



**ASEAN**  
**THAILAND 2019**  
ADVANCING PARTNERSHIP  
FOR SUSTAINABILITY

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

# **2019**

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

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**2019**  
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# Foreword

The year 2019 marked Thailand's Chairmanship of ASEAN, in accordance with the organisation's tradition of alphabetical rotation amongst the 10 Member States. Throughout the year, Thailand hosted no less than 300 meetings, the most important of which were the 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits and Related Summits between ASEAN and Dialogue Partners as well as the United Nations. Thailand's Chairmanship was deemed successful with ASEAN leaders and meeting participants complimenting Thailand on its impressive organisation of all the meetings, both in and outside Bangkok. This would not have been possible without cooperation from relevant agencies and sectors.

During its Chairmanship, Thailand propelled cooperation in many areas under the theme **"Advancing Partnership for Sustainability"**. Thailand's multi-faceted concept of "sustainability" was warmly welcomed by all countries. In the field of political-security, ASEAN leaders endorsed the **ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific**, based on the 3M principles of mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual benefit in order to forge collaboration that will benefit all and ensure peace, security, and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. On economic cooperation, through the political support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand in collaboration with its partners, Thailand successfully pushed forward the conclusion of text-based negotiations for all 20 chapters of the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** agreement among 15 member countries in 2019, thereby paving the way for the future signing of RCEP. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs advanced the **"Connecting the Connectivities"** approach to promote synergy and complementarity between the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 and various regional connectivity initiatives and facilities.

Under the socio-cultural pillar, ASEAN Leaders adopted the **Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris in ASEAN Region**. Thailand and all ASEAN Member States also joined hands on a bid to host the FIFA World Cup 2034. Furthermore, in its capacity as the ASEAN Coordinator on Sustainable Development, Thailand continued to enhance complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development under the **Complementarities Initiative**, initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to advance sustainable development cooperation in ASEAN. One key achievement in 2019 was the development of the **ASEAN Complementarities Roadmap**, which was noted at the ASEAN-UN Summit in November 2019 as guidelines to take forward the Initiative.

Under Thailand's Chairmanship, Thailand established or elevated the status of **7 ASEAN Centres** across Thailand in 2019 with support from various sectors of the country. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD) and agreed to provide financial support for the operation of the Centre.

With the support of relevant agencies and private companies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs adopted a “**Green Meeting**” approach, encouraging greater use of recycled materials, electronic documents and online applications and a reduction in the use of paper and plastic materials. This was done in tandem with efforts to stimulate local economies by organising ASEAN meetings in different provinces throughout the country, and promote inclusiveness by engaging people with disabilities from the food service sector.

In enhancing relations with foreign countries, the year 2019 saw a number of significant achievements. These included the strengthening of strategic partnerships with China and Vietnam; the reinforcement of collaboration with neighbouring countries; a review of the Japan-Thailand Economic Partnership Agreement (JTEPA); the extension of cooperation with India in all aspects into sub-regional and regional cooperation; and the promotion of connectivity between the Pacific and Indian Oceans. In addition, the fostering of relations with Europe led to the European Union’s announcement of the resumption of Thailand-EU FTA negotiations.

At the multilateral level, Thailand played a significant role in forging development cooperation in the international community. Particular attention was given to the promotion of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Partnership. The activities raised Thailand’s profile at a broader level as a soft-power country with smart approaches. This was an important factor that won Thailand considerable support in the election of members to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the term 2020-2022. In these elections, Thailand ranked first among all the candidates.

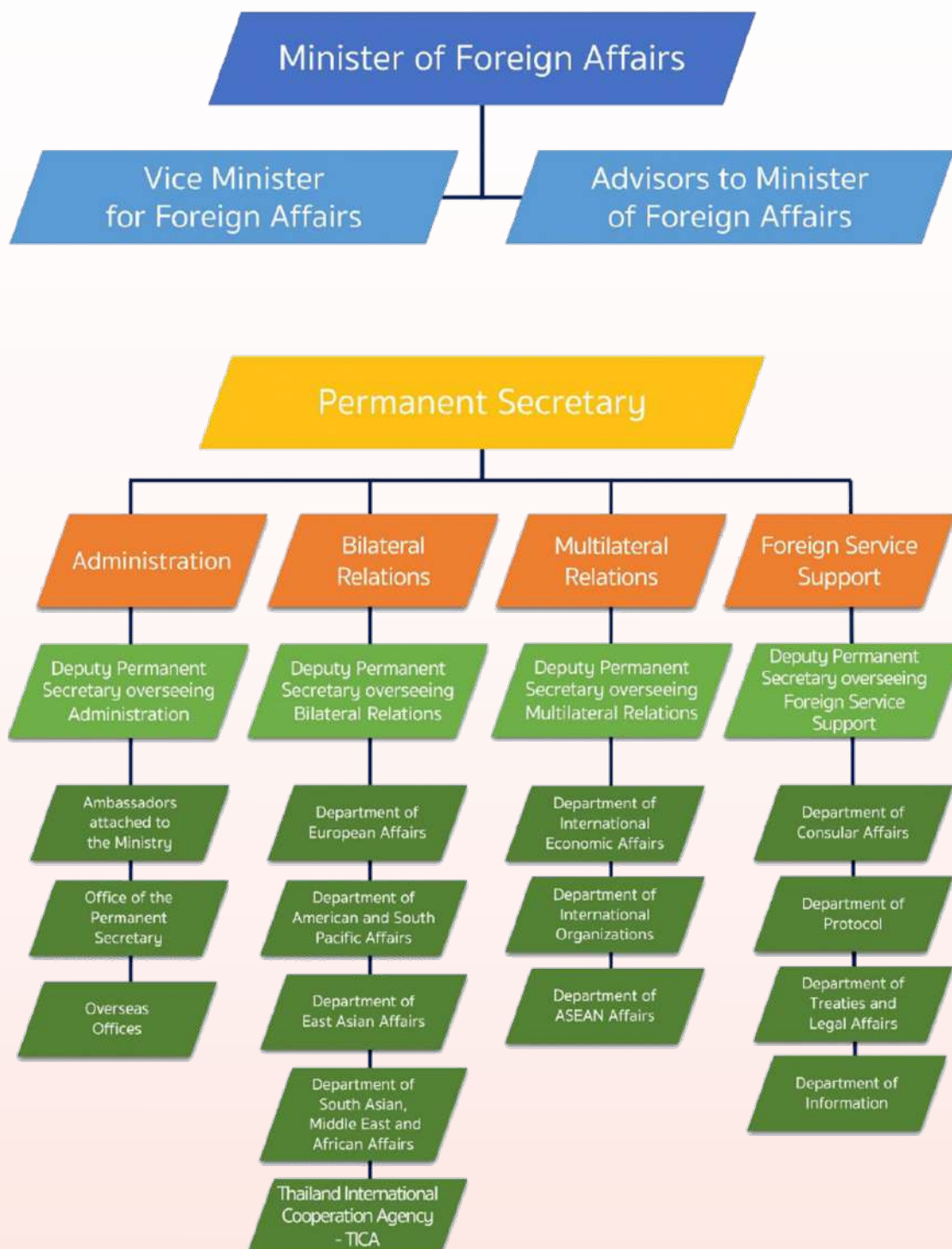
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs played active roles and furthered its national agenda in collaboration with line agencies, strengthening the status of Thailand as a centre and destination of international meetings and organisations in the region. In 2019, the country’s 3 Resolutions were adopted at the 75<sup>th</sup> Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), held in Bangkok. These included: advancing partnerships; promoting science, technology, and innovation; and utilizing space applications for sustainable development.

We hope that our tasks in the past as well as in the future will increasingly yield benefits to the country and people. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to collaborate closely with other agencies and all sectors in the implementation of Thailand’s National Strategy (2018 – 2037) and will actively drive foreign policy in a unified way in line with the Foreign Affairs Master Plan (2018 – 2037) or the 5S Strategy of Security, Sustainability, Standard, Status, and Synergy. The 5S Strategy serves as a compass or guidelines for all government agencies. It emphasises the need for synergies or inter-agency consolidation to promote international cooperation in matters of mutual benefits at the bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels. This must be carried out with proactive

and creative approaches, and with timely follow-ups and follow-throughs, to allow all initiatives to produce concrete results.



## Organization Chart



## The Minister and Executives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



**Minister of Foreign Affairs**  
Don Pramudwinai



**Vice Minister for  
Foreign Affairs**  
Vijavat Isarabhakdi



**Advisor to  
Minister of  
Foreign Affairs**  
Chaisiri Anamarn



**Advisor to  
Minister of  
Foreign Affairs**  
Pornpimol Kanchanalak



**Advisor to  
Minister of  
Foreign Affairs**  
M.L. Suparat Devakula



**Permanent Secretary**  
Busaya Mathelin



**Deputy Permanent  
Secretary**  
Paskorn Siriyaphan



**Deputy Permanent  
Secretary**  
Tana Weskosith



**Deputy Permanent  
Secretary**  
Soonthorn Chaiyindeepum



**Deputy Permanent  
Secretary**  
Jesda Katavetin



## Chapter 1

# Thailand's Chairmanship of ASEAN 2019

Thailand successfully concluded the ASEAN Chairmanship 2019 under the theme “**Advancing Partnership for Sustainability**”. The objective was to promote “sustainability in all dimensions” – be it political-security, economic or socio-cultural – to help realise a people-centred ASEAN community that leaves no one behind and looks to the future. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the lead agency for Thailand’s ASEAN Chairmanship in 2019, coordinating with all relevant agencies and sectors, and organising key ASEAN meetings. Additionally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs served as the national focal point for the ASEAN Political-Security Community. Major outcomes of Thailand’s Chairmanship, consistent with the 20-Year “**5S**” Foreign Affairs Master Plan, were as follows:

1. **Security** - Thailand promoted **sustainable security** in ASEAN and **ASEAN centrality in the regional architecture** based on the principle of the 3Ms – mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual benefit. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand had a key role in:

- Promoting the principles of the **Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC)**, namely mutual respect for sovereignty, independence, equality and territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs and the application of such principles beyond Southeast Asia. In 2019, Peru and Bahrain officially acceded to the TAC while other external partners such as South Africa, Germany, Ukraine and Panama expressed their interest in accession;
- Compiling inputs from line agencies for the adoption of the **ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)**, which is ASEAN’s vista on the increasing competition between the major powers in the region and uncertainties from the changing geopolitical landscape. The AOIP emphasises win-win concrete cooperation, based on existing ASEAN principles and mechanisms;

- Enhancing **border management cooperation** through Thailand's proposal of a concept paper entitled “A Regional Border Management Cooperation Roadmap”, initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the 13<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC). The paper discussed ways to mitigate potential negative consequences from enhanced regional connectivity, while facilitating cross-border trade and movement of people through the development of a comprehensive ASEAN-wide border management cooperation arrangement. The Meeting assigned the relevant ASEAN frameworks to work on the said paper and re-submit for consideration at the 14<sup>th</sup> AMMTC;

- Promoting **ASEAN's enhanced and visible role in addressing the situation in Rakhine State** with a focus on providing humanitarian assistance, facilitating repatriation and promoting sustainable development. ASEAN undertook a Preliminary Needs Assessment (PNA) to support repatriation, prioritising the dissemination of accurate information, capacity-building of reception and transit centres, and the provision of basic services in Rakhine State. ASEAN also agreed to set up an Ad-Hoc Support Team of the ASEAN Secretariat to coordinate and implement the PNA report.

2. **Sustainability** – Thailand promoted **dynamic and sustainable economic growth**, by supporting intra-ASEAN and inter-regional trade and investment, the exchange of knowledge and best practices, technology and innovation, and cooperation on sustainable development and environmental protection. Major achievements included:

- **Concluding text-based negotiations for all 20 chapters of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement** among 15 countries in 2019, to pave the way for the signing of the RCEP in 2020. This was achieved through the political support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand in collaboration with its partners at the Ministerial and Senior Officials' levels. The RCEP will help lessen the impact from trade tensions between ASEAN's major trading partners and support regional economic integration. In addition, ASEAN also completed the **operationalisation of the ASEAN Single Window** – an integrated platform for facilitating trade through faster clearance of cargo and release of shipments – in all 10 ASEAN Member States at the end of 2019;

- Promoting innovation-based economies, **digital economies and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** in ASEAN by developing digital infrastructure, facilitating e-commerce and supporting financial inclusion or access for MSMEs, female entrepreneurs and rural communities. In the year 2019, the Department of International Economics, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in

collaboration with the ASEAN Business Advisory Council, organised a Conference on the theme “ASEAN MSMEs in the Digital Era: Challenges and Opportunities”, which emphasised the access issue and considered the benefits of the digital economy for MSMEs;

- Enhancing **regional connectivity** in infrastructure, rules and regulations, and people-to-people contacts, through the “Connecting the Connectivities” approach, as initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This approach promotes synergy and complementarity between the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 and various regional connectivity strategies such as China’s Belt and Road Initiative, Japan’s Partnership for Quality Infrastructure Initiative, connectivity between ASEAN Plus Three (China, Japan, and South Korea), as well as the development of green and environmentally friendly infrastructure;

- Initiating the **Complementarities Roadmap**, which was noted at the ASEAN – UN Summit in November 2019. The Roadmap takes forward the **Complementarities Initiative**, also initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs earlier, to forge **sustainable development** by enhancing complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development given Thailand’s capacity as the ASEAN Coordinator on Sustainable Development.

- Promoting human capital development in all age groups by addressing malnutrition and stunting, responding to and taking advantage of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution (4IR), preparing for an ageing society, as well as building capacity among vulnerable groups;

- Strengthening regional cooperation on combating marine debris through the implementation of the **Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris in ASEAN Region** and the **ASEAN Framework of Action on Marine Debris**.

3. **Standards** – Thailand played an important role in raising ASEAN’s profile and standards by encouraging compliance with international standards and international laws on the following issues:

- Addressing **Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing** by taking forward the initiative to establish the ASEAN Network for Combating IUU Fishing. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs played a supportive role in the negotiations, and hosted two ASEAN meetings on this matter in partnership with the European Union;

- Working closely with relevant internal agencies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as a lead agency, facilitated the negotiation process on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea



(COC). During Thailand's Chairmanship, ASEAN and China were able to complete the first reading of the Single Draft COC and commence its second reading in 2019. Thailand will continue to advocate the conclusion of an effective and substantive COC.

**4. Status** - Thailand successfully hosted over 300 meetings last year, gaining praise and recognition from ASEAN Member States and the international community. Key undertakings included:

- Promoting **engagement with external partners and Guests of the Chair**. Thailand welcomed leaders and their high-level representatives from various countries throughout the year to numerous meetings. The 52<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Post-Ministerial Conferences and Related Meetings (AMM/PMC) in August 2019 were attended by approximately 30 ministers/ministerial level representatives from ASEAN Member States and external partners as well as from Norway, Turkey, Peru, and the United Kingdom. The 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and Related Summits in November 2019, were attended by 18 leaders, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Thailand also welcomed the President of FIFA who signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ASEAN to promote the development of football in ASEAN to international standards.

- Hosting **side events** during the 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and Related Summits showcasing Thailand's leading role in various fields as follows:

- (1) **ASEAN Business and Investment Summit (ABIS) 2019** under the theme "Empowering ASEAN 4.0," where various leaders of ASEAN Member States and ASEAN's external partners, including the United Kingdom's Duke of York, delivered remarks;

- (2) **The 2<sup>nd</sup> Indo-Pacific Business Forum**, co-hosted by the Thai Chamber of Commerce and the United States Chamber of Commerce, where the US Secretary of Commerce and business leaders from ASEAN Member States and Dialogue Partners shared their visions;

- (3) **Special Lunch on Sustainable Development**, organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and hosted by the Prime Minister of Thailand and joined by 18 leaders or their representatives, the Managing Director of the IMF and the ASEAN Secretary-General;

- (4) **ASEAN Styles**, organised by the Ministry of Commerce of Thailand to promote quality local Thai handicrafts and products and facilitate potential business matching opportunities.

- Strengthening **ASEAN identity** by declaring 2019 as ASEAN Cultural Year in order to promote cultural diversity and ASEAN identity. ASEAN also agreed to Thailand's proposal to work together on a joint bid to host the FIFA World Cup in 2034.

5. **Synergy** – Thailand’s ASEAN Chairmanship would not have been successful without the support and effective and integrated coordination from all sectors in the country. The Chairmanship was an opportunity for all line agencies to develop their capacity and personnel in the field of foreign affairs and promote inter-agency coordination. In preparation for the ASEAN Summits and related meetings, the Prime Minister chaired seven National Committee meetings during 2018 – 2019 and appointed relevant Sub-Committees to move forward Thailand’s ASEAN Chairmanship. The Department of ASEAN Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in its capacity of Thailand’s National Secretariat for ASEAN, served as secretary of the National Committee meetings. Key outcomes of the national synergy were as follows:

- Promoting **sustainability in all dimensions**, which was well-received and supported by all ASEAN Member States and external partners. Sustainability will help all parties better prepare for existing and emerging regional and global challenges such as the 4IR, cybersecurity, marine debris, climate change and sustainable development. Pursuing sustainable development is in line with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej The Great of Thailand;

- Hosting **interfaces between ASEAN leaders and representatives of various sectors**, namely the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN BAC) and ASEAN Youth during the 34<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in June 2019 and the interface between ASEAN Foreign Ministers and representatives of civil society organisations during the 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and Related Summits in November 2019. These interfaces highlight the importance ASEAN leaders place on engaging with various sectors to promote a people-centred ASEAN;

- Promoting **green meetings** and **inclusiveness** by organising ASEAN meetings in different provinces throughout the country in order to enhance people’s participation and stimulate the local economy; engaging people with disabilities by hiring deaf baristas to serve drinks during coffee breaks and partnering with the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability to produce chocolates as snacks for delegates; and cooperating with private companies such as the Siam Cement Group (SCG) and the Petroleum Authority of Thailand (PTT) to ensure that the meetings were as green as possible, encouraging greater use of recycled materials, electronic documents and online applications to reduce the use of paper and plastic;

- Obtaining **broad-based support in publicising and raising awareness about ASEAN and the Chairmanship** through billboards, broadcasting materials in traditional outlets as well as on social media and public transport, and via actors, artists and social influencers;

- Lastly, to ensure that the promotion of sustainability in all dimensions would be carried forward, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated, coordinated or provided support to relevant Thai agencies in launching or upgrading **7 ASEAN Centres** across Thailand in 2019. This was carried out

with support from various sectors in the country. These centres cover the following areas of cooperation, namely: military medicine, cybersecurity, sustainable development, active aging, social work and welfare, disaster management and culture. They represent Thailand's contribution to ASEAN's sustainable future. The ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue was established on the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which would also provide financial support for the operation of the Centre.



## Chapter 2

## Security

### **“Thailand strengthens national security and has the capacity to address global challenges together with the international community.”**

In 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to promote constructive foreign relations and cooperation, to nurture peace and security in the region through bilateral and multilateral collaboration, and to cooperate with the international community in combating all types of threat in accordance with the Foreign Affairs Master Plan under the National Strategy.

#### **2.1 Promoting good relations and constructive cooperation with countries around the world.**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked steadily towards enhancing relations and close collaboration with neighbouring and ASEAN Member States in all fields as well as promoting constructive cooperation with countries in different regions. Activities undertaken were as follows:

##### **2.1.1 Neighbouring and ASEAN Member States**

##### **1. The Republic of Indonesia – Promoting trade, investment, and fishery cooperation**

(1) On 12 – 13 March 2019, H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, paid a working visit to the Republic of Indonesia, as representative of the Royal Thai Government and Chair of ASEAN. During the visit, the Foreign Minister paid a courtesy call on H.E. Mr. Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia, and held discussions with H.E. Ms. Retno L.P. Marsudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia. Both sides expressed satisfaction with the cordial relations between Thailand and Indonesia and the increasing bilateral trade and investment. The two sides agreed to jointly organise events to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Thailand – Indonesia diplomatic relations in 2020. Indonesia also reaffirmed its full support for Thailand’s Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2019.

(2) On 22 June 2019, H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, had a bilateral discussion with H.E. Mr. Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia, during the 34<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit. On the occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Thailand – Indonesia diplomatic relations, both countries look to further strengthen relations in every aspect. In addition, both sides agreed to boost cooperation on trade and investment, including cooperation on fisheries. They also exchanged ideas on how to raise the price of agricultural products and tackle regional security issues.



## 2. The Lao People's Democratic Republic – Enhancing border trade, investment protection, and labour cooperation

On 23 June 2019, H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, held a bilateral meeting with H.E. Mr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of the Lao PDR, on the sidelines of the 34<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and Related Summits in Thailand. The leaders discussed issues that would yield concrete outcomes for the two countries, for example (1) upgrading Muang Khob local checkpoint, Xayaburi Province of the Lao PDR, which is located opposite Ban Huak, Phayao Province of Thailand, to an international checkpoint to further promote trade, transport and tourism; (2) assistance and protection for Thai investors in the Lao PDR; and (3) promoting labour cooperation in order to facilitate Lao workers in Thailand whose permits will expire in March 2020.



