

**Keynote Address and Opening Remarks by  
His Excellency Mr. Surapong Tovichakchaikul  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs  
of the Kingdom of Thailand**

**At the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the Millennium Development Goals to the  
United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015  
Monday 26 August 2013, United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok**

-----

**Your Excellency Prime Minister Gusmao of Timor-Leste,  
Madame Executive Secretary of ESCAP,  
Ministers, Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Royal Thai Government and people of Thailand, I wish to extend a warm welcome to all of you to the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015.

This dialogue is the first Asia-Pacific regional Ministerial-level event to discuss the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 following the release of the Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda at the end of May this year.

The High-Level Panel has reminded us of the remaining challenges in achieving the MDGs. More importantly, it has also set out the way forward beyond 2015.

We find the recommendations outlined in the Report of the High-Level Panel responsive to our challenges in the Asia-Pacific. As millions of us still live below the international poverty line, eradication of poverty should remain central to the UN development agenda beyond 2015.

We concur with the High-level Panel that the fruits of sustainable development will be meaningful only when they are shared by all parts of society.

Moreover, to realize our shared vision of a sustainable development, we need to forge new partnership for development based on mutual respect and benefit.

This Dialogue also comes at an opportune time following the release last week of the United Nations Secretary-General's report on his vision for a new development agenda beyond 2015, reflecting the new global realities and challenges.

We find that the key elements reflected in the Secretary-General's report are truly relevant to all of us in pursuing the future we want. The development agenda beyond 2015 should continue to place people at its core.

It should be inclusive, in both process and outcome, to ensure that it enjoys the broadest possible support, commitment and ownership by all stakeholders and the international community.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We now have less than 900 days to meet the targets of MDGs. It is up to all of us to mobilize an all-out effort in realizing the MDGs as much as possible by the target date.

But our efforts should not stop there. We need to continue the spirit of the Millennium Declaration by completing our unfinished work under the new development agenda framework.

We must carry on with efforts to achieve the unmet targets while moving towards sustainability.

From Thailand's perspectives, while poverty eradication should remain an overarching goal of the post-2015 development framework, it should also aim to achieve the people-centred development with the following key elements.

**First**, we need to address various forms of **inequality** that persists not just in our region but all over the world. Women, girls, people with disability, and the vulnerable should be empowered to take greater part in the post-2015 development agenda.

**Second**, **health goal and target** should be placed high in the post-2015 development agenda. The expansion of Universal Health Coverage, for example, will help address health inequalities and ensure sustainable health outcomes.

**Third**, the post-2015 development agenda should incorporate instruments that help absorb shocks and build resilience. Our hard-won development gains can be wiped out overnight by increasingly common large-scale natural disasters. Therefore, **disaster risk reduction and preparedness** should be properly addressed in the post-2015 development agenda.

**Lastly**, the post-2015 development agenda should ensure people of dignity and opportunities to develop their potential to the full. In this regard, **the rule of law** must prevail. **Good governance** needs to be strengthened to ensure accountability, transparency and equality as well as to guarantee **human rights and fundamental freedoms**.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The voice of the Asia-Pacific will be critical and indispensable in this effort to shape the Post-2015 development framework.

The Asia-Pacific region is home to more than half of the world's population with growing middle class and rapid urbanization. The region is producing more than a third of the world's economic output. The combined GDP of the region accounted for thirty per cent of the global GDP last year and is ever- growing.

The centre of the world economy is indeed moving towards the Asia-Pacific region.

But in spite of the rise of the Asia-Pacific region, many critical development challenges do remain and need to be tackled forcefully and collectively.

These common challenges include poverty, hunger, gender inequality, education, water, sanitation and access to basic healthcare, environment, as well as development gaps within each society and within the region as a whole.

The question we in the Asia-Pacific region need to urgently address is how to sustain the high growth rate and embark on sustainable path towards inclusive development while avoiding the middle-income trap.

Together, all countries in the region should join hands to work even harder as partners to bring about greater improvement of the well-being of our peoples.

We must ensure that **no one is left behind**.

And together with our partners in other regions, we can help bring about greater improvement of the well-being of the peoples worldwide.

As a member of the UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, Thailand firmly believes that our region has much to contribute to the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda.

At the same time, the future development framework should also address Asia-Pacific development priorities.

At the end of this Dialogue we are expected to adopt a Ministerial Declaration, and the outcome of the Dialogue will be shared with the Open Working Group as an input from the Asia-Pacific region without prejudging the on-going work of the Open Working Group.

In closing, I wish all of you success and fruitful deliberations. I am confident that we can positively contribute to the global process in defining the new development agenda for all.

I hereby declare open the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015.

Thank you.