific*" is timely to provide an opportunity to Asia-Pacific's policymakers to plan a Regional Agenda for Sustainable Energy. Your discussions on how to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 7 during the energy transition in the time of COVID-19 and to leverage the capacity of all the countries to accelerate progress towards this Goal are critical to our success. Definitely, responding to these challenges means that a portfolio of measures is needed. Renewable energy, energy efficiency, electrification of transport, as well as regional green power grids towards *net-zero* and *carbon neutrality*, all have their places in this portfolio, I believe.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

- The **Government of Thailand** places great importance on the value of regional cooperation for building a sustainable energy future. During Thailand's Chairmanship of ASEAN last year, we have urged all ASEAN Energy Ministers to progress many sustainable energy issues, from power grid connectivity, to renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- Thailand is now developing the **National Energy Plan (NEP)** taking into account the whole spectrum of energy sector towards the concept of '*go green*' with energy security and competitiveness for sustainable energy future. This National Energy Plan will shape up the future energy of Thailand and transform our energy sector to be cleaner and greener. Renewable energy and innovative technology are the key factors to drive our energy policy direction. Our energy strategy and roadmap to achieve the goals of carbon neutrality in energy sector is the key element to reach the "**low carbon society**" with long- term sustainable actions.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

- I look forward to this event offering strategic direction on how to build on our countries' *success to date*, continue the shift from *visions to actions* and address key opportunities and challenges through *best practices sharing* to manage the transition toward a *cost-effective* system integration of clean and renewable energy to support a decarbonization pathway.
- Our goals are ambitious, but the need to *transition to sustainability* is inescapable. I trust, the driving forces behind the energy transition will not diminish over time but will *intensify*. I welcome all countries' commitment to address their environmental sustainability performance to achieve SDG7 Goal and simultaneously develop the modernization of the country towards low carbon economy.

- In a nutshell, active engagement with contribution of national, regional cooperation, together with political and economic groups are vital to move forward our intention for a sustainable energy future.
- I would like to thank **Ms. Armida Alisjahbana and ESCAP** for organizing this third session of the Committee on Energy, with a broad Agenda that contains topics to enhance energy security, promote cross-border electricity connectivity for Sustainable Development and accelerate the achievement of the SDG7.
- I wish you all successful deliberation in this Committee on Energy.

I thank you.