### 3. Malaysia – Advocating connectivity and fostering cooperation in criminal matters, border security management and border-area economic development

(1) H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, held bilateral meetings with H.E. Tun Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, on the sidelines of the 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits and Related Summits on 23 June 2019 and 2 November 2019 respectively. The two leaders expressed satisfaction with the close relations between Thailand and Malaysia and reaffirmed their commitment to working closely to strengthen bilateral cooperation for the mutual benefit of the two countries and peoples. Particular attention was given to the promotion of connectivity and economic development in the Thailand – Malaysia border areas as well as border security and management.



(2) Following an official visit to Thailand on 19 January 2019 by H.E. Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand paid a working visit to Malaysia on 13 February 2019. During his visit he paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister of Malaysia and held a bilateral meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia. The two sides discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral cooperation and maintain momentum in Thailand – Malaysia relations. The discussions covered multi-faceted issues including the development and promotion of linkages between the Special Economic Zones in both countries, ways to elevate the quality of life for the peoples in Southern Thailand and Northern Malaysia, as well as the on-going peace dialogue process with Malaysia as the facilitator.





(3) The Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, hosted a Meeting of the Secretariat of the Joint Thailand – Malaysia Land Boundary Committee (LBC) in Bangkok, Thailand on 12 – 13 June 2019. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss the arrangements for the 26<sup>th</sup> LBC, which would be hosted by Malaysia in 2020. The Thai delegation was led by Mrs. Suphanvasa Chotikajan Tang, Director of Boundary Division, Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while the Malaysian delegation was led by Sr Ahmad Azman Bin Ghazali, Director of Survey (Boundary Affairs Division), Department of Survey and Mapping Malaysia, Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources. The Meeting covered various topics ranging from the Draft Agreement on Sungai Golok to the draft agenda for the 26<sup>th</sup> LBC. The Meeting agreed to submit any pending issues regarding the Draft Agreement on Sungai Golok to the 26<sup>th</sup> LBC for consideration.



(4) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised and participated in two rounds of negotiation on the Treaty between the Kingdom of Thailand and Malaysia on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons and on Co-operation in the Enforcement of Penal Sentences. Negotiations took place on 4 – 5 April 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand and 24 – 26 July 2019 in Malacca, Malaysia, respectively. In that time, Thailand and Malaysia reached an agreement on a draft Treaty proposed by Thailand. Both sides agreed on the first reading of the Treaty. The Malaysian side expressed its appreciation to the Thai side for sharing its best practices on the transfer of sentenced persons. Both sides agreed and expressed their readiness to continue to work together to complete the negotiations at the earliest opportunity.



Malaysia has a large number of Thai prisoners. In 2019, there were approximately 911 Thai prisoners in Malaysia and 450 Malaysian prisoners in Thailand. The completion of negotiations on the treaty on the transfer of sentenced persons between the two countries provides a mechanism that can further strengthen Thailand – Malaysia cooperation in criminal matters. This is consistent with Thailand’s foreign policy which attaches the utmost importance to Thai people’s interests.

#### **4. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar – Furthering security and development cooperation**

(1) On 7 – 8 March 2019, H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, in his capacity as Chair of ASEAN, visited Myanmar and paid a courtesy call on Her Excellency Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The purpose of the visit was to enhance Thailand – Myanmar relations, follow up on bilateral cooperation, and explore how Thailand and ASEAN can help Myanmar address the situation in Rakhine State. The Foreign Minister expressed Thailand’s readiness to work closely with Myanmar to address the situation in Rakhine State, particularly on humanitarian assistance to create a conducive environment for the return of displaced persons. The State Counsellor of Myanmar expressed her appreciation and confidence in Thailand’s constructive role as the Chair of ASEAN and as a close neighbour.



(2) The Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand organised the Thailand – Myanmar Technical Meeting on the nomination of the Kaeng Krachan Forest Complex for inscription on the World Heritage List. The meeting took place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand on 25 – 26 April 2018. The Thai Delegation was led by Mr. Tana Weskosith, Director-General of the Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. The Myanmar Delegation was led by U Myo Thant Pe, Director-General of the Consular and Legal Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of



Myanmar. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the revised area of the proposed Kaeng Krachan Forest Complex (KKFC) site.



#### 5. The Republic of the Philippines – Increasing trade and investment cooperation

On 23 June 2019, H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, held a bilateral meeting with H.E. Mr. Rodrigo Roa Duterte, President of the Republic of the Philippines, on the sidelines of the 34<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and Related Summits in Thailand. The two sides agreed to promote cooperation at both bilateral and regional levels, with a special focus on potential areas of trade and investment. On this occasion, the two leaders exchanged commemorative stamps, which had been issued by the Philippine Postal Corporation (PhilPost) and Thailand Post, to mark the occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of Thailand – Philippines diplomatic relations. The stamps represent the warm and longstanding friendship between the two countries and peoples.

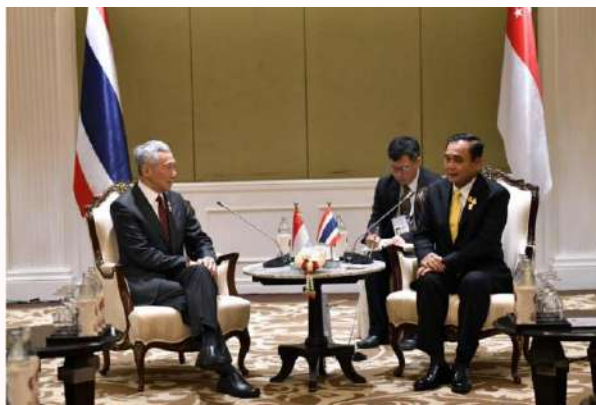


#### 6. The Republic of Singapore – Fostering security cooperation, trade and investment, the digital economy, and startup businesses

On 23 June 2019, H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, held a bilateral meeting with H.E. Mr. Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of the Republic of



Singapore, on the sidelines of the 34<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and Related Summits in Thailand. The two leaders expressed satisfaction with the close and comprehensive relations between Thailand and Singapore, especially in the areas of economic and defence cooperation, which have been underpinned by frequent exchanges of high-level visits and close contacts within ASEAN. Their discussions focused on security cooperation, trade and investment, digital economy and start-up businesses, cybersecurity and cooperation within ASEAN frameworks.



## 7. The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste – Enhancing development cooperation

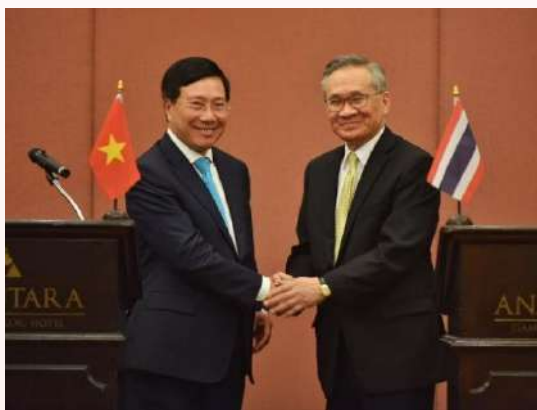
On 28 May 2019, H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand hosted a welcome dinner in honour of H.E. Mr. Dionísio Babo Soares, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, and his delegation during their visit to Thailand to attend the 75<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). The Foreign Ministers discussed development cooperation at both bilateral and multilateral levels as well as global issues of mutual interest, including climate change, environmental degradation, poverty, and malnutrition. The Timorese side expressed their appreciation for the Royal Project's "School Lunch Programme", initiated by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn in rural areas of Timor-Leste. They also discussed Timor-Leste's application for ASEAN membership.



## 8. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam – Strengthening the Strategic Partnership

On 25 January 2019, H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, and H.E. Mr. Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, co-chaired the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC) between Thailand and Vietnam in Bangkok. Attended by representatives from relevant agencies of both countries, the JCBC meeting is an important mechanism for the promotion of bilateral cooperation between Thailand and Vietnam.

At the 3<sup>rd</sup> JCBC meeting, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and his Vietnamese counterpart reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen all dimensions of bilateral relations and explore new areas of collaboration. The two sides agreed to draft a new Plan of Action (POA) Implementing Thailand – Vietnam Strategic Partnership, which will guide the direction of bilateral relations towards a Strengthened Strategic Partnership.



### 2.1.2 East Asian Countries

#### 1. The People's Republic of China – Reinforcing the Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership

On 2 – 5 November 2019, H.E. Mr. Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, attended the 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and Related Summits and paid an official visit to Thailand as guest of the Royal Thai Government. It was six years since his last official visit. The objectives of this visit were to strengthen the **Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership** between Thailand and China and set the future direction and course of relations, based on mutual interest, amidst the uncertainties in the international economic and political situation.

On 5 November 2019, the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China had a plenary meeting with the Prime Minister of Thailand at Government House.

The two leaders agreed to promote linkages between the “Connecting the Connectivities” strategy, initiated by Thailand during its ASEAN Chairmanship, and China’s Belt and Road Initiative with a view to further expanding these linkages with other sub-regional cooperation frameworks, as well as linkages between the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) and the Guangdong – Hong Kong – Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). In addition, both sides agreed to promote other sub-regional and regional cooperation, namely ASEAN – China cooperation, Mekong – Lancang Cooperation (MLC), and Ayeyawady – Chao Phraya – Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), negotiations of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and negotiations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC).

The two Prime Ministers also witnessed the signing of 3 important documents: (1) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Promoting Scientific, Technical and Innovative Cooperation between the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People’s Republic of China; (2) MOU between the Public Relations Department of the Kingdom of Thailand and Xinhua News Agency of the People’s Republic of China; and (3) MOU between Siam Cement Public Company Limited and the Chinese Academy of Sciences Innovation Cooperation Center (Bangkok).



## 2. Japan – Strengthening high-level relations and promoting Thailand’s role as connecting point in the region

(1) The Prime Minister of Thailand attended the Enthronement Ceremony of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito of Japan on 21 – 27 October 2019 in Tokyo. During the visit, he had a bilateral meeting with H.E. Mr. ABE Shinzo, Prime Minister of Japan. The visit further strengthened the relations between Thailand and Japan.





(2) H.E. Mrs. Busaya Mathelin, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, visited Tokyo on 5 – 9 January 2019, under the Strategic Exchanges on Practical Level Programme (STEP). The Permanent Secretary met with the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and high-level officials from the Ministry and other relevant agencies to discuss cooperation under bilateral, sub-regional and regional frameworks and exchange views on regional issues. The purpose of the visit was to enhance relations between the two countries and seek Japan's support to Thailand's Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2019.

(3) H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited Japan on 10 – 13 May 2019 to co-preside over the opening ceremony of the Thai Festival in Tokyo and meet with H.E. Mr. KONO Taro, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. The meeting recognised the constructive role Thailand has played in international affairs, particularly in its capacity as ASEAN Chair and bridge builder between Japan and the Mekong sub-region as well as Southeast Asia.



## 2. The Republic of Korea – Encouraging cooperation in water resource management, industry 4.0, and smart city development

(1) H.E. Mr. Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Madame Kim Jung-sook paid an official visit to the Kingdom of Thailand as guests of the Royal Thai Government

during 1 – 3 September 2019. This was the first official visit to Thailand by the President of the ROK in seven years. On 2 September 2019, Prime Minister Prayut and President Moon had a four-eye meeting and attended a plenary meeting. Prime Minister Prayut invited the ROK private sector to increase their investment in the EEC. Particular interest was given to areas of the ROK's expertise in fields such as automobiles, biotechnology, digital industry, robotics, automation and 5G. The two leaders also agreed to cooperate in the defence, water resource management, promotion of the study of Korean language in Thailand and the Thai language in the ROK, and the mitigation of the issue of undocumented Thai workers in the ROK. The leaders agreed to reconvene the Korea – Thailand Committee on Economic Cooperation (KOTCOM), chaired by Deputy Prime Ministers in charge of economic affairs of the two countries, to push forward economic, trade and investment cooperation. President Moon emphasised his commitment to support Thailand as the Chair of ASEAN and the principle of ASEAN centrality.

The two leaders witnessed the signing of six agreements and memorandums of understanding (MOU) on water resource management, Korean language studies, military information sharing, industry 4.0, railways and smart cities development. After the signing ceremony, Prime Minister Prayut and President Moon met Thai Korean War veterans, who were bestowed honorary medals by President Moon. In the afternoon, the two leaders attended the Thailand – Korea Industry 4.0 Showcase and delivered special remarks at the Thailand – Korea Business Forum which was attended by many business people from both sides. In his remarks, Prime Minister Prayut reiterated an invitation for the ROK's business people to invest in Thailand and readiness to facilitate the ROK's investment in the country.



The Four-Eye Meeting between H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, and H.E. Mr. Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea, in the Ivory Room, Government House, 2 September 2019



(2) On 25 November 2019, H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand had a bilateral meeting with H.E. Mr. Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea (ROK) on the sidelines of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN – ROK Commemorative Summit and the 1<sup>st</sup> Mekong – ROK Summit which took place in Busan from 25 – 27 November 2019. The two leaders agreed to continue enhancing bilateral cooperation, particularly in the areas of trade, investment, infrastructure development, water resources management, science, technology and innovation (STI), SMEs and startups promotion, and to resolve the issue of undocumented Thai workers in the ROK. Moreover, both leaders underscored the importance of the development partnership in regional and sub-regional cooperative frameworks. Prime Minister Prayut also reiterated Thailand's support for the ROK on the Korean Peninsula issue.

On this occasion, the two leaders witnessed the signing of the three memorandums of understanding (MOUs) between Thailand and the ROK in the areas of STI, investment in the EEC, and information exchange to tackle the problem of undocumented Thai workers in the ROK.



The Bilateral Meeting between H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, and H.E. Mr. Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea, in Busan, Republic of Korea, on 25 November 2019

### 2.1.3 South Asian, Central Asia, Middle East, and African Countries

1. The Republic of India – Boosting cooperation in the areas of economics, defence and security, culture and education, and fostering connectivity between the Pacific and Indian Oceans

(1) On 18 March 2019, H.E. Mrs. Busaya Mathelin, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, co-chaired the 5<sup>th</sup> Thailand – India Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) with H.E. Mrs. Vijay Thakur Singh, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs of



India, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. The two sides discussed and agreed upon ways to further strengthen Thailand – India cooperation at all levels and in all dimensions. Both sides concurred on the necessity of convening the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Joint Commission for Bilateral Relations at the earliest opportunity as a means to follow up on all pending issues and prepare for the Prime Minister of India's visit to Thailand. Key areas in the discussions included the promotion of economic cooperation alongside collaboration in the areas of defence and security, culture, education, people-to-people exchanges and development to strengthen Thailand – India relations. On multilateral relations, both sides attached great importance to cooperation under the ASEAN framework with Thailand being the ASEAN Chair in 2019 and also Country Coordinator for ASEAN – India Dialogue Relations for the term 2018 – 2021. Both sides deemed it important to enhance cooperation under the sub-regional frameworks as well as the United Nations (UN) framework. The two delegations also exchanged views on Indo-Pacific and other regional issues.



The 5<sup>th</sup> Thailand-India Foreign Office Consultations (FOC), co-chaired by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and the Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs of India

(2) H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, co-chaired the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Thailand – India Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation (JC) on 10 October 2019, with H.E. Mr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs of the Republic of India, at Hyderabad House in New Delhi, Republic of India. The JC was preceded by the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on 9 October 2019, co-chaired by H.E. Mrs. Busaya Mathelin, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand and H.E. Mrs. Vijay Thakur Singh, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India. Both sides recognised the importance of the complementarity in Thailand's Look West Policy and India's Act East Policy, particularly during this time as Thailand was Chair of ASEAN in 2019 and Country Coordinator for ASEAN – India Dialogue Relations during 2018 – 2021. The two countries agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation in all dimensions as a path towards regional cooperation and to create concrete

collaboration between the two regions linking the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Oceans. The two sides discussed both bilateral and multilateral cooperation on defence and security, economy, connectivity, social and cultural linkages, science and technology, consular affairs, pending agreements under negotiations, cooperation in sub-regional frameworks, ASEAN – India relations as well as cooperation under the United Nations framework.

The JC meeting concluded with the two Ministers signing the Agreed Minutes of the JC meeting and witnessing the signing ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Devawongse Varopakarn Institute of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and Foreign Service Institute (FSI), Ministry of External Affairs of India on fostering cooperation in capacity building for personnel in the foreign services.



The 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Thailand-India Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation (JC), co-chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and the Minister of External Affairs of India

(3) On 3 November 2019, H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, held a bilateral meeting with H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, on the margins of the 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and Related Summits. The purpose of the meeting was to broaden and deepen cooperation between the two countries in several areas including the exchange of high-level visits, trade and investment cooperation, regional connectivity as well as the negotiations on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).





## 2. The Republic of Maldives – Promoting technical cooperation, sustainable development, and investment protection negotiation

During 15 – 17 October 2019, H.E. Mr. Abdulla Shahid, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives paid an official visit to Thailand as a guest of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. In a bilateral meeting with H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand on 16 October 2019, the two sides discussed constructive ways to further promote and strengthen bilateral cooperation in the areas of trade, investment, tourism and technical cooperation. The Foreign Ministers also agreed to work closely together under multilateral frameworks such as the Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in order to promote sustainable development, climate change mitigation, the blue economy, clean energy and disaster management.

Thailand and Maldives took the opportunity to discuss ways to enhance relations and increase cooperation on bilateral and multilateral issues for the benefit of both sides. The Ministers were pleased with the initiative to begin negotiations on the conclusion of a Bilateral Investment Treaty between Thailand and Maldives. The two sides also agreed to exchange support for their respective candidatures in international organisations. Thailand reaffirmed its commitment to support Maldives in human capacity building by offering scholarships and training courses in areas of Thailand's expertise such as public health, agriculture, food security and climate change mitigation.



The exchange of gifts between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives on the occasion of the latter's official visit to Thailand





Luncheon in honour of H.E. Mr. Abdulla Shahid, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives, hosted by H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand

### 3. The Islamic Republic of Iran – Enhancing people-to-people relations and technical cooperation

On 28 November 2019, H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, had a bilateral meeting with Her Excellency Ma'soumeh Ebtekar, Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Both sides discussed issues relating to people-to-people relations, technical cooperation, and social affairs.



### 4. The Kingdom of Morocco – Supporting moderate schools of thought, gateways of connection, and parliamentary cooperation

(1) On 28 August 2019, H.E. Mr. Habib El Malki, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Morocco met with H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, during his visit to attend the 40<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) Meeting as guest of the National Assembly of Thailand.

The meeting recognised that in the 34 years since diplomatic relations were established between Thailand and Morocco there have always been close ties between the two countries' monarchies, governments and people. The two sides discussed the

expansion of economic cooperation given the strategic locations of both countries since Morocco could act as Thailand's gateway to Africa and Europe, while Thailand could become Morocco's gateway to ASEAN and the sub-continent. Morocco's understanding towards Thailand's political situation was appreciated, as well as support under the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) framework to the issue of the Southern Border Provinces (SBPs) of Thailand, where the Thai Government continuously strives to improve the livelihoods of people.

Furthermore, Morocco praised Thailand's role in mobilising the regional economy through various trade and investment activities. Morocco also expressed its willingness to further tighten relations with Thailand and other ASEAN Member States and to explore possibilities for cooperation on tourism and agriculture.

Both parties agreed on freedom of religion and belief, and recognition of diversity and differences. The Thai Prime Minister commended Morocco's position as a moderate Muslim country, and Morocco for providing annual scholarships to Thai students to continue their studies in Morocco, and for training courses for Imams from Thailand.



Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Morocco met with H.E. Gen. Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand.

(2) On 28 August 2019, H.E. Mr. Habib El Malki, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Morocco met with H.E. Mr. Wissanu Krea-ngarm, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand. Acknowledging the smooth and close ties between the Thai – Moroccan Parliamentary members, the Deputy Prime Minister looked forward to continuing cooperation, especially in the fields of education and culture. He thanked the Moroccan side for the annual scholarships granted to Thai students and for taking good care of them. Morocco is a well-known moderate Muslim country and one of the preferred education destinations for Thai students to pursue their studies.

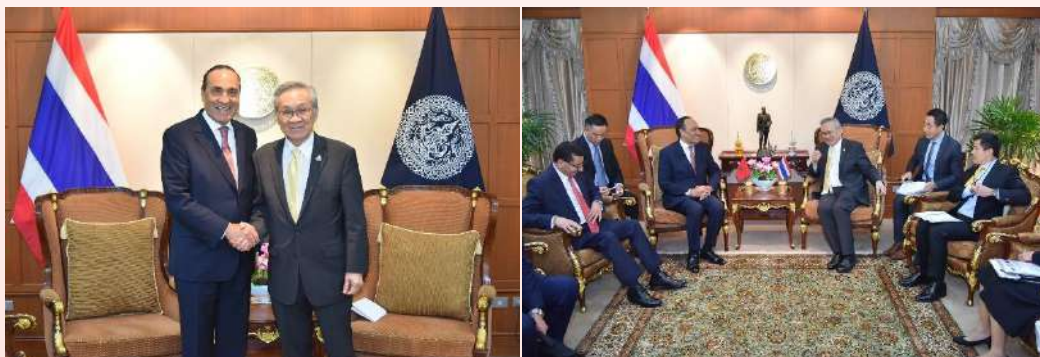


The Moroccan Speaker of the House of Representatives informed the Deputy Prime Minister that the Moroccan side had decided to organise training for Imams from Thailand at the Mohammed VI Institute. The Moroccan side attached high importance to instilling tolerance and mutual respect for youths of all races and religions. Beyond education, the Moroccan side expressed an intention to enhance economic cooperation with Thailand and the ASEAN region.



Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Morocco met with H.E. Mr. Wissanu Krea-ngarm.

(3) On 28 August 2019, H.E. Mr. Habib El Malki, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Morocco, met with H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand. Thailand and Morocco established diplomatic relations in 1985. The meeting underlined the close ties that have been maintained between the Thai and Moroccan royal families. The two sides agreed to enhance governmental and parliamentary cooperation, including promoting increased partnership between the Thai-Moroccan Parliamentary Friendship Group since the executive and legislative branches are key mechanisms in the two countries' administrations. They also exchanged views on global challenges including climate change, marine debris, and stability and security.



Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Morocco met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand.



## 5. The Sultanate of Oman – Promoting trade, investment, and technical cooperation

On 9 – 12 March 2019, H.E. Mr. Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, paid an official visit to Thailand as guest of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss bilateral cooperation. Key areas of interest included trade and investment, agriculture, aquaculture, rubber, tourism, public health, and people-to-people relations.

During a courtesy call on H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, both sides underlined the close and amicable relations between the two countries and discussed the ongoing situation in the Middle East region. A further meeting took place with H.E. Mr. Grisada Boonrach, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives which was followed by a presentation on “Natural rubber technology for road construction”. The Omani delegation made three study visits: the first was to a rubberised asphalt factory to study the process of building a natural rubber-modified asphalt concrete road and a para soil cement road at the Chachoengsao Rubber Research Center (CRRC); the second focused on aquaculture at the Chachoengsao Coastal Fisheries Research and Development Centre; and the third on poultry in Lopburi Province.

The visiting Minister also met with his counterpart, H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, to discuss issues encompassing cooperation on trade and investment, agriculture, tourism, development, combating violent extremism as well as security and stability in the Middle East. The two sides exchanged views on cooperation between the two regions, ASEAN and the GCC under Thailand’s ASEAN Chairmanship.



## 6. The State of Qatar – Enhancing cooperation in trade and investment, food security, and energy security

During 28 – 30 August 2019, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, and delegation paid an official visit to Thailand, as guest of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. The visit was part of a regional trip of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar and the first official visit to Thailand by the Qatari Minister of Foreign Affairs since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

On 29 August 2019, H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, met the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar and discussed ways to further promote bilateral cooperation in various areas such as trade, investment, public health, food and energy security, and education. In addition, the two sides discussed cooperation under multilateral frameworks such as the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), strengthening of partnership between ASEAN and Qatar and exchanged views on the situation in the Middle East.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar paid a courtesy call on H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, on 30 August 2019, and met H.E. Mr. Somkid Jatusripitak, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, on 29 August 2019.



### 2.1.4 European Countries

#### 1. The Czech Republic – Enhancing cooperation in the fields of economics, research, and technology

H.E. Mr. Andrej Babiš, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, paid an official visit to Thailand during 15 – 17 January 2019. During the visit, H.E. Mr. Andrej Babiš met with

H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister, General Prawit Wongsuwan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, and Mr. Somkid Jatusripitak, Deputy Prime Minister.

The visit to Thailand of H.E. Mr. Andrej Babiš, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, was the first-ever official visit to Thailand by a sitting prime minister of the Czech Republic since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Thailand and the Czech Republic in 1974 and represents the opening of a new era of Thai – Czech relations. Both sides agreed to build cooperation in the fields of trade, investment, tourism, education, research, science, technology and defence industry. The Czech side expressed its readiness to support Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor projects and transfer relevant technologies to the Thai side.

## **2. The Holy See – Strengthening religious relations**

His Holiness Pope Francis, Supreme Pontiff of the Holy See and Head of State of the Vatican City State, paid an official visit to Thailand during 20 – 23 November 2019. During the visit, His Holiness Pope Francis had several important engagements, including a Royal Audience with Their Majesties King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua and Queen Suthida Bajrasudhabimalalakshana; a meeting with His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand; an audience with H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand; a meeting with the Thai Cabinet, diplomatic corps, invited guests and the media at the Government House; and a meeting with leaders and representatives of religions in Thailand at Chulalongkorn University.

Furthermore, His Holiness Pope Francis performed a number of religious activities, for instance the holy masses at the National Stadium and Assumption Cathedral, a meeting with medical personnel and patients at the Saint Louis Hospital, and meetings with bishops, Jesuits, clergy and laity at the Shrine of Blessed Nicolas Boonkerd and Saint Peter's Church, Sampran District, Nakhon Pathom Province.

The visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to Thailand fostered closer ties between Thailand and the Holy See, both between the two states and the two religions, and celebrated three auspicious occasions, namely the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Catholic Mission in Siam, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Thailand and the Holy See and the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the official visit to Thailand of His Holiness Pope John Paul II.

## **3. The Portuguese Republic – Advancing cooperation in the areas of economics, culture, and labour, as well as trilateral cooperation**

H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs, paid an official visit to the Portuguese Republic during 17 – 21 December 2019 after the 14<sup>th</sup> ASEM FMM Meeting in



Madrid, Spain. On this occasion, H.E. the Foreign Minister had a bilateral meeting with H.E. Mr. Augusto Santos Silva, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Portuguese Republic. Both sides agreed to strengthen bilateral relations and to drive forward the dynamism of cooperation in economic, trade and investment areas. The two ministers, furthermore, agreed to enhance cooperation in terms of culture, labour and trilateral cooperation to expand to ASEAN countries and the Portuguese speaking countries.

#### **4. The Russian Federation – Strengthening beneficial cooperation in all aspects**

Thailand has continued to maintain positive momentum in its dynamic relations with the Russian Federation. This was highlighted by the visit to Thailand of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev to participate in the East Asia Summit during 2 – 4 November 2019 during which he had a bilateral meeting with H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand. This meeting followed a number of high-level visits to further advance mutually beneficial cooperation in all spheres, including official visits paid by H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, to the Russian Federation in February 2019 and H.E. Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, to Thailand in July 2019.

#### **5. The Republic of Turkey – Enhancing cooperation in trade, investment, and tourism**

On 30 July 2019, H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs, had a bilateral meeting with H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, who was visiting Thailand to attend the ASEAN Ministerial and Related Meetings in Bangkok. The two Ministers had a very constructive discussion on ways and means to enhance cooperation in the areas of trade, investment and tourism, including the possibility of Turkish Airlines opening a direct route between Istanbul and Chiangmai. They also agreed that the ongoing FTA negotiations should be finalised at the earliest opportunity.

#### **6. The European Union – Strengthening relations and developing comprehensive partnership**

(1) Ms. Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP), attended the 52<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM)/ Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC) held in Bangkok in July 2019 and paid courtesy calls on H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Foreign Minister, and H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, on 1 and 2 August 2019 respectively. Ms. Mogherini was reassured by the Thai side of a positive development in relation to the political situation in Thailand

after the General Election. Both sides discussed issues of mutual interest such as the early signing of the Comprehensive Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and the resumption of the Thai – EU FTA negotiations.

The fruitful discussions between the HR/VP and the Thai PM and FM resulted in the Foreign Affairs Council's (FAC) conclusions on 14 October 2019 which called for the EU to take steps towards broadening its engagement with Thailand by preparing for the timely signature of the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA). The Council also stressed the importance of taking steps towards the resumption of negotiations on an ambitious and comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

(2) On 15 December 2019, Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Foreign Minister, met with Mr. Josep Borrell, HR/VP, during the ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Madrid. The FM took the opportunity to update the HR/VP on the recent political developments in Thailand while reiterating the necessity for the EU and Thailand to step up bilateral engagement following the FAC decision on 14 October 2019 for the mutual interest of both sides. The meeting reaffirmed political commitments at the policy level to enhance bilateral relations between Thailand and the EU, including, among others, the signing of the PCA and the resumption of the FTA. Such a symbolic gesture gave a much-needed political impetus at implementing levels from both sides.

### **2.1.5 American and South Pacific Countries**

#### **1. The Commonwealth of Australia – Paving the way towards strategic partnership and strengthening security and economic cooperation**

(1) The meetings between H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-Cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, and the Honourable Scott Morrison MP, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia, during the past year have helped strengthen the ties between Thailand and Australia. The two leaders met on several occasions, namely the G20 Summit in Osaka, Japan on 29 June 2019, the 74<sup>th</sup> UNGA in New York, USA on 24 September 2019, and the 34<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit in Bangkok, Thailand on 4 November 2019.



Their discussions included Australia's proposal to elevate the relations with Thailand to the level of "Strategic Partnership." Australia is a country with great potential to expand cooperation with Thailand in various sectors, ranging from economics, education, and energy, to science and innovation. Cooperation with Australia will create opportunities for Thailand to develop an innovation-driven economy and raise Thailand's strength as a hub for trade, investment and connectivity in the region.

(2) H.E. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand met his counterpart, the Honourable Marise Payne, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Australia, during the latter's visit to Thailand as a guest of Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 10 January 2019. The meeting took place on 1 August 2019 on the sidelines of the 52<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Post-Ministerial Conferences and Related Meetings in Bangkok. Apart from economic issues, the two Ministers discussed security cooperation, including cyber and digital security, prevention and suppression of narcotic substances, human trafficking, and terrorism. Such cooperation will be enhanced at both bilateral and regional levels, particularly through ASEAN and ACMECS, which will help highlight the constructive roles of both Thailand and Australia.



## 2. New Zealand – Fostering bilateral economic and regional development cooperation

On 3 November 2019, H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-Cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, met with The Right Honourable Jacinda Ardern, MP, Prime Minister of New Zealand, who attended the 14<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit in Bangkok. The Thai Prime Minister used this occasion to foster bilateral cooperation in many areas including trade and investment, the promotion of SMEs, quality improvement of agricultural products, education management as well as enhancing cooperation under the frameworks of Mekong Institute (MI) and ACMECS. New Zealand possesses



strength especially in value addition to farm products and the efficient management of education and environment. Cooperation with New Zealand on these areas will not only enhance Thailand's capacity for economic development but also support Thailand's advantage as a hub for trade and connectivity in the region.



### 3. The United States of America – Reinforcing dynamic relations, strengthening cooperation in trade, investment, and target industries, and enhancing collaboration at the regional and sub-regional levels

(1) The Honorable Michael Pompeo, US Secretary of State paid an official visit as guest of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand to participate in the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conferences and Related Meetings during 31 July-3 August 2019. This was the first official visit of Secretary Pompeo to Thailand as the US Secretary of State.

During his visit, Secretary Pompeo had a bilateral meeting with H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, and paid a courtesy call on H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand on 1 and 2 August 2019 respectively. At the meetings, both sides emphasised the importance of the long-standing relations between Thailand and the US and revisited the close cooperation between the two countries on all fronts, especially security, economic and trade cooperation. Both sides agreed to further strengthen the relations at the bilateral and regional levels and exchanged views on regional issues.



(2) On 3 November 2019, The Honorable Wilbur Ross, US Secretary of Commerce, paid a courtesy call on H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, during his visit to Thailand to attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> Indo-Pacific Business Forum on 4 November 2019. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and ASEAN Related Meetings.

During the courtesy call, Secretary Ross congratulated Thailand on its success as ASEAN Chairman. Both sides expressed their commitment to further strengthen the economic and investment cooperation, especially in the targeted 10+2 industries in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) as well as in the energy sector.



(3) On 4 November 2019, Ambassador Robert O'Brien, Assistant to the President of the United States of America for National Security Affairs, in his capacity as Special Envoy of the President and Head of the United States of America delegation to attend the 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and Related Summits, paid a courtesy call on H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand. Ambassador O'Brien delivered an official note from President Trump commending



Thailand's role as ASEAN Chair and exchanged views with the Prime Minister on strengthening bilateral relations and cooperation.

During the courtesy call, Ambassador O'Brien reiterated the US' commitment to strengthening its strategic partnership with ASEAN and its support for ASEAN centrality. Both sides also discussed bilateral relations, particularly on security and economic cooperation. The Prime Minister reiterated Thailand's commitment on the anti-human trafficking issue.



(4) Thailand and the US co-hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Indo-Pacific Business Forum on 4 November 2019, on the sidelines of the 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and ASEAN Related Summits. Over 1,000 participants from the private sector in Thailand, the US, and countries in the region, as well as representatives from the diplomatic corps and public sector of Thailand and the US joined the Forum. Dr. Kobsak Pootrakool, Deputy Secretary General of the Prime Minister of Thailand represented the Thai Government and gave an opening address along with the Honorable Wilbur Ross, the US Secretary of Commerce, who represented the US Government and gave a keynote address.





The Forum aimed to enhance business and investment opportunities for the private sector, particularly in the areas of digital economy, energy, and infrastructure. It also showcased the governments' roles in promoting a conducive environment for trade, investment, development, and access to capital and financial services as well as Thailand's leading role in promoting development cooperation in the Mekong sub-region.

The meeting presented an opportunity for networking among the public and private sectors of Thailand, the US, and countries in the region, which would help foster trade and investment cooperation both with the US and among countries in the region. The Forum served as a platform for Thailand to showcase its leading role and potential as a strategic development partner of both the US as well as of countries in the region.

## 2.2 Thailand's roles in cultivating peace and security through different forums

### *(2.2.1) Nurturing peace and stability*

- *United Nations framework*

*(1) Mine Ban Convention:* The Ministry of Foreign Affairs acts as a coordinator between the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Mine Ban Convention) and authorities concerned in Thailand including the Thailand Mine Action Center (TMAC), Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and National Institute for Emergency Medicine. The MFA is working to ensure that the authorities concerned can prioritise their work to be in compliance with what is highlighted by the international community. In addition, the Ministry has been working closely with the TMAC to draft and finalise Thailand's annual report to submit to the ISU as one of the obligations under the Convention. The MFA plays a significant role in the implementation of the Mine Ban Convention. As a committed Party to the Convention, Thailand has disposed of all of its retained 3,133 anti-personnel mines this year, as part of the implementation under article 4 of the Convention. Examples of activities carried out by the MFA are as follows:

- Supporting TMAC in its demining operation. In 2019, Thailand returned 142 sq.km. of safe land back to people;

- Supporting TMAC's operation to dispose of all retained 3,133 anti-personnel mines during 1 – 10 August 2019 in accordance with article 4 of the Convention. Therefore, Thailand no longer retains anti-personnel mines;

- Promoting close cooperation with the ISU. On 17 September 2019, the cabinet approved the MFA proposal to continue the country's voluntary contribution of 10,000 Swiss Francs each year to the ISU for four consecutive year from 2020 to 2023;

- At the Review Conference of the Convention in November 2019 in Oslo, Thailand was appointed as a member of the Committee on Victim Assistance for the term 2020-2021.

**(2) Peacekeeping Mission:** Thailand deployed peacekeepers (Horizontal Military Engineering Company: HMEC) to join the United Nations Mission in South Sudan on 22 December 2018. HMEC consists of 273 Thai soldiers, mostly from the engineering corps. Their main responsibilities included road reconstruction and infrastructure building in the United Nations military camp. Apart from the above-mentioned UN mandates, the Thai peacekeepers also promoted development initiatives and the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) initiated by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej The Great to assist in achieving sustained peace which complements Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions). Against this backdrop, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has coordinating roles in (1) peacekeeping related policies within the United Nations through the Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations in New York, (2) the facilitation of mission-related activities upon request from the HMEC through the Royal Thai Embassy in Nairobi and (3) Thai peacekeepers' applications for secondment positions in peacekeeping operations.

- ***ASEAN framework – Peaceful settlement of disputes:***

On 2 November 2019, the Kingdom of Bahrain officially acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) at the 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit and Related Summits in Bangkok and Nonthaburi, Thailand. The Instrument of Accession to the TAC was signed by H.E. Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohamed Al Khalifa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain.



The TAC contains principles on promoting and sustaining regional peace and stability that was originally signed by the five Founding Members of ASEAN in 1976. It was subsequently opened to all countries that have expressed their intent in enhancing their relations with ASEAN. The provisions of the TAC focus on the peaceful settlement of disputes and cooperation in areas of mutual interest within the ASEAN region.

- **OSCE framework – Promoting comprehensive security:** The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is a diplomatic consultative forum through the mechanism of preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution in Europe. The purpose is to promote peace and comprehensive security in the region by preventing crisis and avoiding the use of force among member countries. Thailand as a partner country of OSCE has played an important role as a bridge between ASEAN and OSCE through participation in OSCE meetings, seminars, and projects. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Royal Thai Embassy in Vienna are key drivers through different activities including (1) the OSCE Asian Contact Group in Vienna, Austria, on 1 May 2019 in which Thailand as the Lead Country had Dr. Darnp Sukontasap from the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation deliver a talk under the theme “Advancing Partnership for Sustainable Security” to explore possible ways to strengthen cooperation on security issues between ASEAN and the OSCE. The meeting was an opportunity to showcase Thailand’s role as the ASEAN Chair in promoting security cooperation in all dimensions between ASEAN and OSCE; (2) the OSCE-wide Youth Forum Bratislava – Perspective 20-30: Engaging Youth for a Safer Future during 28 – 29 October 2019 in which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs selected Thai youth representatives to participate in the discussion on building and sustaining peace and comprehensive security; (3) the 2019 OSCE Asian Conference in Tokyo, Japan, during 2 – 3 September 2019 in which the Director-General of the Department of European Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, delivered Thailand’s statement regarding the promotion of cyber security.

- **CICA framework – Peace building and sustainable development:** On 15 June 2019, H.E. Mr. Vijavat Isarabhakdi, Advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in his capacity as the Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, attended the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Many leaders from the region attended the meeting and exchanged views on regional security situation and cooperation within the CICA framework.

In his statement to the meeting, Mr. Vijavat underscored Thailand’s role and contribution to CICA and proposed that CICA gives priority to sustainable development which would help contribute to peace and stability in the Asian region. Thailand as the coordinator for



Confidence Building Measures in the area of sustainable development stands ready to share its experience in following the development path as guided by the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej The Great. Moreover, Thailand can share its experience as the ASEAN Chair under the theme “Advancing Partnership for Sustainability”. Also CICA should consider enhancing cooperation with other regional organisations such as ASEAN, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) which will be beneficial. The meeting adopted the Declaration of the Fifth CICA Summit which outlines the promotion of cooperation among the CICA Member States in various dimensions.

- ***Manama Dialogue framework – Conflict prevention:*** On 22-25 November 2019, Mr. Vijavat Isarabhakdi, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, attended the 15<sup>th</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Manama Dialogue in Manama, the Kingdom of Bahrain, which has been held since 2004 to provide a platform for discussion on security issues in the Middle East among senior decision makers and policymakers from both within the region and beyond.

The 2019 IISS Manama Dialogue was held under the theme “Navigating Competition and Conflict in the Middle East” and has 5 sub-themes, namely (1) Regional Competition and Cooperation (2) Defence Diplomacy and Regional Stability (3) Maritime Security in the Middle East (4) Conflict and Stabilisation in the Middle East Policy and (5) Policy and Alliance Relations in the Middle East.

On the sidelines of the conference, the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs met H.E. Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohamed Al Khalifa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Undersecretary of International Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and Shaikha Rana bint Isa bin Daij Al Khalifa, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain. He also met H.E. Mr. Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

#### ***(2.2.2) Strengthening security in the Southern Border Provinces***

***(1) Supporting Thai students’ activities abroad:*** Supporting Thai students abroad is one of the Ministry’s missions under the Royal Thai Government’s Southern Border Provinces Administration and Development Policy which has been undertaken through various activities for the students by the Royal Thai Embassies and the Royal Thai Consulates-General. The objectives of the activities include empowering students with skill and capacity development for

future career opportunity, strengthening unity among students and raising students' pride as Thai nationals abroad.

In 2019, the Royal Thai Embassies and the Royal Thai Consulates-General in 18 countries, namely Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Jordan, Qatar, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Yemen, UAE, Turkey, Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, and South Africa, along with the Devawongse Varopakarn Institute of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, organised various activities that supported overseas Thai students. These included student welfare and services, instructions on Islamic principles, skill and capacity development, sport activities, education promotion activities such as educational guidance and academic meetings and seminars, and financial support for student clubs or associations, as well as creating channels of engagement between students and government agencies.



Throughout 2019, the Royal Thai Embassies and the Royal Thai Consulates-General in various countries organised activities to support Thai students abroad.

*(2) Promoting understanding of multicultural society in the SBPs:* The Royal Thai Embassy in Ankara led a delegation of Turkish media and academics to visit Thailand during 24 August-2 September 2019 to promote better understanding of the Royal Thai Government's policies on the development of the Southern Border Provinces (SBPs), especially on the issues of the promotion of a multicultural society in the SBPs. The delegation had the opportunity to meet with government agencies to receive firsthand information on the issues of the SBPs and attended an academic session with Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus. Upon the completion of the visit, the media delegates reported positively on their experience and impressions of the SBPs in the Turkish media.







