

Country Report
delivered by
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Head of the Thai National Assembly Delegation
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Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Honourable Parliamentarians,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address in the 20th Asia Pacific Parliamentarians' Conference on Environment and Development General Assembly. On behalf of the Thai delegation, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the Speaker of the Korean National Assembly, H.E. Kim Jin-pyo, the President of the APPCED, Honorable Mr. Lee In Young, and the APPCED Secretariat for hosting this forum.

Mr. President,

The climate change is one of the most challenging global environmental problems that needs cooperation and future actions from member countries to achieve the objectives of international agreements such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Nowadays, Thailand has suffered severe effects from climate change and encounters other environmental problems such as natural disasters, animal deaths and biodiversity losses, waste management, and PM 2.5 air pollution. These issues have adverse effects on the economy and peoples' daily lives. The country realizes the significance of environmental issues and tries to find the best solution to cope with them. The Thai government and every sectors have put efforts into inclusive and sustainable development under the 20-year National Strategy (2017-2036).

According to Thailand's present 5-year development plan, the 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2023-2037) emphasizes climate change and green growth economic development under the new context from the COVID-19 lessons learned. This development plan holds four concepts, including His Majesty King Bhumibol's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP), the "Resilience" concept, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Bio-Circular-Green Economic Model (BCG Model) to steer the country towards a stable, prosperous, and sustainable way. This development plan also highlights the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and environmentally friendly practices with a target to reach the circular economy and carbon-neutral community.

Unfortunately, even with the remarkable efforts to make progress in development. Thailand still remained stuck in the middle-income trap and still faces many challenges.

First of all, since 2019, Thailand has encountered high levels of PM 2.5 in many parts of the country that directly affects the environment, economy, and the well-being of her people.

Second, the approach to proper disposal and reuse of waste has not yet developed as it should. In 2022, 25.7 million tons of waste were generated, but inappropriately disposed waste remained at approximately 7.1 million tons (28 percent). Importantly, about 2 million tons of plastic waste were generated annually before the COVID-19 outbreak but during the pandemic, the rate of plastic waste generated has not decreased and the trend is expected to rise.

Third, Thailand is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts and is ranked the 9th country in the extreme risk category of the future even though the country has emitted less than 1 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

From the challenges mentioned above, apart from the 20-year National Strategy and the present 5-year development plan, Thailand has implemented a series of policies to manage key environmental issues and enable green growth, for example

1) Driving BCG Economic Model as a national agenda to promote the wisely use of resources, the maximum reuse of materials, and the balanced development to limit impacts on environment.

2) Driving dust pollution resolution through the National Dust Pollution Resolution Action Plan, which focuses on local management, prevention and reduction of source pollutions, and improvement of pollution management.

3) Mobilizing the Waste Management Operational National Plan to address pollution in environment and impacts on public health, based on the concepts of BCG Model, the Polluter Pays Principle (PPP) and the participation of public and private sectors in waste management. Moreover, The Thai government also sets a target for increasing properly waste management from households up to 80 percent and the amount of waste returned recyclable material management up to 74-100 percent in order to reduce the odor problem and greenhouse gases.

4) In 2007, Thailand established the Thailand Greenhouse Gas Management Organization as a central cooperation center between the public, private, and international organizations sectors in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Thailand intends to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30-40 percent from the projected business-as-usual level within 2030, increased from 20 percent as determined earlier.

At the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), Thailand declared its goal of carbon neutrality in 2050 and net zero emissions in 2065 and the Thai government will present a long-term climate change management plan to reach the goal as specified in Thailand's 2nd Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). Thailand also continues cultivating forests to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and aims to increase all types of green areas to no less than 55 percent of its domestic area within 2037.

Mr. President,

In the legislative branch, Thailand has passed a number of key laws related to climate change and environmentally friendly growth, for example.

1) The Forest Park Act (updated in 2015): the act aims to promote the development of forest parks, increase forestry, encourage the cultivation and production of woods, and guarantee the benefits of forestry.

2) The Environmental Quality Promotion and Conservation National Act (2018, 2nd edition): the act aims to promote and maintain the quality of the environment, natural resources, and public health, along with balanced country development.

(3) Land and Building Tax Act (2019): The act aims to encourage the use of agricultural benefits on individual's own land and improve land tax evasion.

In addition, the Thai National Assembly has the Senate and House of Representatives Standing Committees and Sub-committees related to Natural Resources and Environment, to examine bills and oversee the work and budgets of government that are related to environmental management, as well as recommending for balanced national development under the 20-year National Strategy.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, environmental issues can be threat to the world peace. The demand for natural resources that exceeds the supplying capacity of the earth, can lead to resource disruption and conflicts. On the other hand, when the society is peaceful, the public will give more concern on environmental problems. So, peace and healthy environment, and the road towards them are always in tandem.

And, as parliamentarians, we should use our parliamentary mechanism to address environmental issues and promote a good atmosphere for green growth at both national and international levels, including exchanging environmental knowledge and best practices to solve cross-border environmental problems and facilitate sustainable development.

Lastly, on behalf of the Thai Delegation, I would like to express my genuine appreciation to all APPCED member countries for their dedication and hard working to establish mutual interest and cooperation spirit with widespread concern within the Asia Pacific Region. Again, I would like to reaffirm Thailand's commitment to broaden and deepen the cooperation among APPCED member countries to achieve our goals. I have strong confidence that the 20th General Assembly of APPCED will generate an excellent and fruitful outcome.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.
