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*Draft
Country Statement*

*of
Thailand*

*delivered by Mr. Vitavas Srivihok,
Acting Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs
under Agenda item 7 (a): Key challenges to inclusive and sustainable
economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific,
ESCAP Hall, 18 May 2016, 10.30 hrs.*

Excellencies,
Madame Shamshad Akhtar, Executive Secretary of ESCAP,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. This Seventy-second Commission of ESCAP marks an opportune time after the adoption of the milestone 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development last year to discuss how we can effectively **transform global vision into local action**. To **“think global, act local”** so to speak.
2. In the past eight months, **“transformation”** became a buzzword. In this regard, the role of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) cannot be overemphasized as a critical means of implementation to bring such **“transformation”** into practice.
3. Allow me to share with you our experiences and best practices on STI, especially how we seek to integrate STI across full spectrum of three dimensions of sustainable development with equal emphasis to social progress and environmental protection.
4. Just like many other developing countries in the region, Thailand enjoyed the East Asian economic miracles during 1960s-1980s and experienced the 1997 Asian economic crisis, 2008 global recession and current persisting economic slowdown. We realize that the traditional resource-based economy is no longer viable.
5. For these reasons, we have been working robustly on economic and political reforms to transform the country towards a sustainable, **value-based economy**. We call it **Thailand 4.0**. Ten clusters are selected as pioneers to spark innovative economy such as robots for industry, medical hubs, logistics and aero-industry,

biochemical industry, digital industry, high value and health tourism, innovative agriculture and bio-technology and food processing. Our goal is to be **out of middle-income trap and become a high-income country in 20 years** with research and development investment amounting to 1% of GDP. We are taking several steps towards advancing to a **knowledge-based and digital economy** as well as to create enabling environment for STI in cross-sectorial policy, be it education, infrastructure, finance, institutions, human capital, knowledge and data.

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. Please allow me to highlight some key elements that Thailand views as key factors to achieve STI for sustainable development.

7. **First**, we must enhance **public sector innovation**, which can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of national development. Under the **National e-Payment Master Plan**, we have introduced the e-Tax System, registration for social welfare and access to finance to ensure the protection of human rights for all.

8. **Second**, we must enhance innovative ways for business investments to generate social and environmental value. Businesses must not only practice CSR but also adopt the **social enterprise approach** to incorporate sustainable development into their core business strategy. And they too can utilize STI with innovative ideas to scale up and spark their start-up businesses, such as in areas of Traveltech, Meditech, Foodtech and Agritech. A case in point is our Smart Farming and Smart Enterprises policy which apply IT and innovation to increase productivity and quality of products. Furthermore, the Royal Thai Government just successfully organized the “Startup Thailand 2016” last month with more than 200 start-ups from different sectors participated.

9. **Third**, fostering **social innovation** through STI is a key to achieving quality growth. This is why Thailand attaches great importance to **inclusive innovation** to ensure that vulnerable and marginalized group has access to ICT. It also ensures affordable access to quality products and services to improve their livelihood opportunities. The government also seeks to upscale further **digital literacy** through integrated online platform, e-learning and mobile application and access to internet in isolated schools. This way our future generations are prepared and ready to cultivate the **Digital Thailand**.

10. **Fourth**, to bring reform into action, we need **innovative source of funding for STI and human resource development**. We will push for effective

implementation of the **Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development** through inclusive development and active involvement by all stakeholders.

11. No doubt, all of these interventions must be tailored and crafted for each country and society. This is in line with His Majesty the King's principle of **Sufficiency Economy Philosophy or SEP**, which teaches us to first understand the overall context and identify the right solution according to their geo-social settings. His Majesty's initiatives on STI application for sustainable development are therefore based on **reasonableness** of the application in the areas and **evidence-based knowledge** working with local communities to build strength and resilience from within. It is simple, inexpensive and realistic, using appropriate technology and innovation for agricultural, disaster and water resource management found in several Royal Development projects, for example the application of technology for planning crop calendar and land reform as well as working with locals to utilize GPS and GIS to plan water management strategy.

12. To achieve the 2030 Agenda, Thailand believes that we all need to work together at all levels through seamless collaboration between **global and regional partnership**. The newly established Committee on Information and Communications Technology and Innovation at ESCAP can play important role to facilitate the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda and enhance the networking in the region linking with the new Technology Facilitation Mechanism at the global level.

Thank you for your kind attention.