During 24 August – 2 September 2019, the Royal Thai Embassy in Ankara led a delegation of Turkish media and academics to visit Thailand to promote better understanding of the Royal Thai Government’s policies on the development of the Southern Border Provinces (SBPs).

**(3) Developing knowledge on counter-narrative:** During 25 – 28 September 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised a project entitled “Knowledge Development on Counter-Narrative in the Context of Southern Border Provinces”, inviting experts from Australia, Finland and the United Kingdom to give lectures and share experiences on the development of preventive and deterrent measures to counter the narratives that encourage extremism and the use of violence in the SBPs as well as to raise awareness amongst law enforcement officials on the significance, messaging tactics and process of counter-narrative operation. The activity aimed to improve the governmental agencies’ communication strategies to be more people-centred and to take into consideration local contexts such as cultures and religious beliefs. This is considered beneficial to Thai People as a whole since it should help alleviate the risk of radicalisation.







During 25 – 28 September 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised a project entitled “Knowledge Development on Counter-Narrative in the Context of Southern Border Provinces”, in which representatives of various agencies including security, social and cultural sectors participated.

## Chapter 3

## Sustainability

**“Thailand is a centre for trade, investment, and connectivity in Asia, with its innovation-driven economy and sustainable development partnerships.”**

3.1 Promotion of trade, investment, and national competitiveness with a research and innovation driven economy

### 3.1.1 Thai Festivals

- In 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, jointly organised the “Thai Festival 2019: Local Best, Global Taste” in four cities: (1) Tokyo, Japan; (2) Shanghai, China; (3) Bad Homburg, Germany; (4) Hanoi, Vietnam with a view to strengthening Thai local communities. The aim was to promote good Thai products to global markets and to allow entrepreneurs to study market trends and standards. This was done through economic and community-oriented diplomacy.

### 3.1.2 Bilateral economic cooperation

#### (1) Southeast Asia

- **Launching Ceremony of the 24-hour Operation of Sadao Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) checkpoint:** On 17 June 2019, H.E. Mr. Chaisiri Anamarn, Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and Dato’ Marzuki Yahya, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, co-officiated the Launching Ceremony of the 24-hour Operation of Sadao Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) checkpoint in Songkhla Province, Thailand, and Bukit Kayu Hitam Immigration, Customs, Quarantine and Security (ICQS) checkpoint in Kedah state, Malaysia. The one-year trial period for lorries and trailers until 16 June 2020 was introduced to facilitate cross-border transport of goods and enhance trade flow between the two countries. For Thailand, this first time opening of its border with its neighbouring country around-the-clock reflected

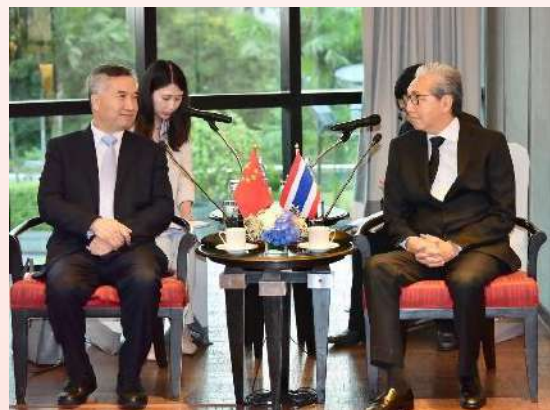
the close and cordial relations between Thailand and Malaysia, translating the shared vision of the two countries' Prime Ministers into concrete outcomes for the benefit of peoples in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia and the economic development in the border areas.



Launching Ceremony of the 24-hour Operation of Sadao Customs,  
Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) checkpoint

## (2) East Asia

- **Official visit by H.E. Mr. Li Xi, Member of the Political Bureau of CPC Central Committee and Secretary of the CPC Guangdong Provincial Committee** : On 8 – 11 June 2019, H.E. Mr. Li Xi, Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Secretary of the CPC Guangdong Provincial Committee paid an official visit to Thailand as guest of H.E. Dr. Somkid Jatusripitak, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand. The purpose of the visit was to promote cooperation between Thailand – China and Thailand – Guangdong. On this occasion, H.E. Mr. Li Xi paid courtesy calls on H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, and H.E. Dr. Somkid Jatusripitak, Deputy Prime Minister, who also hosted a dinner for the delegation, attended by Thai and Guangdong business leaders.





During the courtesy call on the Prime Minister, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to deepen cooperation between Thailand and Guangdong in potential areas such as trade, investment, tourism, the digital economy, e-commerce, technology, innovation, and culture. Both sides also noted that closer cooperation between Thailand and Guangdong would contribute to the strengthening of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Thailand and China. During the meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister, both sides agreed to promote connectivity between China's Greater Bay Area (GBA) and Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) both at the policy and physical levels. This would help enhance connectivity between China and the Ayeyawady – Chao Phraya – Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) and ASEAN countries. Furthermore, cooperation between the GBA and EEC would significantly complement “Thailand 4.0” policy and China's BRI.

- **Visit to Guangdong Province and Hong Kong SAR** : On 22 – 25 October 2019, H.E. Dr. Somkid Jatusripitak, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, visited Guangdong Province and Hong Kong SAR, the People's Republic of China, to promote economic development, investment and tourism cooperation with Thailand, as well as to enhance strategic linkages between the development policies of Thailand and China, especially between Thailand's EEC and China's GBA.



The visits yielded four concrete results as follows: (1) the Guangdong side agreed to upgrade the Working Group between Thailand and Guangdong Province to a ministerial level while the Hong Kong side agreed to establish a high-level cooperation mechanism between Thailand and Hong Kong SAR as proposed by the Thai side (2) the Thai side renewed confidence in the potential and readiness of Thailand to be an investment hub for Chinese and Hong Kong investors (3) the Thai side enhanced understanding amongst leaders in the state and private sectors of Guangdong Province and Hong Kong SAR on Thailand's policies in promoting strategic connectivities between ACMECS and GBA, with Thailand at the center and (4) the signing of the MOU between the

Eastern Economic Corridor Office and the People's Government of Guangdong Province, the MOU between the Eastern Economic Corridor Office and the Federation of Hong Kong Industries and the MOU between the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation and Huawei Technologies, Co. Ltd.

● **Visit by the Honourable Mrs. Carrie Lam, Chief Executive of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region:** On 28 – 29 November 2019, the Honourable Mrs. Carrie Lam, Chief Executive of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China, paid an official visit to Thailand as guest of H.E. Dr. Somkid Jatusripitak, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand. The purpose of the visit was to deliberate further on the issues discussed between both sides during the official visit to Hong Kong SAR by the Deputy Prime Minister during 23 – 25 October 2019 with a view to translating them into concrete outcomes. On the morning of 29 November 2019, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chief Executive of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China co-chaired the inaugural High-Level Joint Committee (HLJC) Meeting at Government House, which was attended by high-level representatives from the public and private sectors of both sides. The meeting discussed ways and means to promote economic cooperation in six key areas, namely (1) trade (2) relocation and investment (3) finance (4) creative industries (5) digital and technology start-ups and (6) human resource development.



After the High-Level Joint Committee Meeting, the Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand and the Chief Executive of Hong Kong Special SAR of the People's Republic of China signed an MOU on Strengthening Economic Relations between Thailand and Hong Kong SAR, covering the above-mentioned areas of cooperation. They also witnessed the signing of five MOUs, namely MOU between the Federation of Thai Industries and the Federation of Hong Kong Industries, MOU on Cooperation between the Office of the Board of Investment of the Kingdom of Thailand and the

Federation of Hong Kong Industries, MOU between Creative Economy Agency (Public Organization) and Hong Kong Trade Development Council, MOU between Creative Economy Agency (Public Organization) and Hong Kong Design Centre on Collaboration on fostering a Creative Economy, and MOU on Promotion of Technology and Innovation Development between National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) and Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTP).

In addition, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong SAR paid a courtesy call on General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand. The Prime Minister of Thailand expressed confidence that the Government of the Hong Kong SAR would be able to appropriately manage challenges and reclaim its role in the international arena. The Chief Executive of Hong Kong SAR expressed gratitude to the Thai side for the continued encouragement and for hosting the inaugural HLJC Meeting, which helped to concretise cooperation between both sides.

- **Visit to the Kansai region (Osaka, Wakayama and Kyoto):** H.E. Mr. Somkid Jatusripitak, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, visited the Kansai region (Osaka, Wakayama and Kyoto) on 30 January – 2 February 2019 to invite investment from Japan’s private sector in the field of innovation in Thailand.



H.E. Mr. Somkid Jatusripitak, Deputy Prime Minister, paid a visit to Osaka Wakayama and Kyoto to meet with high-level officials from public and private sectors in the said three prefectures to strengthen relations between Thailand and Japan at the local level. The Deputy Prime Minister also delivered remarks at a seminar entitled “Thailand: Advancing ASEAN – Japan Partnership” in Osaka Prefecture inviting investment from Japan’s private sectors in the innovation fields in Thailand, particularly in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC). More than 500 people attended the seminar. The Thai delegation visited many companies in the three prefectures.

Following the Deputy Prime Minister’s visit to Japan, the Governor of Wakayama led a business delegation to visit Thailand in May 2019 to explore business opportunities in the Kingdom and, together with the Director-General of the Department of International Trade



Promotion, Ministry of Commerce, signed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in trade and the promotion of SMEs. On this occasion, a number of Kansai-based companies, such as Yamashina Seiki, an SME producing machinery for automobile and medical devices, the executive of which met with the Deputy Prime Minister during his visit to Japan in February 2019, decided to invest in Thailand.

- **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sub-Committee Meeting on General Review under the Japan-Thailand Economic Partnership Agreement (JTEPA)** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, as supervising agency of the JTEPA, commenced the general review process in 2017 in accordance with the Agreement which stipulates that both sides will conduct a general review after 10 years of implementation. In this regard, the two sides established a sub-committee to review and assess JTEPA implementation with a view to amending both old and new chapters of the Agreement, taking into account past and future trends of economic development in both countries, and to propose recommendations to their governments on the next step of JTEPA. The Thai side was led by the Deputy Director-General of the Department of East Asian Affairs while the Japanese side was led by the Deputy Director-General of the Department of Economic Affairs. Three sub-committee meetings were convened. The third meeting was held on 29 – 30 January 2019 in Tokyo in which the sub-committee's report on suggested amendments to each chapter were concluded and both sides agreed to temporarily suspend the general review process until Thailand had a clear position on the accession to CPTPP.

### **(3) South Asia, Central Asia, Middle East, and Africa**

- **The Colours of Africa:** The Department of South Asian, Middle East and African Affairs, in cooperation with seven African Embassies in Bangkok (Egypt, Kenya, Libya, Morocco, Nigeria, Sudan and South Africa), Egypt Air, Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways, South African Airways, Minor Hotel Group, and Central Pattana Public Company Limited organised “The Colours of Africa 2019” event. The main activities of this event included: (1) a student quiz competition, (2) an exhibition on Thailand and Africa Development Cooperation and Thai – African Diplomatic Relations, (3) an art exhibition, (4) exhibition booths, and (5) African cultural and live musical performances. The event aimed to promote a better understanding of the African continent amongst the Thai public, create awareness of trade, investment and tourism opportunities in Africa, as well as enhance cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts between Thailand and Africa.

#### (4) Europe

- **Russian – Thai Business Forum 2019:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand co-hosted the “Russian – Thai Business Forum 2019” with the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation in Bangkok in August 2019. The Forum, which was attended by almost 300 participants from governmental agencies and private companies, was an important venue for pushing forward economic cooperation between Thailand and the Russian Federation in new potential areas such as innovative technologies, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, transport and agriculture. On this occasion, H.E. Mr. Vijavat Isarabhakdi, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, and H.E. Mr. Alexey Gruzdev, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation gave the welcome remarks to the participants during the plenary session.

- **ASEM High-Level Meeting on Marine Sustainability:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand hosted the ASEM High-Level Meeting on Marine Sustainability on 7 – 8 March 2019 at Centara Grand Hotel @ CentralWorld. This meeting provided a platform for high level experts from public and private sectors, international organisations, and other relevant agencies from Asia and Europe to exchange knowledge and best practices and to promote cooperation on marine conservation and sustainability. Particular attention was given to resolving the issue of marine debris. Over 170 participants attended the said meeting.

#### (5) America and South Pacific

- **Discover Latin America (DLA) mobile application:** The Latin American Division, Department of American and South Pacific Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand has developed a mobile application called “Discover Latin America (DLA)”, the first mobile application in Thai language covering information on tourism, geography, culture, economic statistics, and trade and investment opportunities of 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.



The **DLA application** aims to bridge a vast geographical divide between the two regions and to promote a better understanding between Thai and Latin American peoples so that Thailand could further strengthen cooperation in areas of mutual interest, especially in promoting

her “New Market” policy, with the region. The Ministry also organised the DLA official launch on 2 September 2019 at Siam Center to invite the Thai public to download the said application. There were about 120 participants at the launch, comprising representatives from all nine Latin American Embassies in Thailand (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and Peru) and celebrities from diverse sectors. The nine Embassies set up booths to raise awareness of their respective countries, providing tourist information and cultural knowledge to the Thai public.

- **Latin Link Project 2019:** To promote greater commercial exchanges between Thailand and countries in Latin America, the Department of American and South Pacific Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand organised the Latin Link Project 2019 during 1 – 11 June 2019 with the objective of driving forward Thailand’s “New Market” policy in Latin America, and expanding Thailand’s economic footprint in the region. The Department, in close coordination with related Thai Embassies, led a Thai delegation comprising government officials as well as leading business entrepreneurs, a total of 23 persons, to visit Mexico, Brazil and Chile. The delegation learned about the economic potential as well as investment opportunities available in the three countries by taking part in various activities hosted by the three Thai Embassies, namely consultations with policymakers from both government and private sectors in the visited countries, study tours of various economic sectors and business networking with private sectors of those countries.



## 3.2 Building connectivity with the global community, and making Thailand a prominent centre for regional trade, investment, service and connectivity

### 3.2.1 Forging connectivity with neighbouring and friendly countries

- **Expanding cooperation in road and rail connectivity with Cambodia:** On 22 April 2019, H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, and Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, co-presided over a ceremony to mark the completion of the Thailand – Cambodia Friendship Bridge (Ban Nong Ian –



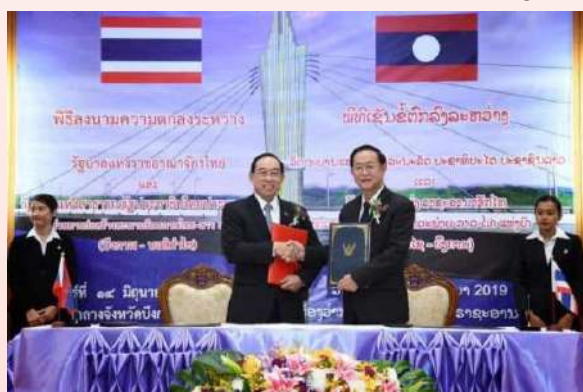
Stung Bot) in Aranyaprathet District, Sa Kaeo Province of Thailand. The new bridge will link Sa Kaeo Province of Thailand with Banteay Meanchey Province of Cambodia.



During the ceremony, the two leaders also witnessed the signing of an Agreement on Joint Traffic Working over Railway between Thailand and Cambodia, and the handover of four Diesel Multiple Units (DMU), the same model that are being used in Thailand. These train units were renovated by the State Railway of Thailand.

The above development will better connect the two countries by road and rail via two additional gateways, namely the Thailand – Cambodia Friendship Bridge (Ban Nong Ian – Stung Bot) and the rail link at Aranyaprathet District, Sa Kaeo Province. The new gateways will facilitate the flow of goods and people between the two countries.

● **Friendship bridge between Thailand and Lao PDR:** On 14 June 2019, H.E. Mr. Arkhom Termpittayapaisith, Minister of Transport of the Kingdom of Thailand, and H.E. Mr. Bounchanh Sinthavong, Minister of Public Works and Transport of the Lao PDR, co-presided over the signing ceremony of an agreement between the two governments on the construction of the 5<sup>th</sup> Friendship Bridge between Thailand's Bueng Kan Province and Laos' Bolikhamxai Province. The signing ceremony took place at Bueng Kan Province. Once completed in 2023, the bridge will provide an alternative route for transboundary transportation which will further enhance economic activities and connectivity for Thailand and Laos as well as for the region.



- On 19 March 2019, H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, and Her Excellency Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of Myanmar, co-presided over a ceremony marking the completion of the construction of the Second Thailand – Myanmar Friendship Bridge Crossing the Moei – Thaungyin River. The ceremony took place in the middle of the newly constructed bridge linking Mae Sot District in Tak Province of Thailand and Myawaddy Town of Myanmar. The Royal Thai Government provided a grant of 4.132 billion baht for the construction of the bridge and necessary facilities on both sides of the border. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand provided a further 3.9 million baht in financial support for the purchase of equipment for the Border Control Facilities Building on the Myanmar side. The Second Friendship Bridge will help reduce congestion at the First Friendship Bridge, facilitate an increase in cross-border trade, and promote connectivity along the East – West Economic Corridor (EWEC).



### 3.2.2 Promoting sub-regional, regional, and inter-regional connectivity

- **The Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation:** H.E. Gen. Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, together with H.E. Mr. Somkid Jatusripitak, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, H.E. Mr. Arkhom Termpittayapaisith, Minister of Transport of Thailand, H.E. Dr. Pichet Durongkaveroj, Minister of the Digital Economy and Society of Thailand and H.E. Ms. Chutima Bunyapraphasara, Deputy Minister of Commerce of Thailand, attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> Belt and Road Forum (BRF) for International Cooperation under the theme “Shaping a Brighter Shared Future” in Beijing, People’s Republic of China during 25 – 27 April 2019. The meeting was also attended by leaders from 38 countries, special envoys from 7 countries, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to discuss cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) for concrete outcomes.



On 26 April 2019, the Prime Minister attended the High-Level Meeting and delivered remarks as the chair of ASEAN in 2019, noting the similarity between ASEAN and BRI principles and focusing on cooperation to achieve prosperity, peace, and a shared future. In his speech, the Prime Minister emphasised the principle of equality and respect for multilateralism and noted the importance of promoting connectivity in all areas, namely policy, infrastructure, laws and regulations, digital connectivity, and people-to-people exchanges, as key to bring about sustainable development, as well as to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. He also suggested expediting the implementation of the ASEAN Master Plan on Connectivity 2025 (MPAC 2025) and the ACMECS Master Plan (2019 – 2023), as well as establishing a sustainable financing mechanism for the development of high-quality infrastructure.

On the same day, the Prime Minister had bilateral meetings with H.E. Mr. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, and H.E. Mr. Li Keqiang, Premier of the People's Republic of China. Both sides discussed Thailand's development policies which are in line with those of the BRI, especially in the area of connectivity. The Prime Minister emphasised Thailand's role as the hub of Southeast Asia and requested the Chinese side to look after Thai investors in China, support Thai-Sino railway cooperation, as well as tripartite cooperation between Thailand, China and Japan on the flagship project to construct a high-speed railway linking 3 airports in Thailand in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) which can serve as a model of cooperation in the region. Moreover, H.E. Mr. Han Zheng, Vice Premier of the People's Republic of China, hosted a working lunch in honour of the Prime Minister and his delegation. The Prime Minister also met with H.E. Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and H.E. Mr. Khaltmaa Battulga, President of Mongolia, at the meeting.

On 27 April 2019, the Prime Minister attended the Leader's Round Table session I entitled "Boosting Connectivity to Explore New Sources of Growth" and delivered remarks which focused on Thailand's role in enhancing connectivity within the country, as well as in the region and beyond, especially by elevating the EEC as a connecting hub. He also suggested that the BRI support capacity building in the business sector, facilitate trade and investment, enhance digital connectivity, set up a sustainable financing mechanism, and promote human resource development to support development projects. The high-speed railways project connecting 3 airports can be considered a successful model of economic cooperation between China and Japan in a third country, which could be applied to other projects for tangible results.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand represented the Prime Minister at the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Leader's Round Table meeting. The 2<sup>nd</sup> session entitled "Strengthening



Policy Synergy and Building Closer Partnership,” was organised as a working lunch where leaders from many countries were informed about the signing of agreements and memorandums of understanding between their countries and China to promote cooperation under the BRI, and synergy between the BRI and their development policies.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the meeting entitled “Promoting Green and Sustainable Development to Implement the UN 2030 Agenda” for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, which requires constructive cooperation from all stakeholders. The meeting also adopted the Joint Communique of the 2<sup>nd</sup> BRF Meeting, which reviews past achievements and sets the future direction of cooperation under the BRI in 5 areas, namely (1) strengthening development policy synergy, (2) boosting infrastructure connectivity, (3) promoting sustainable development, (4) strengthening practical cooperation, and (5) advancing people-to-people exchanges.

On 25 May 2019, China also hosted 12 thematic forums, attended by 5,000 people from 150 countries, to discuss ways to enhance connectivity in areas such as policy, infrastructure, digital, trade and financing mechanisms. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand attended the Thematic Forum on Policy Connectivity and delivered remarks commending the success of the BRI which has produced concrete results in many areas, including the promotion of multidimensional connectivity. He also suggested that 4 elements be taken into account for future cooperation under the BRI, namely (1) respecting domestic priorities and the needs of every country, (2) safeguarding multilateralism, (3) promoting sustainable development to achieve the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and (4) promoting the synchronisation of various development and connectivity policies and initiatives or “Connecting the Connectivities.” He also informed the meeting of the tripartite cooperation between Thailand, China and Japan on the flagship project to construct high speed railways linking 3 airports in the EEC, which can be considered as a model of cooperation and partnership between the public and private sectors (PPP). This model can be applied to BRI projects and other initiatives to achieve the 5Ps of the Global Agenda, namely People, Partnerships, Peace, Prosperity and Planet.





- **The 11<sup>th</sup> Mekong – Japan Summit:** On 4 November 2019, H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, attended the 11<sup>th</sup> Mekong – Japan Summit which was co-chaired by H.E. General Prayuth Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, and H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, and was attended by the Prime Minister of Cambodia, the Prime Minister of the Lao PDR, the State Counsellor of Myanmar, and the Prime Minister of Vietnam.



The Meeting reviewed the progress achieved under the Tokyo Strategy 2018 for Mekong – Japan Cooperation, particularly under the 3 main pillars, namely (1) Vibrant and Effective Connectivity (2) People-Centered Society and (3) Realization of a Green Mekong. Also discussed were ways and means to drive forward cooperation as well as manage regional and global issues that could affect peace and stability of Mekong – Japan Cooperation such as the situation in the Korean Peninsula and developments in the South China Sea. The Prime Minister reiterated Thailand's readiness to work closely with Japan as ACMECS Development Partner. He also provided some recommendations to drive forward Mekong – Japan Cooperation through the promotion of quality infrastructure development along the East – West Economic Corridor (EWEC), the Southern Economic Corridor (SEC), and the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC). The Prime Minister also encouraged the Mekong countries to expedite their internal procedures to implement the Early Harvest of the Cross-



Border Transport Agreement (CBTA) with a view to facilitating the exchange of goods, services, and people, and expressed Thailand's readiness to cooperate with Japan in co-hosting the Mekong – Japan SDGs Forum which will provide opportunities for various stakeholders to exchange views and best practices in achieving sustainable development. The Meeting adopted two outcome documents, namely (1) the Joint Statement of the 11<sup>th</sup> Mekong – Japan Summit and (2) the Mekong – Japan Initiative for SDGs toward 2030.

- **The 1<sup>st</sup> Mekong – Republic of Korea Summit:** H.E. General Prayuth Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand attended the 1<sup>st</sup> Mekong – ROK Summit as co-chair with the ROK during 26 – 27 November 2019 in Busan, Republic of Korea. This inaugural Summit, since its inception in 2011, reflects the importance of cooperation between the Mekong countries and the ROK as it is elevated to the highest level.

In this regard, the Prime Minister presented 3 main proposals in accordance with the 3 Pillars of the ROK's New Southern Policy and Mekong – ROK Vision: (1) Under the People Pillar, the Prime Minister proposed a target to double the number of student exchanges in the next 5 years and pledged to support the implementation of universal health coverage (UHC) and share experience with the Mekong countries; (2) Under the Prosperity Pillar, the Prime Minister proposed that the Mekong countries utilise the ROK's best practices on innovation and digital technology for the development and value-creation of our SMEs and MSMEs, and (3) Under the Peace Pillar, the Prime Minister proposed that the Mekong countries should make use of the ROK's advanced Space and Geographic Information technologies for water resource management and long-term forecasting of flood and drought.



The leaders adopted the Mekong – Han River Declaration as the outcome document of the Summit to underscore their visions and commitment in forging a partnership to drive Mekong – ROK cooperation forward in line with ACMECS. They reprioritised Mekong – ROK cooperation into 3 pillars and 7 new areas to address on-going challenges and endorsed



establishment of the Mekong – ROK Biodiversity Center, Mekong – ROK Water Resources Joint Research Center, and Mekong – ROK Business Council to facilitate future cooperation.

After the Summit, the leaders attended a special exhibition on Biodiversity Cooperation between Mekong countries and the ROK that showcased the biodiversity of the Mekong countries. On the section about Thailand, the Exhibition showcased ‘Pim Saen Balm’ as an example of value-creation for Thai indigenous herbs through the application of technology.

### **3.3 Thailand is a sustainable development partner with other countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals**

#### **3.3.1 International sustainable development cooperation**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs promoted sustainable development at home and abroad. At the national level, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs set up an Open-Ended Working Group for Sustainable Development (OWEG for SDGs), comprising representatives from the government sector and civil society. The OEWG has ensured the inclusion of all stakeholders in promoting awareness and implementation of the SDGs in an integrated manner. At the international level, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs conducted the following activities:

##### **(1) Bilateral and Trilateral Cooperation**

In promoting sustainable development cooperation with partners and former donors as well as international organisations under the United Nations and other international organisations including regional cooperation frameworks, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs focused on human resource development and the raising of economic and social living standards of developing countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to attain long-lasting security and balanced happiness.

In 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had bilateral cooperation projects with 30 countries and trilateral cooperation projects with 28 partners, including developing countries as South-South cooperation and former donors and 9 international organisations under the United Nations and other international organisations to help the third countries. Details and project samples are as follows:

**(1.1) Development Cooperation Programme in Rakhine:** The programme consists of 4 projects, namely 1) Project on Public Health Cooperation in Rakhine, 2) Project on Rice Mill Development in Rakhine, 3) Project on the Development of Shrimp Culture in Rakhine, and 4) SEP Project on Sustainable Community Development in Rakhine.

In 2019, mobile medical units were dispatched twice under the Project on Public Health Cooperation in Rakhine. Medical teams (physicians, pediatricists, nurses, otolaryngologists, oculists, and pharmacists) from Rajavithi Hospital, Queen Sirikit National Institute of Child Health (1<sup>st</sup> team) during 12 – 18 March 2019, and Nopparatrajathanee Hospital (2<sup>nd</sup> team) during 11 – 17 November 2019 treated a total 1,745 patients. In addition, the community rice mill was successfully established, along with the preparation for the establishment of a shrimp farming demonstration centre and SEP learning centre. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Royal Development Projects and Security Coordination Center, also organised a training programme for government and community leaders.

**(1.2) Project on Skill Development along the Borders of Thailand – Cambodia – Laos – Myanmar:** This was a project that matched the border provinces of Thailand and neighbouring countries, with the Skill Development Provincial Offices as focal agencies in organising training courses using the Skill Development Department's curriculum. The courses focused on productivity enhancement, industrial production, and services. The targeted groups were (1) labourers from neighbouring countries working in Thailand and 2) skilled and unregistered labourers/ other labourers in the neighbouring countries to serve the needs of the Thai business and industrial sectors along the border and to enhance the competitiveness of Thai entrepreneurs. During 2016 – 2018, a total of 2,822 persons were trained.

**(1.3) Project on Artificial Reef in Ca Mau, Vietnam:** This project aimed to solve fishery issues between Thailand and Vietnam. The project included academic exchanges on developing and restoring marine and coastal resources and capacity building for Vietnam in controlling and managing marine and coastal resources.





Mobile medical unit dispatched under the Project on Public Health Cooperation in Rakhine

The said activities were successful in alleviating a fragile situation in neighbouring countries which might affect Thailand's security. It helped the people from the neighbouring countries who participated in the activities to have a better quality of life. The activities helped them gain knowledge to earn income for themselves and for their communities, building trust and cordial relations and being a successful showcase of sustainable development cooperation abroad.

## (2) Regional Cooperation

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs promoted deliberations and actions on the SEP for SDGs at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), which serves as a crucial mechanism for regional dialogue and the exchange of policy recommendations and experiences. Thailand also proposed resolutions on issues of national importance to promote sustainable development in the region at the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) and the annual ESCAP Commission.

- **APEC Concluding Senior Officials' Meeting or CSOM 2019:** The Director-General of the Department of International Economic Affairs attended the APEC Concluding Senior Officials' Meeting on 7 December 2019 in Singapore, the last meeting under the chairmanship of Chile in 2019. Following Chile's announcement of its decision to cancel the 27<sup>th</sup> APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Chile due to its political situation, it was agreed that the CSOM would be held at the APEC Secretariat in Singapore. The meeting endorsed three outcome documents, namely (1) the La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth (2019 – 2030); (2) APEC Roadmap on Marine Debris, and (3) APEC Roadmap on Combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, all of which fully complements Thailand's national agendas. Furthermore, the meeting also endorsed the independent report of the APEC Vision Group (AVG). This report will be an important



starting point in the development of the APEC Post-2020 Vision, a document which will set APEC's directions in the next 20 years after the Bogor Goals matures in 2020.



- The Director-General of the Department of International Economic Affairs attended the APEC Informal Senior Officials' Meeting during 10 – 11 December 2019 in Langkawi, Malaysia. It was the first meeting under the chairmanship of Malaysia in 2020. Malaysia announced the APEC 2020 Theme “Optimising Human Potential for a Future of Shared Prosperity”, with a focus on three priority areas: (1) improving the narrative of trade and investment; (2) inclusive economic participation through digital economy and technology; and (3) driving innovative sustainability.

The meeting supported Malaysia's role as Chair and welcomed the annual theme and priorities proposed by Malaysia, all of which fully complements Thailand's national agendas, in particular those relating to the digital economy, green economy, circular economy, as well as addressing the emerging challenges arising from the increasing influence of technology and innovation on people's everyday lives.



Malaysia introduced the “Beyond GDP” concept to initiate discussions on the possibility of an alternative indicator for growth, in which the social and environmental factors will be taken into consideration.

On the Post-2020 Vision, Malaysia approached New Zealand and Thailand, as incoming Chairs in 2021 and 2022, respectively, to support Malaysia in developing the zero draft of the said

document. Thailand will be placed in the spotlight with the leading role in developing the main document of APEC.

We will soon be commencing the preparations for assuming our chairmanship in 2022, mindful that such preparations should be systematic, in line with the direction of APEC, and responsive to the global trends.

### **3.3.2 Sufficiency Economy Philosophy for Sustainable Development Goals**

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs promoted the application of Thailand's home-grown approach of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at key events on the international stage. This included the SDG Summit, at which the Prime Minister joined other leaders in endorsing the High-Level Political Declaration in order to underline Thailand's commitment in achieving the SDGs. Thailand also delivered a statement on behalf of ASEAN at the summit, as well as at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs aims to build cooperation partnership based on the application of SEP to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by cooperating with international partners and sharing resources, expertise, capacity, and participation on bilateral and trilateral projects, raising awareness, and building strength, self-reliance, and immunity in the countries and joint development areas through 3 forms of activities.

**(1) SEP-based Projects Abroad (continued):** There were 14 targeted countries, namely Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Tonga, Fiji, Solomon Island, Vanuatu, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Lesotho, Benin, and Mongolia. The projects were (1) the Establishment of SEP Learning Centers in Laos, Myanmar, Tonga, Fiji, Lesotho, and Mozambique, and (2) the Sustainable Community Development Model based on the Application of SEP in Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Benin, and Mongolia (in cooperation with Germany – GIZ).

#### **(2) Promotion of SEP through Human Resource Development Projects:**

**(2.1) Annual International Training Courses (AITC):** The course focused on knowledge and experience sharing on the application of SEP for sustainable development in various sectors such as community development and agriculture. A total of 113 participants from 50 countries took part in the following 7 courses:

(1) Sufficiency Economy Philosophy towards a Sustainable Development (12 – 16 March 2019);

(2) Sustainable Community-based Ecotourism Development (30 April – 15 May 2019);

(3) Sufficiency Economy Practices in Community-based and Economic Development (6 May – 7 June 2019);

(4) The Integration of Sufficiency Economy for Empowerment on Mobilizing Sustainable Development (10 – 28 June 2019);

(5) Community-based Microcredit and Sufficiency Economy Development (23 June – 6 July 2019);

(6) Sufficiency Economy to Sustainable and Disability-Inclusive Development (15 – 28 September 2019), and

(7) Sufficiency Economy Philosophy: Tool for Sustainable Rural Development (29 October – 21 November 2019)

**(2.2) Thailand International Postgraduate Programme (TIPP):** with 26 recipients from 14 countries, including 8 new recipients and 18 continued recipients through the following 6 courses:

(1) Master of Bioscience for Sustainable Agriculture, Silpakorn University, focusing on SEP in agricultural problems and solutions;

(2) Master of Science in Sustainable Land Use and Natural Resources, Kasetsart University, focusing on soil and natural resource management;

(3) Master of Science in Tropical Agriculture, Kasetsart University, focusing on food security, income, and well-being of humans with sustainable natural resource management;

(4) Master of Rural Development Management, Khon Kaen University, focusing on SEP application;

(5) Master of Science Program in Agriculture, Khon Kaen University, focusing on research to find new technology and philosophy, and

(6) Master of Arts in Environmental Development and Sustainability, Chulalongkorn University, focusing on environmental and sustainable development study. The total of AITC and TIPP recipients were 157 from 55 countries.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Cambodia, Chile, Cote D'Ivoire, Ecuador, Egypt, Eswatini, Gambia, Georgia, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, the Philippines, Russia, Rwanda, Samoa, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine, Vietnam, Zambia, and Zimbabwe



### (2.3) SEP for SDGs Partnership Promotion in Thailand and Abroad

(1) Lecture on “Development Diplomacy” for diplomats from targeted countries in the Asia-Pacific, Africa, Europe, and Latin America, to build knowledge and understanding on Thailand’s role as development partner, on 5 March 2019 at the Devawongse Varopakarn Institute of Foreign Affairs;

(2) Exhibition on SEP for SDGs Partnership at the UN Global South-South Development Expo (GSSD Expo) 2018, during 28 – 30 November 2018 at the UN Headquarters in New York;

(3) Exhibition on SEP for SDGs Partnership at the Second High-Level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40 Conference), during 20 – 22 March 2019 in Buenos Aires, Argentina;

(4) Exhibition on SEP for SDGs Partnership at the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) 2019, during 27 – 29 March 2019 at ESCAP, and SEP for SDGs Partnership at the 75<sup>th</sup> Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, during 27 – 29 May 2019;

(5) Exhibition at the European Development Days 2019 (EDD 2019), during 18 – 19 June 2019, in Brussels, Belgium, and

(6) Exhibition at the Open House on SEP for SDGs Driving, during 9 – 11 July 2019 at Bangkok Arts and Culture Center, Bangkok.

Partner countries and the international community recognise Thailand’s capacity and creative role as development partner for sustainable development, goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), with SEP as the development guideline. In 2019, 5 more countries applied SEP for sustainable development in their countries – the Philippines, Bhutan, Brunei, Senegal (trilateral cooperation between Thailand – Japan (JICA) – Senegal), and Lao PDR (trilateral cooperation between Thailand – Luxembourg (LuxDev) – Lao PDR), with 28 projects in 47 areas of 18 countries.

Thailand could develop networks and mechanisms, as well as enhancing capacity of government officials, academic institutions, and youth volunteers in universally applying SEP in sustainable development abroad. In 2019, more government agencies and academic institutions participated in the activities, such as Royal Development Projects and Security Coordination Center, Maejo University, and Kasetsart University Kamphaeng Saen Campus. In addition, the number of Friends from Thailand (FFT) increased from 6 in 2018 to 13 persons in 2019.



Study visit of Mr. Kolinio Gata Takali, Fiji High Commissioner-designate of Malaysia to the Kingdom of Thailand, to a school farm based on the application of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy in Ratchaburi Province on 1 February 2019



Study visit of Tongan Delegation, led by HRH Prince Ata, to the Royal-initiated Demonstration Farm Project at Ang Thong Province on 2 May 2019

## Chapter 4

## Standards

### **“Thailand’s development is in line with her international commitments and the nation has a proactive role in setting international standards.”**

#### 4.1 Developing knowledge and best practices in accordance with international obligations and standards

- **ASEM Seminar on Enhancing Human Capital for Sustainable Digital Connectivity:**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand hosted the ASEM Seminar on Enhancing Human Capital for Sustainable Digital Connectivity on 25 October 2019. The seminar provided a platform for Asia and Europe to exchange views and best practices regarding how to promote sustainable digital connectivity in anticipation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution. Particular attention was given to the areas of building human capital, digital economy and cybersecurity. High level experts who participated in the panel discussions included representatives from public and private sectors, international organisations, and other relevant agencies from Asia and Europe. Over 250 participants attended the meeting. The seminar strengthened Thailand’s proactive role in promoting knowledge and best practices according to international law and standards between Asia and Europe, raising the standards that will support the digital age such as digital literacy development, creation of regulatory frameworks conducive for the digital economy, and strengthening cybersecurity.

#### 4.2 Enhancing agencies’ capacity and improving laws in compliance with international obligations and standards

- **The First and the Second Thai – EU Joint Working Group Meeting on Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU Fishing):** Representatives of the Department of the European Affairs joined Thailand’s delegation for the First and the Second Thai – EU Joint Working



Group Meeting on Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU Fishing). Held on 13 – 15 February 2019 and 9 – 10 December 2019 respectively, the meetings were established as a cooperative platform for Thailand and the European Union to discuss, exchange knowledge and advance cooperation on comprehensive aspects of combating IUU fishing following the lifting of Thailand's yellow card. During the meeting, the Thai delegation presented Thailand's progress in combating IUU fishing in various aspects, such as monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), control of overseas fishing, fleet management, traceability, law enforcement and cooperation with third countries and international organisations. The delegation also took this opportunity to respond to the EU's questions and comments in order to increase the EU side's confidence in Thailand's fishery reform and assure the EU of continuity in Thailand's efforts and actions against IUU fishing.

- **Fisheries curriculum for shipmasters and newly-recruited fishing vessel workers:**

With a view to enhancing Thailand's capacity in tackling illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing), the Department of European Affairs, in collaboration with the Department of Fisheries and Kasetsart University, developed a fisheries curriculum for shipmasters and newly-recruited fishing vessel workers between 17 May and 12 November 2019. The curriculum encompasses essential information for shipmasters, newly-recruited fishing vessel workers, and vessel owners. It includes, for instance, the use of fishing gear and fishing technologies, Thai and international laws relevant to fisheries and labour standards, as well as safety and hygienic conditions. In developing the curriculum, the Department of European Affairs invited Dr. Karsten Zumholz, Director of Fischereischule, Rendsburg, Germany, an expert in the field, to Thailand to give recommendations. The aforementioned curriculum is due to be publicised by relevant agencies e.g. the Department of Fisheries, the Ministry of Labour, National Fisheries Association of Thailand and National Farmers Council.

The curriculum will enhance the fishing vessel workers' fishing skills and give a greater understanding of sustainable fishery and the prevention of IUU fishing, addressing port-in and port-out reporting, fishing data recording and how to use the vessel monitoring system. In addition, this curriculum will equip the workers with knowledge on their legal rights and duties, as well as decent working conditions, in line with international obligations, such as the ILO's Work in Fishing Convention No. 188. This in turn will help prevent the exploitation of workers.

- **Thailand promoted standards and best practices on migration issues:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand played a significant coordinating role in formulating Thailand's position and pledges to solve the problems of statelessness and migration. In collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised a meeting

which provided a platform for the exchange of best practices on the management of international migration that could be applied depending on the context of each country. The activities are summarised as follows:

**(1) Regional Preparatory Meeting for the 2019 High-Level Segment on Statelessness:** H.E. Mr. Thani Thongphakdi, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, delivered opening remarks at the Meeting, organised on 31 May 2019 in Bangkok by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Deputy Permanent Secretary stressed that preventing and reducing statelessness is a shared responsibility that requires strong commitment. On Thailand's part, the Royal Thai Government has integrated the stateless into society and provided them with access to fundamental rights and social services, such as access to education, healthcare, and employment. The Deputy Permanent Secretary encouraged member states and all concerned parties to commit further to working towards ending statelessness.

The Meeting was attended by 116 representatives, including government officials from 16 countries in the Asia-Pacific region as well as representatives of relevant international organisations, academia and civil society. The Meeting was organised this year to mark the midpoint of UNHCR's 10-year #IBelong Campaign to end statelessness by 2024. The achievements and progress made by States were showcased, and best practices in eradicating and preventing statelessness were shared among the participants, which helped raise the awareness about statelessness issues in the region and prepare for concrete commitments or possible pledges made at the High-Level Segment on Statelessness organised in October 2019 in Geneva.

**(2) The 70<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme:** On 9 October 2019, H.E. Mr. Sek Wannamethee, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations in Geneva, as head of the Thai delegation, stated Thailand's 7 pledges<sup>1</sup> at the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of Executive Committee (the High-Level Segment on Statelessness was held in the first day on 7 October 2019) in Geneva, Switzerland. The pledges included, for instance, equal access to education and social protection to stateless people.

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<sup>1</sup> Thailand's 7 pledges are : (1) to promote access to education for stateless children (2) to enhance social protection for stateless persons (3) to adjust regulations for granting nationality and civil rights to cover target groups to access naturalization process equally and equitably (4) to enhance effectiveness of the systems to facilitate stateless persons to access civil registration services (5) to expedite process to address statelessness among the elderly (6) to enhance partnership among all sectors of the society to raise awareness on the roles, duties, rights, and process regarding birth and civil registration of stateless persons, especially the hard-to-reach population and (7) to promote international and regional cooperation in addressing statelessness.

**(3) The 1<sup>st</sup> Global Refugee Forum:** General Somsak Roongsita, Secretary-General, Office of the National Security Council, lead the Thai delegation to the 1<sup>st</sup> Global Refugee Forum during 17 – 18 December 2019. A representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also participated in the Forum, in which Thailand announced its 8 pledges<sup>2</sup> which included, for example, equal access to justice and alternative to detention measures for youth. The pledges indicate Thailand's strong commitment to solving statelessness and migration issues, which are global concerns, and reflected what Thailand has been undertaking with tangible outcomes such as:

- ***Enhancing cooperation in the repatriation process of Myanmar Displaced Persons (MDPs)*** – Thailand and Myanmar have been working to promote the return of the MDPs in a safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable manner. Between 2016 and 2019, a total of 1,039 MDPs voluntarily returned to Myanmar. Success of the return demonstrated the continued efforts of both governments, driven by the Thailand – Myanmar Joint Working Group on the Preparation of the Return of Myanmar Displaced Persons. On 6 March 2019, H.E. Mrs. Busaya Mathelin, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and H.E. U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, co-chaired the Third Meeting of the Thailand – Myanmar Joint Working Group on the Preparation of the Return of Myanmar Displaced Persons in Chiang Rai Province. The agreed results included (1) a definite time frame on the return to be undertaken at least twice a year, prior to and after the monsoon season (2) the legal employment of Myanmar displaced persons in Thailand after their return to Myanmar, and (3) cooperation in the establishment of learning centres and community development projects based on the application of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) in Tanintharyi Region, Mon State and Kayin State.

- ***Effective application of alternatives to detention measures for children in need of international protection*** – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has played a crucial role in promoting the implementation and integration of alternative measures and approaches to the

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<sup>2</sup> Thailand's 8 pledges are (1) continuing work to ensure mutual recognition of educational certificates and documents for children of Myanmar displaced persons (2) providing employment opportunities for returnees in accordance with laws and regulations and relevant trainings prior to their return to Myanmar (3) enhancing cooperation in the repatriation process of Myanmar displaced persons (4) development-led approach to help prepare receiving areas for Myanmar displaced persons and local communities (5) enhancing capacity-building of officers involved in implementing the national screening system (6) effective application of alternatives to detention measures for children in need of international protection (7) provision of access to age-appropriate health care for children in need of international protection in Thailand and (8) justice care.



detention of children, taking into account the best interests of the child and international standards, in particular to the obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to which Thailand is a state party. Such measures are in line with the pledges made by H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, at the Leaders' Summit on Refugees held during the 71<sup>st</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in 2016. As a result, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Determination of Measures and Approaches Alternative to Detention of Children in Immigration Detention Centres was jointly signed on 21 January 2019 by seven government agencies, namely, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of the Interior and the Royal Thai Police, demonstrating Thailand's strong commitment on non-detention of children in Immigration Detention Centres.

**(4) *Regional Workshop on the Voluntary Repatriation of Refugees*:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs co-hosted the Regional Workshop on the Voluntary Repatriation of Refugees together with the UNHCR on 25 October 2019. The workshop was attended by approximately 80 representatives consisting of government officials from refugee hosting countries, countries of origin and donor countries from Asia and beyond, representatives from international organisations, academia and former refugees, the European Union and the World Bank. The workshop provided an opportunity for participants involved with or having experience in the return of refugees to gain an understanding of the complexities surrounding the process of voluntary repatriation. It was also a good opportunity to identify supporting conditions and necessary support needed for the success of voluntary repatriation, which could be useful for practical application into respective refugee situations in each country.

● **Regional Dialogue on the National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up, Bangkok (29 – 30 August 2019):** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Regional Office for South-East Asia co-hosted the Regional Dialogue on the National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up in Bangkok on 29-30 August 2019. The dialogue was attended by approximately 50 participants from relevant agencies in 12 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, namely Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Vietnam, as well as representatives from relevant Thai agencies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and the Courts of Justice. This initiative reflected Thailand's constructive role in disseminating knowledge regarding NMRFs in the region and beyond. The dialogue provided a platform to exchange good practices and lessons learned in utilizing NMRFs,

build capacities of line agencies, and deliver inputs to relevant forums such as the Human Rights Council. In addition, the dialogue strengthened the network of government agencies responsible for implementing, reporting and following up a country's human rights obligations and recommendations.

● **Responsible Business and Human Rights (RBHR) Forum:** The Department of International Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, together with the Ministry of Justice of Thailand, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) co-hosted the Responsible Business and Human Rights (RBHR) Forum during 12 – 13 June 2019 at the United Nations Conference Center, Bangkok.

Several aspects of human rights and responsible business conduct were discussed at the RBHR Forum, such as the role of government and private sectors in fostering responsible business conduct, including how to support SMEs and reduce their costs in managing the businesses responsibly; and the role of private sector in achieving the SDGs. Moreover, best practices in several business sectors and on various specific issues were discussed during the deep-dive breakout sessions such as due diligence in agriculture and the food sector, infrastructure and electronic components, etc.

Hosting the RBHR Forum reflects Thailand's determination to promote human rights among business partners as well as Thailand's excellent collaboration with various international organisations in building momentum in Asia upon this matter. It is worth mentioning that this is the first RBHR Forum to be held outside the OECD Headquarter in Paris which further emphasised Thailand's leading role as Thailand is the first country in Asia to adopt the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP). The Forum received great attention and was a resounding success, with over 700 registered participants from 60 countries around the world.



● **Improvement of standards of investment protection:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs proposed the establishment of the Committee on the Protection of International Investment and the issuance of the Regulation of the Office of the Prime Minister on Work Relating to the Protection of International Investments B.E. 2562 (2019). The government established a Committee on the Protection of International Investment, presided over by the Deputy Prime Minister appointed by the Prime Minister, to serve as a policy tool to overseeing investment protection policies and investment disputes. The enactment of the Regulation of the Office of the Prime Minister on Work Relating to the Protection of International Investments B.E. 2562 (2019) was published in the Royal Gazette on 28 February 2019. This established the Committee on the Protection of International Investment, with the Director-General of the Department of International Economic Affairs serving as committee member and secretary. This will enhance the effectiveness and continuity of domestic investment protection, provide coherence among relevant authorities according to national interests, as well as prevent and resolve international investment disputes and claims by foreign investors.



## Chapter 5

## Status

### **“Thailand’s status and dignity is recognised and well accepted by the international community.”**

#### 5.1 Thailand is a centre and destination of international meetings and organisations in the region

● **Development Equality:** Thailand was proud to be host country to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), with the 75<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission held during 27 – 31 May 2019 at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, under the theme “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”. The Commission session was attended by approximately 650 participants from 47 Member States and 2 associate members, as well as other various stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific.

At the Commission session, Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn graciously attended the opening ceremony and delivered a special address on Her Royal Highness’s first-hand and extensive experience in various areas of development, which was highly praised by the meeting. The Thai delegation actively participated in the deliberations, as well as shared Thailand’s visions and best practices through its country statement, the tabling of three resolutions, participation in various side-events and the organisation of exhibitions.

In the country statement, Mr. Thani Thongphakdi, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, stressed the importance of empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality as a means to achieve sustainable development. He highlighted the country’s best practices, including the 20-year National Strategy (2017 – 2037), basic education, the Universal Health Coverage scheme, a value-based economy driven by science, technology and innovation (STI), a whole-of-society approach or "Pracharath" initiative promoting Public – Private – People Partnerships to address inequality and achieve the SDGs, and sub-regional, regional and inter-regional cooperation to achieve the SDGs and leave no one behind.

The Meeting adopted 9 Resolutions, including the 3 tabled by Thailand, namely (1) Advancing partnerships within and across regions for the sustainable development of Asia and the Pacific (2) Advancing science, technology and innovation for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (3) Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, and the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018 – 2030).

## **5.2 Thailand and its people are well recognised in the international community**

### **5.2.1 Royal Coronation Ceremony**

- **Facilitation for diplomatic missions and spouses at the Coronation of King Rama X:** On the occasion of the Coronation of King Rama X, the Department of Protocol was assigned to (1) invite the diplomatic missions, consular representatives and international organisations, and their spouses to a Royal audience with His Majesty the King on the Coronation of King Rama X on 4 May 2019 (2) invite the diplomatic missions, consular representatives and international organizations to the Royal Barge Procession on 12 December 2019 at Suan Luang Rama VIII. In this regard, the Department of Protocol organized briefings for the diplomatic missions and spouses to provide information, explain ceremonial procedures and advise on regulations and prohibited actions. The Department of Protocol prepared a document containing all the administrative arrangements in English for the diplomatic missions and spouses, prior to the afore-mentioned Royal functions.

The Department of Protocol successfully facilitated and rendered assistance to the heads of diplomatic missions and their spouses during the Royal audiences with His Majesty the King as part of the Royal Coronation Ceremony. The dignitaries expressed compliments on the splendor and elegance of the Royal Coronation Ceremony which portrayed the delicateness of Thai culture and traditions. Furthermore, the dignitaries witnessed first-hand the love and admiration that the people have towards the Monarchy. These activities clearly demonstrated the importance of the Monarchy to the Thai people and the essence of Thainess through the diplomatic missions.



Foreign diplomatic missions and their spouses were granted Royal audiences with His Majesty the King at the Royal Coronation Ceremony on 6 May 2019 at the Royal Palace, after the briefing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand.

### 5.2.2 Policy making and implementation in the international community

- **Promoting multilateral cooperation and sustainable development:** On 21 – 27 September 2019, H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, headed the Thai delegation to the 74<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 74) at the United Nations Headquarters, New York. The Prime Minister was accompanied by H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and H.E. Mr. Varawut Silpa-archa, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand. The theme of the 74<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly was “Galvanizing multilateral efforts for poverty eradication, quality education, climate action and inclusion.”

The Prime Minister attended and delivered statements in three major high-level meetings as follows:

**(1) High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** The Prime Minister delivered a speech addressing Thailand’s UHC experiences that have been guided by the following three principles: equity, efficiency and participation by all stakeholders. Thailand stands ready to share its knowledge and experiences on its people-centred UHC system.

**(2) SDG Summit 2019** The Prime Minister delivered a statement on behalf of ASEAN Member States highlighting ASEAN’s efforts to achieve the SDGs under the theme “Advancing Partnership for Sustainability” and to enhance complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda.

**(3) UN Climate Action Summit 2019** The Prime Minister delivered a statement on behalf of the ASEAN Member States announcing key ASEAN targets on climate action in two sectors,



namely: **(1) Energy Transition** — ASEAN aims to reduce energy intensity by 30% and increase the component of renewable energy mix by 23% by 2025; **(2) Land Transport** — ASEAN aims to reduce the average fuel consumption of new light-duty vehicles sold in ASEAN by 26% between 2015 and 2025.

On this occasion, the Prime Minister also had bilateral meetings with Her Majesty Queen Máxima of the Netherlands, the Honourable Scott John Morrison MP, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia, H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, H.E. Mr. António Guterres, the United Nations Secretary-General and H.E. Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of the 74<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, also attended the three major high-level meetings along with the Prime Minister. The Minister co-chaired the 2<sup>nd</sup> panel multi-stakeholder discussion entitled “Accelerating multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder action and investments for achieving UHC” with H.E. Dr. Adolfo Rubinstein, Secretary of Government for Health of Argentina. The Minister also attended the High-level Commemorative Event on the Occasion of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

During the UNGA 74, the Minister attended a number of meetings under the ASEAN framework, namely the Informal ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (IAMM), the ASEAN – UN Ministerial Meeting (AUMM) and the ASEAN – Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Ministerial Meeting. In addition, the Minister co-chaired a side event entitled “Regional Dimension in Achieving SDGs: From Lessons Learned to Practical Action in the ASEAN Region and Beyond” with Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of ESCAP.

The Minister also had bilateral meetings with Deputy Prime Ministers and Ministers of Foreign Affairs of various countries, namely Bulgaria, Romania, Grenada, Kuwait, Morocco, Guatemala, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, Bahrain and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar. During his delivery of Thailand's statement at the General Debate of the 74<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Minister stressed the importance of multilateral partnership and cooperation to address global challenges such as climate change, natural disasters and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As the Chair of ASEAN in 2019, Thailand initiated the theme “Advancing Partnership for Sustainability,” highlighting partnerships as a tool for achieving sustainable development.

- **Policy making and implementation on climate change:** Thailand recognises that climate change is a common challenge for the global community. Therefore, as Chair of ASEAN in 2019, Thailand strived to enhance ASEAN climate action. In this regard, the Prime Minister delivered

a statement on behalf of the ASEAN Member States announcing key ASEAN targets on climate action in the energy sector and land transport sector at the United Nations Climate Action Summit 2019, which was held on 23 September 2019 at the United Nations Headquarters, New York. The ASEAN Joint Statement to the United Nations Climate Action Summit 2019 was initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to emphasise the role of ASEAN as a partner for sustainable development in international forums, consistent with Thailand's ASEAN Chairmanship theme of "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability".

- **Asia-Europe cooperation in building effective multilateralism:** H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs, attended the 14<sup>th</sup> ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting (ASEM FMM14) from 15 – 16 December 2019 in Madrid, Spain. The theme of the meeting was "Asia and Europe: Together for effective multilateralism". Thailand was able to showcase her vision and concretize her leading role in the multilateral platform through the Minister of Foreign Affairs' intervention during the 1<sup>st</sup> Plenary Session entitled, "Revitalising the multilateral system – advancing the ASEM partnership on global issues". The Minister took this opportunity to promote Thailand's policy priorities as ASEAN Chair in 2019. His suggestion included the strengthening of effective multilateral approaches on such issues as (1) a new multilateralism based on shared prosperity and environmental sustainability (2) the sustainability of things through connectivity between Asia and Europe to achieve the SDGs along with the strengthening the regulations of multilateral trade with WTO playing central roles and the promotion of Bio-Circular-Green Economy (3) global cooperation in solving environmental issues with emphasis on ocean governance and marine debris as well as the reduction of socio-economic gaps and the promotion of social and economic equality, connectivity, digital access, and human resource development. It was suggested that this should be done in tandem with the promotion of confidence building among ASEM members on the basis of the principles of mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual interests.

- **ASEAN – G20 cooperation in sustainable trade and development:** H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, as the Chair of ASEAN 2019, attended the G20 Osaka Summit during 28 – 29 June 2019, at the invitation of the Japanese government. H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, joined the delegation. The G20 Osaka Summit addressed four main themes: (1) Global Economy, Trade and Investment (2) Innovation, Digital Economy and Artificial Intelligence (3) Addressing Inequalities and Realizing Inclusive and Sustainable World and (4) Environment, Climate Change and Energy.

The Prime Minister's intervention highlighted the outcome of the 34<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit held in Bangkok during 22 – 23 June 2019, which emphasised the importance of international

cooperation to promote economic stability, inclusiveness and sustainable growth. This idea formed the basis for the theme of Thailand's ASEAN Chairmanship "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability," and the two outcome documents endorsed by the ASEAN leaders, namely the ASEAN Leaders' Vision Statement on Partnership for Sustainability and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific". To realise the concepts of these documents, the Prime Minister proposed greater cooperation between ASEAN and G20 members, especially those that are ASEAN Dialogue Partners, to promote long-term stability and sustainable economic growth, such as continuing trade liberalisation by concluding the RCEP, strengthening the multilateral trading system through WTO reform, enhancing connectivities, reducing inequalities, preparing for an ageing society, promoting sustainable use of marine resources, and combatting marine debris.

In addition, the Prime Minister proposed 3 areas of cooperation where ASEAN and the G20 can exchange best practices in order to concretise the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, namely (1) promoting the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN), (2) enhancing financial inclusion, and (3) promoting sustainable use and conservation of marine resources. The Prime Minister's proposals resulted in three concrete projects as follows:

- On 22 – 24 August 2019, the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society in collaboration with the Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Energy of Thailand hosted the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN) Conference and Exhibition in Bangkok. G20 countries, including the USA, China, Japan, and ROK, attended to share their experiences and best practices on smart city development.

- On 5 September 2019, the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion, in collaboration with the ASEAN Business Advisory Council, the Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, hosted a Conference on the topic of "ASEAN MSMEs in the Digital Era: Challenges and Opportunities" in Bangkok. A panelist from Japan shared experiences on financial technology for inclusivity and representatives from G20 countries also attended the conference.

- On 9 September 2019, the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council of Thailand, in collaboration with the World Bank and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), hosted the ASEAN High-Level Meeting on Human Capital Development in Bangkok. G20 countries were invited to the meeting.



### 5.2.3 Cultural heritage at the international level

● **The inscription of “Nuad Thai” on UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity:** On 11 December 2019, at the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICS-ICH) in Bogota, Republic of Colombia, “Nuad Thai, Traditional Thai Massage” was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (RL) under UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003.

The inscription will contribute significantly to the international recognition of Nuad Thai’s value and importance as intangible cultural heritage on healthcare, and also promote the learning, access, development and safeguarding of Nuad Thai for future generations.

The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was endorsed by the UNESCO General Conference on 17 October 2003 in Paris, with the objectives of safeguarding the practices, expressions, knowledge and skills which are recognized as part of the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of a community or group. The Convention also aims to build respect and recognition for the ICH at the local and international levels, and to promote international cooperation in safeguarding them. ICH comprises forms of verbal expression, language, art performance, social practices, religious ceremonies, celebrations and handicrafts.

Thailand became a party to the Convention on 10 September 2016. At present, Thailand has inscribed 2 listings in the RL, namely Khon, masked dance drama in Thailand (2018), and Nuad Thai, traditional Thai massage (2019).

### 5.2.4 International positions of Thailand and its personnel

● **PR campaigns for Thailand’s ASEAN Chairmanship (1 January – 31 December 2019):** As ASEAN Chair in 2019, Thailand, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Public Relations Department and other concerned agencies from public and private sectors, produced and released media products to raise public awareness on Thailand’s ASEAN Chairmanship and its deliverables, the outcome of the 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits and Related meetings as well as important issues including marine debris, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. The media products were produced and publicised through a variety of platforms namely:

- Promotional spots by Thai artists and influencers which were shown on television and LED screens on BTS sky trains, major LED screens around Bangkok, LED screens in major department stores and airports in Bangkok and other main cities;

- Documentaries about different aspects of ASEAN which were released on key television channels and social media platforms;

- Welcoming messages on billboards and outdoor advertising boards such as street view light boxes and MUPIs to promote the 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits and to welcome leaders and representatives who attended the meetings;
- “Rapstar ASEAN” game show on Workpoint TV and its social media outlets;
- Radio spots;
- Saranrom journals;
- Articles and interviews promoting the 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits and 52<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in print media, websites and online channels of the Nation Media Group;
- Coordination of special interviews by high-level officials for television and radio programs in Thai and English;
- Infographics, motiongraphics and media products which were released on CNBC, CNN, CNA and Euronews and international press such as Time and Monocle;
- Thailand's ASEAN Chairmanship 2019 Interactive Kiosks at Thailand’s leading department stores;
- Souvenirs with the logo of Thailand’s ASEAN Chairmanship;
- Social Media Unit (SMU) to monitor “ASEAN2019TH” Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, website, Instagram), the official platform to promote Thailand's ASEAN Chairmanship.

In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs set up a media center and provided the necessary facilities to Thai and foreign media during the 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN summits, the 52<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Retreat, and Related Meetings.



Media Products on promoting Thailand’s ASEAN Chairmanship, such as promotional spots, billboards, special interview programs, and infographics

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs widely promoted Thailand's ASEAN Chairmanship and the theme "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability" via all platforms throughout the year. Various activities were organised to raise public awareness on the importance of the ASEAN Community and participation of all stakeholders to move ASEAN forward as well as the role of Thailand and key achievements under Thailand's Chairmanship.



Media Centre and broadcasting services during the 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit

- **Thailand's Candidatures to International Organizations:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched campaigns to support and promote Thai individuals and organisations to hold positions at several international organisations. Being elected to various positions under the United Nations system enhances Thailand's status and dignity and promotes Thailand's engagement with the international community. By participating in international standards setting, Thailand and the Thai people will benefit from the exchange of best practices and experiences which will further promote sustainable development in the country. Taking part in various mechanisms in international organizations will also provide opportunities to further promote Thai identity and culture within the international community.

In 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with relevant government agencies, actively campaigned for Thailand in the elections to various international organisations. Thailand was successful in nine candidatures for the membership of (1) the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the term 2020 – 2022, (2) the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) for the term 2020 – 2023, (3) the UN World Tourism Organization Executive Committee for the term 2020 – 2023, (4) the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Executive Committee for the term 2019 – 2023, (5) the UNESCO Executive Board for the term 2019 – 2023, (6) the World Heritage Committee (WHC) for the term 2019 – 2023, (7) the Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for the term 2020 – 2021, (8) the



UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board for the term 2020 – 2023 and (9) the Executive Committee of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) for the term 2020 – 2024.

## 5.3 Promoting the Thai identity and understanding about Thailand

### 5.3.1 Reinforcing relations through religious legacies

- **Enhancing Regional Cooperation through Buddhism:** The Ministry helped promote close and cordial relations between Thailand and its neighbours, as well as other countries with Buddhist backgrounds, through the Offering Ceremony of the Royal Kathina Robes which were graciously bestowed by His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua. In 2019, the Ministry organized these Offering Ceremonies of the Royal Kathina Robes in 6 countries, namely the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the Republic of India, Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The Ceremonies were grand and dignified, with great respect for His Majesty the King, who is not only the great patron of Buddhism in Thailand but also an emissary who helped forge closer relations with other countries.

In addition, the Ministry supported projects of Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates-General that aimed to promote cooperation in Buddhism and strengthen people-to-people contact. These events helped promote Thailand's role as a supporter of tradition and cultural heritage.



Mr. Vijavat Isarabhakdi, Vice Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, presided over the Royal Kathina Robes Offering Ceremony at Wat Ounalom, Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia



Mrs. Busaya Mathelin, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, presided over the Royal Kathina Robes Offering Ceremony at Zabuaye Pariyatti Sar Thin Taik Monastery in Thanlyin, Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

### 5.3.2 Promoting Thai culture and identity

- **Enhancing Thailand's status through cultural diplomacy:** The promotion of Thai culture as a rich source of soft power has been an integral part of the Ministry's Cultural Diplomacy. The Ministry places importance on promoting potential areas of Thai culture such as fashion design, the Thai film industry and Muay Thai. Activities and projects were organised in various countries in 2019 as follows:

- Promotion of Thai cultural performances and Thai textiles in the State of Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain, and Japan
- Promotion of Muay Thai in the Republic of Kenya, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Republic of Mozambique, and the Republic of South Africa, as well as in the Republic of Croatia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany



The Muay Thai roadshow in the Republic of Kenya, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Republic of Mozambique and the Republic of South Africa

- Promotion of Thai films in Jakarta, Shanghai, Phnom Penh and Hanoi



The Opening Ceremony of Thai Film Week in Shanghai, People's Republic of China

These activities aimed to introduce and promote better understanding of Thailand among the general public in other countries, which in turn helped strengthen bilateral relations and cultural cooperation between Thailand and these countries, both at the government-to-government and people-to-people levels. They also added to efforts to promote business potential, an appreciation of “Thainess” and Thailand’s interests in the multilateral arena.

- **Thailand at the forefront:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and the Royal Thai Embassy in Tokyo, organised the “Thai Textiles: A Touch of Thai” event at Tokyo National Museum on 19 August 2019 to showcase Thai textiles from traditional to contemporary. The event honoured Her Majesty Queen Sirikit the Queen Mother’s efforts in preserving Thai textiles and promoted Thai culture in Japan. It also aimed to enhance cooperation on Thai textiles in Japan, which is one of the world’s technological innovation and fashion design hubs.

The event was a prime example of proactive activities that the Ministry had organized in 2019 to highlight the strength of Thai culture in support of Thailand’s branding. Not only did it draw the attention of the international community and put Thailand on the radar but it also reflected Thailand’s unique cultural identity and quality products and services, which in turn helped foster goodwill towards Thailand and the Thai people and created opportunities for Thai businesses.





The fashion show and demonstration of Thai silk production process at the event of Thai Textile:  
A Touch of Thai in Tokyo, Japan

### 5.3.3 Providing information about Thailand

- **Promoting understanding about Thailand's highest national institution – the monarchy:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised proactive projects to enhance understanding about the monarchy in various aspects, especially in developing the country and the people's quality of life, as well as the close bonds between the monarchy and the people. The projects contributed to the strengthening of national solidarity and the dissemination of concepts, knowledge, and best practices of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) abroad. The adoption or application of the SEP by foreign countries will strengthen the universal value of the philosophy. Throughout 2019, the following projects were undertaken:

(1) **The presentation and dissemination of the SEP and Royal Initiative Projects as a homegrown concept to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).** Projects included:

- “Less Is More”, a documentary series in 10 episodes to deepen the understanding about Thai mentality and characteristics, especially SEP. The programme was broadcast on Thairath TV and shared on social media platforms of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Royal Thai Embassies and Royal Thai Consulates-General, to reach a wider audience overseas.
- Special lectures on the monarchy, particularly on its role in national development and improving the people's well-being, were given to the Thai community living abroad in several locations. As invited experts, Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul, Secretary-General of the Chaipattana Foundation delivered a lecture in the United Arab Emirates on 6 – 10 February 2019; M.L. Dispanadda Diskul, Chief Executive Officer of Mae Fah Luang Foundation under Royal Patronage lectured in the United States of America and Japan during 7 – 16 September 2019; and Mr. Tej

Bunnag, Assistant Secretary General of the Thai Red Cross, lectured in the People's Republic of China during 19 – 24 September 2019.



Special lectures on the role of the monarchy in national development and improving the people's well-being by Dr. Sumet Tantivejku, Secretary-General of the Chaipattana Foundation, in the United Arab Emirates

**(2) Exhibition and pamphlets:** 96 exhibition sets in Thai and English as well as pamphlets in Japanese and Chinese were produced and sent to Royal Thai Embassies, Permanent Missions, Consulates-General and Thailand Trade and Economic Office to be displayed on the auspicious occasions of the Coronation Ceremony in 2019 and His Majesty the King's Birthday on 28 July 2019. The exhibitions included His Majesty King Rama X's biography, royal duties, and information on the Coronation Ceremony, which is a highly regarded and esteemed example of traditional Thai culture and royal custom. They helped promote better understanding on Thailand's national institution as well as disperse information on the role of the monarchy in national development. They also gave Thai communities overseas an opportunity to join the celebrations and express their loyalty through their attendance.



The exhibition on the Coronation Ceremony of King Rama X put on display by the Royal Thai Embassy, Prague, Czech Republic



(3) **Study visit for the heads of diplomatic missions and spouses to Phang-nga and Phuket Provinces:** The Department of Protocol led a group of 71 heads of diplomatic missions and spouses from 45 countries, along with executives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on a study visit to the Royally-initiated Projects in Phang-nga and Phuket Provinces during 30 March – 1 April 2019. The heads of diplomatic missions and spouses had the opportunity to learn first-hand how various Royally-initiated projects have contributed to the sustainable livelihoods of local communities under the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP). The Chaipattana – Thai Red Cross Village was an excellent demonstration of how SEP played a critical role in the recovery of victims and the livelihoods of those affected by the 2004 tsunami at Baan Tung Rak. They also visited the Kuraburi Chaipat Hospital and Kuraburi Chaipattana Pittayakom School in Phang-nga Province.

In Phuket Province, the heads of diplomatic missions and spouses visited the local Muslim fishing community at Baan Sarm Chong Nuea, a model for balanced co-existence with the ecosystem. Here the villagers have developed local methods of preserving daily catches, turning raw materials into ready-to-eat and sellable products, ranging from shrimp paste to tea and soap derived from local ingredients. While in old town Phuket, they experienced the rich history of the different groups of people during a visit to the Museum Phuket and by watching local cultural performances such as Nora. Furthermore, the dignitaries visited the Sea Turtle Conservation Centre, initiated by Her Majesty Queen Sirikit.

The heads of diplomatic missions and spouses who participated in the study visit, were impressed with all the activities in the programme. They learned and understood more regarding the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej The Great through the visit to the Chaipattana – Thai Red Cross Village (Baan Tung Rak) in Phang-nga Province where SEP has been applied to support the sustainable development and livelihoods of the local communities. The visits to the various Royally-initiated projects made the dignitaries realise how much His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej The Great cared for His people.

Furthermore, the heads of diplomatic missions and spouses had the opportunity to learn about the history, art and culture, and economic and touristic potential in the southern Provinces of Thailand, in particular the country's possibility of serving as a hub for marine and cruise tourism in Asia. The heads of diplomatic missions appreciated and supported the study visit project which helped to enhance friendship and cooperation between the Ministry's officials and the Heads of Missions, as well as creating positive perspectives towards Thailand.



- **Promoting Thailand's constructive engagement with the Muslim community:**

The Department of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised activities and projects to promote a better understanding about Thailand's multicultural society and freedom of religion. It aimed to support balanced and unprejudiced understanding among foreigners in order to mitigate the possibilities of the situation in the Southern Border Provinces being distorted and exploited in international forums.

(1) Projects to support Muslim associations/organisations in Thailand as follows:

- In 2019, the Ministry supported the Muslim Association of Al-Quran Reader of Thailand under the Patronage of the Sheikhul Islam of Thailand in participating in the Al-Quran reading and memorising competitions overseas, including in the Republic of Indonesia, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the State of Kuwait, Malaysia and Negara Brunei Darussalam. The Ministry also supported their organisation of national Al-Quran reading competitions in Thailand. These projects provided opportunities for Thai Al-Quran readers to further practice their skills. In addition, they helped strengthen people-to-people contact and build networks with the Muslim community, which helped boost Thailand's image as a pluralistic society where freedom of religion is valued.



Representatives from the Muslim Association of Al-Quran Reader of Thailand under the Patronage of the Sheikhul Islam of Thailand participated in the 62<sup>nd</sup> Al-Quran Reading Competition in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

- On 18 September 2019, the Sheikhul Islam Office of Thailand organized the “Meet the Ambassador” event to enhance understanding about the Muslim community in Thailand among Ambassadors from Muslim countries residing in Thailand.

(2) Activities to enhance understanding about Thailand's multicultural society were as follows:

- A youth essay competition on the topic "Volunteerism among Thai Muslim Youths: Contributions to the Society" and a photo competition on the topic of "Thai Muslims and the ASEAN Identity". Selected excerpts from the essays and photos were compiled into a colourful notebook sent to Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates-General, as well as public agencies for distribution.



The winning photo "Raya-Fitr at Krue Se Mosque" on the topic of "Thai Muslims and the ASEAN Identity"

- Production of a documentary series entitled "Diversity United", presenting stories about the Thai Muslim community. It was broadcast on Channel 5 and shared on social media such as YouTube, Thailandtoday.in.th, and the facebook pages of Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates-General all over the world.

- Radio broadcasting of 22 special episodes for Muslim audiences during Ramadan during 6 May – 4 June 2019 (Monday to Friday for 30 minutes daily).

- **Enhancing the understanding of foreign media about the government's major policies:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported the 5<sup>th</sup> Bloomberg ASEAN Business Summit (ABS), held on 21 June 2019 at Waldorf Astoria Hotel in Bangkok. It was attended by participants from public, private and academic sectors.

At the summit, the Prime Minister delivered his first speech in an international event after being elected as Prime Minister for the second term, and on the occasion of Thailand's assuming the ASEAN Chairmanship. The speech was entitled "The Future of Thailand and ASEAN". Public and private executives from ASEAN member states and dialogue partners were given an opportunity to present ASEAN's and Thailand's economic potential, thus boosting confidence in

Thailand's preparedness on important issues including the fourth industrial revolution, social inclusiveness, digital transformation, startups, and SMEs.

The speech of the Prime Minister attracted much interest from the public and foreign media, who highlighted several issues from the speech in their news reports, such as the continuity of government policies and political stability, Thailand's positive democratic progress resulting from the general election, advancement of the Eastern Economic Corridor and high-speed railway linking three airports, positive prospects of the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET), preparedness of Thailand and ASEAN amidst uncertainties of trade protectionism and conflict, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations. The Prime Minister's vision on Thailand's readiness in terms of economic policies and political stability after the elections significantly strengthened the confidence of the business sector.



The Prime Minister delivered a speech during the 5<sup>th</sup> Bloomberg ASEAN Business Summit.

- **Thailand's 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle Universal Periodic Review Midterm Report:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs submitted Thailand's 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle Universal Periodic Review Midterm Report to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and presented it during a side event entitled "From Geneva to the ground: Strengthening national implementation through UPR mid-term reporting" during the 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva on 28 February 2019. This initiative illustrated Thailand's constructive role in working collaboratively with UN agencies and stakeholders and encouraging the international community to make use of the UPR process. It further encouraged all concerned actors in implementing recommendations and expanded the networking among government agencies and civil society organisations.



#### 5.3.4 Diplomatic and media networking

- On 27 September 2019, Mr. Sasiwat Wongsinsawat, Director-General of the Department of European Affairs, hosted a reception in honor of the European Ambassadors and diplomats to Thailand at Vithes Samosorn, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. The objectives of this event were to promote networking, strengthen ties, and foster good relationship among participants from both Thai and European sides.

There were more than 150 participants including European Ambassadors and Embassies' representatives as well as CEOs and senior officials from Thai government agencies and private companies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, Board of Trade of Thailand, Federation of Industry of Thailand, Franco-Thai Chamber of Commerce, Thai-Russian Chamber of Commerce, Charoen Pokphand Foods Public Co. Ltd. (CPF), Thai Beverage Public Co., Ltd., Kasikorn Bank, Siam Michelin Co., Ltd., Double A, and Gran-Monte Winery.

The Director-General extended a warm welcome to all participants, and reiterated that the Department of European Affairs was fully supportive of any cooperation that would help strengthen the ties between Thailand and European countries. With determination, the Department of European Affairs will always be a reliable contact point and a bridge connecting European embassies and delegations with Thai agencies. Moreover, the Department expressed willingness to support activities organised by European embassies.

Mr. Kobsak Pootrakool, Deputy Secretary-General to the Prime Minister for Political Affairs, gave a special talk entitled "An Overview of Thailand's Economic and Investment Policy". The talk provided updated information on the Thai Government's economic policy as well as infrastructure and connectivity projects which will make Thailand a gateway to the region. Mr. Pootrakool also invited European businesses to invest in Thailand, especially in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC).

- **Building confidence and cooperation networks with the media**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked to promote understanding by providing accurate information on Thailand, Thai citizens abroad and international issues pertaining to Thailand for the Thai and foreign public as well as the media. The activities included: coordinating media interviews with the Ministry's officials, organizing press conferences by the spokesperson, and issuing press releases as well as explanation or clarification on important issues of public concerns and awareness. The Ministry also coordinated news coverage by Thai media agencies during high-level visits or international conferences. In addition, in order to promote cooperation networks and exchange views, best practices, and information with foreign media, a delegation from the

Department of Information visited Beijing and Shanghai, People's Republic of China during 13 – 18 May 2019, in an exchange program with Xinhua News Agency. Furthermore, the Ministry improved the MFA Media Online Service (MMOS) to accommodate foreign media with a systematic on-line registration process to obtain or renew a media visa.

The success of both proactive and responsive measures undertaken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in building confidence and cooperation networks with the media have raised awareness of Thai public and private sectors on the issues of interest to Thailand. Likewise, foreigners have gained a better understanding of the policy and actions of the Royal Thai Government in coping with such issues of concern as the fight against the illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. This confidence is reflected in Thailand's higher international rankings, with Thailand moving up to 25<sup>th</sup> place in the 2019 IMD World Competitiveness Ranking (30<sup>th</sup> in 2018) and 21<sup>st</sup> in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index (26<sup>th</sup> in 2018).



Press conference and meet-the-press events by the Foreign Ministry Spokesperson



Landing page of MFA Media Online Service (MMOS) for foreign media visa application or extension

## 5.4 Humanitarian assistance

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is Thailand's key organization in the consideration of disaster relief cooperation. In 2019, Thailand provided financial assistance to the following countries:

- (1) 100,000 US dollars to the Republic of Mozambique towards disaster relief efforts following Cyclone Idai;

- (2) 150,000 US dollars to help the Rohingya people in the People's Republic of Bangladesh;

- (3) 100,000 US dollars to the Islamic Republic of Iran towards flood relief efforts;

- (4) 20,000 US dollars to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to support flood relief efforts.



## Chapter 6

## Synergy

### **“Thailand adopts a unified approach to drive the nation’s foreign affairs and strengthens all aspects of cooperation with partners.”**

6.1 Promoting efficiency, integration, and good governance in government agencies and propelling foreign affairs by people and public diplomacy

#### 6.1.1 Collaboration in knowledge building and policy formation

- **Capacity-Building Programme “Workshop on Treaty Body Reporting”:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights organised the 2<sup>nd</sup> Capacity-Building Programme: Workshop on Treaty Body Reporting at the Royal Princess Lamluang Hotel in Bangkok on 25 – 27 March 2019. About 40 government officers in charge of reporting on the country’s implementation of human rights treaty obligations attended the workshop.

By providing participants with the opportunity to learn about the UN treaty body system, including its benefits, procedures and coordination mechanisms, as well as to exchange views and good practices regarding the preparation of periodic national reports, the workshop supported the national implementation of Thailand’s human rights obligations. As in the previous year, this activity equipped the participants with skills necessary for treaty body reporting through activities such as mock sessions.

- **2019 United Nations Regional Course in International Law for Asia-Pacific:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and the United Nations co-hosted the 2019 United Nations Regional Course in International Law for Asia Pacific on 18 November – 13 December 2019 at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok. The programme enabled government lawyers and

academics in international law to deepen their knowledge in various fields of international law such as the law of treaties, international economic and investment law, law of the sea and international humanitarian law. There were a total of 25 participants from countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including officials from Thai government agencies. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand has co-hosted the programme annually for four consecutive years.



Apart from enabling Thai lawyers to develop their knowledge and capacity in international law, the programme also provided an opportunity to exchange experiences and build networks among lawyers from developing countries and emerging economies within the Asia-Pacific region.

- Seminar entitled “Legal principles and guidelines for officials working along the border areas between Thailand – Cambodia and Thailand – Laos”:





The Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, organised a seminar entitled “Legal principles and guidelines for officials working along the border areas between Thailand – Cambodia and Thailand – Laos” in Ubon Ratchathani Province, on 15 – 17 May 2017. The seminar consisted of (1) lectures on the boundary issues and border management conducted by representatives from the Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs, Royal Thai Survey Department, Office of National Security Council etc. and (2) discussions on the boundary issues between the representatives of the agencies and participants. There were at least 100 participants in the seminar.

- **Seminar entitled “Enhancing the network of relevant agencies for the reception of foreign dignitaries”:** On 28 March 2019, the Department of Protocol organized a seminar entitled “Enhancing the network of relevant agencies for the reception of foreign dignitaries” at Pullman Bangkok King Power Hotel. More than 31 agencies from both public and private sectors attended the social seminar to exchange information, experiences and best practices regarding the reception of important foreign dignitaries. The objective of the seminar was to create mutual understanding and common ground between agencies concerned on matters related to the visits of foreign dignitaries as guests of the Royal Thai Government, the utilisation of a special form as a tool for airport facilitation and the creation of an ASEAN Lane at the Suvarnabhumi Airport, among others, in order to improve protocol practices to meet international standards.



Seminar entitled “Enhancing the network of relevant agencies for the reception of foreign dignitaries” on 28 March 2019



The seminar was very productive. Participants actively exchanged information, experiences, and best practices. It paved the way for the preparation of Thailand's ASEAN Chairmanship and the hosting of all ASEAN meetings, especially the 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits, in 2019. Moreover, the seminar strengthened the network between the Department of Protocol and relevant agencies, resulting in fast and effective coordination. The exchange of visits is one of the core mechanisms for the successful conduct of international relations, therefore the reception of foreign dignitaries plays an important role in this.

- **Seminar entitled “Thailand’s Future under Trade Friction”:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI) co-organised a seminar entitled “Thailand’s Future on Trade Friction” at Vithes Samosorn, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to disseminate knowledge and promote understanding of the volatile state of the global economy caused by the US – China trade friction, which has impacted regional economies, including Thailand. Speakers from the TDRI, public sector, private sector and civil society exchanged views on JTEPA and other Free Trade Agreements that Thailand was in the process of negotiating or would be interested to join. Thailand’s participation in these agreements will be useful in alleviating the impact of trade friction on the Thai economy and in supporting government's policy decisions and private sector’s business operation. Publications and an e-book on the seminar by TDRI are available at <https://tdri.or.th/41057/>



6.1.2 H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn graciously presided over the opening ceremony and an exhibition which marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Young Ambassadors of Virtue Foundation (YAVF) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



On 1 November 2019, H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn graciously presided over the opening ceremony for an exhibition which marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Young Ambassadors of Virtue Foundation (YAVF) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ceremony was attended by distinguished guests, teachers and students from YAVF's network schools from all over Thailand, and members of the diplomatic missions in Bangkok. For over 20 years, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has fully supported the Young Ambassadors of Virtue Foundation's activities and projects to instill morality, together with knowledge and skills, among the participating Thai youth to ensure they become responsible and competent individuals in society.



### 6.1.3 Promoting participatory projects

- In 2019, H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited schools in the Young Ambassadors of Virtue Foundation network in Chiang Mai and Kanchanaburi. The visits promoted interactions and increased communication channels between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the schools as well as the local communities. They also raised awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a global agenda and to highlight its importance and relations to the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP).



The Minister of Foreign Affairs visited schools during the Buakaew Outreach Projects in Chiang Mai and Kanchanaburi.

- **ASEM Day celebration activities with the Young Ambassadors of Virtue Foundation:** The Department of European Affairs held activities to celebrate ASEM Day in collaboration with the Young Ambassadors of Virtue Foundation on 24 April 2019 at Puparn Royal Development Study Centre, Sakon Nakhon Province and on 13 August 2019 at Anuban Singburi School, Sing Buri Province. These activities aimed to raise awareness about ASEM among the Thai youth in various provinces through entertaining animation and interactive games encompassing the origins of ASEM and the various dimensions of partnerships between Asia and Europe. The key tangible result of these activities was that the Thai youth became aware of the Asia – Europe Meeting (ASEM) and learned how they can benefit from various projects under the ASEM umbrella. They also became more aware about the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the possibility of them becoming more involved in the making of Thai foreign policy in the future.



## 6.2 Improving foreign affairs services, protecting and promoting the interests of Thai nationals abroad

### 6.2.1 Protecting Thai nationals abroad

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) supervised the Royal Thai Embassies, Royal Thai Consulates-General, and Thai Trade and Economic Office in their obligation as the overseas Damrongtham Centres to provide support to Thai nationals who required assistance, including in cases of emergency. Assistance to ensure the safe and timely repatriation of Thai nationals is done through the collaboration of relevant agencies.

In 2019, the Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates-General provided assistance to 20,451 Thai nationals abroad, most of whom were people facing general challenges, those who had been arrested, or those having difficulties relating to labor issues respectively. In addition, the MFA successfully repatriated 15 Thai students from Libya due to domestic unrest and 18 Thai stranded fishing crews from Somalia. The latter was in collaboration with the International Organization of Migration (IOM) which ensured safe and timely results.



Repatriation of Thai students from Libya



Rescuing of Thai fishing crews from Somalia

### 6.2.2 Strengthening Thai communities abroad

- **Support of Thais' activities abroad:** In the year 2019, the MFA supervised the Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates-General in conducting a total of 140 projects aimed at strengthening Thai communities abroad. The projects focused on capacity building of Thais and Thai volunteers residing abroad, fostering harmony among Thai communities and network-building, supporting Thai students' activities, promoting Thai-ness among the Thai youth through the learning of Thai language, music, culture, and religious activities, as well as enhancing relations with concerned agencies in the protection of Thai nationals abroad.

The Thai communities abroad, through the support of Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates-General, have become stronger and more united to such an extent that they were able to expand their community network and join hands in conducting constructive activities such as promoting Thai culture, providing support to Thai nationals as well as assisting the Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates-General's activities. As a result, they contributed a great deal to the promotion of a positive image of Thais and Thailand in the eyes of their host countries.



Thais' activities abroad

- **Strengthening of Thai nationals abroad through the interdisciplinary committee:** In the year 2019, the MFA collaborated with other agencies, namely the Department of Medical Services, the Department of Mental Health, the Office of the Attorney General, and the Department of Skill Development, in setting up an interdisciplinary committee to work with the Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates-General in organising capacity building activities for Thai nationals living abroad. The activities administered through the committee for Thais in Bahrain, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Australia and Georgia included providing experts to give legal and medical advice; and arranging a wide range of vocational training including nail painting, artificial flowers making, Thai traditional massage, beauty services, and flower arrangement. Moreover, with



the cooperation of the Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development, the committee organised training for Thai volunteers in Japan to equip them with necessary knowledge and skills.

The integrated approach has proved a good means to provide more comprehensive support to the Thai communities overseas. In Bahrain, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Georgia, and Japan, Thai communities have been strengthened and united so that they are now in a position to support each other. Some have developed vocational skills that have enabled them to earn a living with dignity. Furthermore, these Thai communities have retained a positive attitude towards Thai government agencies, and are willing to take part in the Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates-General's activities, particularly ones concerned with cultural and national identity.



Interdisciplinary committee's activities abroad

### 6.2.3 Passports and travel documents

- **The upgrading of visa services:** The MFA introduced the E-Visa system at 9 Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates-General in 2019. The service was inaugurated on 15 February 2019 at the Royal Thai Embassy in Beijing, followed by the Royal Thai Embassies in London and Paris, and the Royal Thai Consulates-General in China – Nanning, Qingdao, Kunming, Xian, Xiamen, and Shanghai. Applicants can now submit their visa application, make an appointment with the Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates-General for receiving a visa sticker after their application is approved, and make the fee payment through the online platform.

Moreover, the MFA and the Thai Immigration Bureau have agreed to share and create a linkage between the MFA's visa database and the Immigration Bureau's immigration database in order to improve the screening process of foreigners. The sharing system began on 1 June 2019. The upgrading of visa services has increased the effectiveness of the screening process of foreigners prior to their entry to the Kingdom. More systemic and rapid data processing plays an important part in fostering national security. It is also easier, faster and more convenient for foreigners to apply for Thai visas, thus leading to the promotion of Thailand's tourism and investment of foreign businesses in the long run.



- **The English version of Thai public/official documents:** According to a Cabinet resolution on 15 November 2016, Thai government agencies now have approval to create English versions of Thai public/official documents which benefits Thai citizens by saving the cost of document translation as well as shortening legalisation processes. The Department of Consular Affairs, MFA has cooperated with the Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior in setting up templates for the English version of the public/official documents. As a result, since the beginning of 2019, all district offices under the Department of Provincial Administration and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration have provided, upon request, the issuance of English versions for 12 types of Thai public/official documents (18 document forms) which are frequently used abroad, comprising birth certificates, death certificates, house registration records, etc.

Thai citizens can now obtain the English version of 12 types of Thai public/official document at any district office, and can directly submit the said documents for legalisation at the Legalisation Division, Department of Consular Affairs. This reduces the steps of the legalisation process, saves the cost of document translation, as well as standardises the English version of Thai public/official documents so that they can be used and accepted internationally.

- **E-Passport Phase 3:** The MFA embarked on the third phase of the Thai electronic passport scheme (e-Passport 3) in line with the proposed e-passport launch on 29 June 2020. The project aims to provide more convenient and rapid passport services by employing new technology for the issuance of passports which makes the forgery or misuse of passports more difficult. The MFA signed a contract for the e-Passport 3 project with DGM Consortium on 5 July 2019, and undertook preparatory processes, including the transfer of passport data, linkages with relevant agencies, and renovation and opening of new passport offices/units nationwide.

The operation of e-Passport 3 focuses on delivering more rapid and effective passport services, upgrading the security features and the protection of personal data so that it is in line with international standards, which relate to national security as a whole.

- **Outreach consular activities**

- **The Department of Consular Affairs (DCA) Outreach Program** aims to promote communication channels with local administrations, the business sector, and Thai people living outside Bangkok. During the outreach programs, key consular issues such as the protection of Thai nationals abroad and constructive role of consular services in promoting ease of doing business for the benefit of the locals in each area were identified and discussed. The DCA is responsible for organising various types of activities, including special lectures at several locations, interviews on local Radio Thailand programmes to provide necessary information for the public on consular

services and on travelling and working abroad, as well as information on the mobile passport unit which provides service to the locals. In 2019, the DCA organized 2 outreach programs. The first was held during 17 – 19 March 2019 at Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, followed by the second during 16 – 19 June 2019 in Nong Khai Province.

- **The Mobile Passport Unit:** The DCA organises mobile passport units to serve Thai citizens living in provinces where a passport office is not located. In 2019, the Department dispatched mobile passport units to 16 provinces, namely Phetchabun (7 – 11 January 2019), Ang Thong (2 – 3 February 2019), Sukhothai (11 – 15 February 2019), Chaiyaphum (4 – 8 March 2019), Nakhon Si Thammarat (18 – 22 March 2019), Nakhon Phanom (13 – 17 May 2019), Prachin Buri (10 – 14 June 2019), Nong Khai (17 – 21 June 2019), Uttaradit (1 – 5 July 2019), Krabi (18 – 24 July 2019), Satun (5 – 9 August 2019), Roi Et (2 – 6 September 2019), Loei (9 – 13 September 2019), Kamphaeng Phet (16 – 20 September 2019), Sisaket (11 – 15 November 2019) and Amnat Charoen (25 – 29 November 2019). In total 32,172 Thais benefited from the service.

- **The Mobile Consular Service:** Each year the Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates-General around the world dispatch mobile consular units to various locations outside the capital cities to provide consular services to Thai communities overseas. Apart from the Thai I.D. card issuance and passport, legalisation, and civil and family registration services, Thai citizens also received a briefing and advice on how to live a quality life in each country. In 2019, 290 projects on mobile consular services were conducted by 82 Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates-General, with a total of 27,672 participants receiving services through the program.

Thai citizens, both living in regional or remote areas of Thailand and overseas, are ensured equal access to consular services. In addition, the DCA outreach programme and mobile consular services offer an opportunity for the officials and staff from the MFA to promote its consular work and provide necessary information which is beneficial to Thai people. At the same time, the activities allow the exchange of information and ideas which can lead to vital improvements to consular services and assistance to Thai nationals abroad.



Mobile Passport Unit



Mobile Consular Service

- **Consular Consultations** In 2019, the DCA held consular consultations with 3 countries, namely the Republic of Korea (4<sup>th</sup> Consular Consultation in Seoul on 30 April 2019), India (5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ad Hoc Joint Working Group on Visa and Consular Matters in Bangkok on 27 September 2019), and the People's Republic of China (7<sup>th</sup> Consular Consultation in Shanghai on December 11, 2019). The discussions touched upon fostering cooperation in the protection of nationals, visa and immigration facilitation, people-to-people exchanges, and other consular matters. Representatives from relevant agencies such as the Immigration Bureau, the Royal Thai Police, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, and the Department of Corrections participated in the preparatory meetings and the consultations.

Thai government agencies responsible for consular-related matters have tightened cooperation with their counterparts in other countries, bringing about closer discussions and exchange of information to resolve ongoing consular issues such as inconvenience at the immigration checkpoints and Thai illegal workers overseas. Both sides also discussed new consular cooperation and measures; for instance, the launch of the Thai E-Visa scheme and the proposed alternatives to promoting the legal employment of Thai workers in South Korea. Last but not least, they provided opportunities for Thai authorities to acknowledge other countries' positions in the aspect of protection extended to their nationals and foreigners, which is beneficial for the making of Thai foreign policy in general.





Consular consultations

#### 6.2.4 Protocol services

- **Development of the Ministry's internet-based e-Privilege system for online applications and database connectivity relating to privileges and immunities of members of Diplomatic Missions, Consular Posts, and International Organisations:** The Department of Protocol is the focal point for matters relating to privileges and immunities (P&I) of Personnel of Diplomatic Missions, Consular Posts, and International Organisations. Each year, the Department of Protocol handles an increased volume of P&I requests, therefore, it is an essential necessity to introduce information technologies in order to meet and exceed the incoming demands through an e-Privilege system. The Department's e-Privilege system was first introduced back in Fiscal Year 2015 and has continuously been upgraded and developed until the present (Fiscal Year 2019). As of 2019, the e-Privilege system has gradually been developed to offer a wider range of P&I requests which includes issues in reference to motor vehicles, such as permission requests for acquiring/ selling/ disposing/ transferring of ownership, vehicle registration, and the annual renewal of the said registration. Moreover, the e-Privilege system has been amplified to be more inclusive and include requests of Consular Posts, Honourary Consulates, and International Organisations based in Thailand.



## EVOLUTION OF e-PRIVILEGE



### 2016 PHASE 1: YOUR ARRIVAL

- Assumption of Duty
- Permit of Stay
- Diplomatic ID Cards

Upon arrival, DCIOs shall submit an online Staff Registration (with soft copy of Assumption of Duty Note) into e-Privilege. Then, DCIOs shall request a facilitation letter for Permit of Stay (to submit to Immigration Bureau) and Diplomatic ID Cards.

### PHASE 2: AIRPORT PASS

Request Airport Pass for Suvarnnabhumi Airport

This function is now obsolete as AOT recently updated its regulation in 2017. This phase will be revamped in Phase 5 (2020)



2017



### 2018 PHASE 3: IMPORTATION

- Driving License
- International Transport Permit
- Duty-Free Importation
- License to Possess Firearm

### PHASE 4: MOTOR VEHICLE

- Motor Vehicle Permission Request (Acquire / Dispose / Transfer / Sell)
- Duty-Free Importation
- License Plate Registration
- License Renewal
- Exportation
- Sell / Transfer

### PHASE 4.2 : EXPAND

- Expanded the e-Privilege System to Consulate-General, Consulate, Honorary-Consulate, and International Organization



2019

### 2020 PHASE 5: TAX AND REVAMP

- VAT Exemption
- Excise Tax
- Revamp Airport Pass Facilitation
- Revamp ID Card Facilitation
- Statistical Report Generation

Phase 5 aims to complete the Tax and Fee Privilege accorded to DCIOs, revamp the Airport Pass and ID Card Facilitation, and add a statistical report generating function. (within August 2020)





With the introduction of the new phase of e-Privilege system, the Department is able to enhance its information management capabilities while reducing time, procedure, and paper consumption. In addition, data management concerning Foreign Missions to Thailand has been standardised and is available for future data management upgrades. The e-Privilege system is a project that greatly enhances the Department's effectiveness on P&I matters and so far has met the expectations of the Diplomatic Missions, Consular Posts, and International Organisations.



A seminar to introduce the e-Privilege system

## **6.3 Enhancing the capacity of organisation and foreign affairs personnel**

### **6.3.1 Training programmes for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other organisations**

- In line with the 20-Year “5S” Foreign Affairs Masterplan objectives on raising organisational competencies, the Devawongse Varopakarn Institute of Foreign Affairs, Thailand's leading training centre for diplomatic excellence, has implemented a number of training programs in 2019. These programs aimed to impart knowledge, enhance skills and instill positive values in the Ministry's officials at all levels, from newly recruited officials to ambassadorial level. The overall goal is to prepare officials to deal with global changes, to effectively promote and protect Thai national interests, to maintain the country's positive image, and to build confidence in the country at the international level.

To ensure both integrated and inclusive academic services, the Devawongse Varopakarn Institute of Foreign Affairs provides training for those who will represent Thailand in different capacities. Throughout the year, various activities were organised to disseminate information on Thai diplomacy and develop the linguistic skills of officials in order to reach to a wider public. At the same time, the Institute continued to engage with other training institutes worldwide to stay up-to-date with developments on diplomatic training. All programmes and activities were executed with



the cooperation of the Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development, the committee organised training for Thai volunteers in Japan to equip them with necessary knowledge and skills.

The integrated approach has proved a good means to provide more comprehensive support to the Thai communities overseas. In Bahrain, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Georgia, and Japan, Thai communities have been strengthened and united so that they are now in a position to support each other. Some have developed vocational skills that have enabled them to earn a living with dignity. Furthermore, these Thai communities have retained a positive attitude towards Thai government agencies, and are willing to take part in the Royal Thai Embassies and Consulates-General's activities, particularly ones concerned with cultural and national identity.



Interdisciplinary committee's activities abroad

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3-day course focused on protocol practices, coordination with visiting delegates, receptions, social demeanor and etiquette, social meetings and interactions. Through practical simulations, the participants gained both knowledge and skills and were able to exchange views and experience on protocol and international relations. They were also encouraged to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in their work.



A training on signing ceremony and a workshop on protocol

**4. The 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Advanced Oral Communication Course (AOCC):** The 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> batches of the Advanced Oral Communication Course were held during 6 February – 10 March 2019 and during 5 June – 7 July 2019 respectively. Among the thirty-four participants were MFA directors, mid-level officers and officials from international organisations and state enterprises. The Devawongse Varopakarn Institute of Foreign Affairs collaborated with Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) and Auckland University of Technology (AUT), New Zealand on the design and implementation of the courses at the three different venues. The course modules developed the participants' skills in presenting, public speaking, participating in international conferences and negotiating. They also boosted the participants' confidence and cultivated an appreciation of foreign cultures. Participants had opportunities to expand their existing networks through meetings with representatives from the public and private sectors in New Zealand, focusing on the application of the language to their real situations.





**5. MFA's 14<sup>th</sup> Training Programme for Students from Thailand's Southern Border Provinces for 2019:** Thirty students studying at universities across Thailand's Southern Border Provinces of Songkhla, Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat joined the 14<sup>th</sup> training programme at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Devawongse Varopakarn Institute of Foreign Affairs during 6 – 19 March 2019. The programme included briefings, calls on high ranking officers, meetings with relevant agencies, an English camp and other cultural and educational visits. These activities enhanced the participants' knowledge and understanding of Thailand's development strategy and provided opportunities for them to share their perspectives and views with representatives from the public and private sectors, as well as community representatives. The programme was designed to give moral support and motivation to youth in the southern border area, widen their worldview, and inspire them to realise their career objectives in order to benefit their communities and their nation.



A study visit to the Embassy of Singapore in Bangkok and an English camp held in Samut Songkhram

**6. Special Lecture entitled “Thailand's Digital Developments”:** The Institute invited Dr. Pichet Durongkaveroj, Minister of Digital Economy and Society to give a special lecture entitled “Thailand's Digital Development” on 10 June 2019. The lecture aimed to instill the audience with a digital mindset, develop an understanding of the impact of disruptive technologies, and promote the application of digital technologies in order to work more effectively and efficiently.





7. Seminar entitled “Six Years of the Belt and Road Initiative: Progress, Contributions and Prospects” by Professor Liu Qiao and Professor Shen Qiaowei: The seminar, which drew a total one hundred and seventy participants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs other government agencies, international organizations, private sector and financial institutions, was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The seminar was led by Professor Liu Qiao, Dean of the Belt and Road Institute and Professor of Finance, and Professor Shen Qiaowei, Professor of Marketing, Guanghua School of Management, Peking University. The seminar promoted the exchange of information and views on China’s proposed Belt and Road Initiative.



8. Launch of the International Studies Centre (ISC): The Devawongse Varopakarn Institute of Foreign Affairs marked the reactivation of its International Studies Centre at a special ceremony in September 2019. Mr. Vijavat Isarabhakdi, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, delivered the opening speech at the official re-launch. The International Studies Center is intended to support the conduct of Thai foreign policy and diplomacy in terms of analytical studies and research on international relations. The Centre cultivates partnerships and linkages with existing think tanks and institutes at both a national and international level to promote exchanges of knowledge and information.



### 6.3.2 ICT and technologies

#### (1) Maintenance of MFA's Operating System

1.1 The Information and Communication Technology Centre (ICT Centre) creates, maintains and develops the MFA Office Application (comprising 3 core systems – MFA Portal, eSubmission and Central Filing) for the Ministry. The Application enhances the efficiency of document processing (paperless) and data storage for officers, incorporating technology to improve and enhance the flow of work.

1.2 The ICT Centre creates, maintains and develops Ministry's website and all related websites, including the websites of the Royal Thai Embassies and Royal Thai Consulates-General abroad, managing information and enhancing the channel of communication between the Ministry and the citizens.

1.3 The ICT Centre maintains and develops online applications to enhance work processes and work flow with applications such as DPIS (Human Resources Management system), MOFA (Internal Information Portal System), Directpayroll (Salary Management System), Trips (Official Trips Management and Approval System), Food Ordering Applications (Ad-hoc Food Ordering System to cater for large events such as the 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit), etc.

1.4 The ICT Centre is responsible for maintaining and upgrading the ICT hardware, software, foundation system such as the enhancement of the router between the Ministry's headquarters and the Department of Consular to ensure better communication flow. Upgrading physical hardware such as desktops, notebooks etc. to increase their compatibility with current and future technological specifications. A new internet public zone has been approved for installation, which will enhance and strengthen the Ministry's cybersecurity. The ICT Centre has also been upgrading the Virtualization system, Server, V-SAN Storage and software for the information backup system.

#### (2) Support for Thailand's ASEAN Chairmanship

2.1 The ICT Centre supported all related ASEAN events during Thailand's chairmanship of ASEAN in 2019. It set up the radio communication system network for all related meetings throughout the year, including the 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in Bangkok during 29 October – 5 November 2019. The ICT Centre Team set up the centralised radio communication system network, sending signals to all related venues in Bangkok and provincial areas. The ICT Centre officials were deployed to maintain the system and ensure the smooth delivery of signal and uninterrupted communication.

2.2 The ICT Centre, in conjunction with the ASEAN Task Force, set up the Cybersecurity Centre for the ASEAN 2019 official website ([www.asean2019.go.th](http://www.asean2019.go.th)). The Cybersecurity Centre, consisting of officials from the ICT Centre, ClickNext (website developer), Thailand Computer Emergency Response Team (ThaiCERT) and Digital Government Development Agency (DGA), was set up to monitor any possible security threat to the website. It operated around the clock throughout the whole duration of the ASEAN Summit. Despite numerous attempts to breach and hack the website, the Cybersecurity Centre managed to contain all cyber related attacks, thus keeping the website clean and free flowing throughout the Summit.



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