Statement

by

Youth Delegates of Thailand

at the Third Committee

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Please check against delivery
Mr. Chair
Distinguished delegates,
My fellow youth delegates,

Today my colleagues and I are speaking to you as youth representatives of Thailand and as the voice of women and girls.

Despite the fact that many positive steps have been made towards gender parity and equality across regions and countries, women and girls still remain marginalized in certain aspects in some parts of the world. As the international community is in the process of shaping its vision for post-2015 development agenda, we strongly urge that the elimination of gender inequality and empowerment of women and girls should be distinct and cross-cutting goals of the post-2015 development agenda.

It is necessary to emphasize the importance of the role of women in society and in the family. Stereotype of women roles and gender discrimination can result in structural and cultural barriers to full access of women and girls to basic rights and full participation in decision-making process and in development. Those obstacles could condemn women to continued poverty and vulnerability. Even worse, their rights and dignity can be violated without their voices ever being heard.

The more we believe that women, as mothers, play a vital role in shaping our youths and their future, the more urgent the need to address this issue becomes.

Mr. Chair,

For Thailand, tremendous efforts to eliminate gender disparities have been exerted. Two notable initiatives are; first, the National Women’s Development Fund established by the Thai Government with the aims at providing low-interest funds to help women secure jobs and
earn more income. The second is Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha’s advocacy of the “United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders” or commonly known as the “Bangkok Rules”. It aims to promote respect for the special needs of women prisoners and focus on providing assistance to female and pregnant prisoners and their children.

We would like to take this opportunity to invite all distinguished delegates to explore and learn about the concrete implementation of Bangkok Rules in Thailand’s side events including a panel discussion to be held on 16 October and the premiere of a documentary film on 17 October.

**Mr. Chair,**

Empowerment of women is a major challenge. One of the best ways to do so is through education. Empowerment and education are interlinked and inseparable.

Among the eight goals of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, universal primary education along with gender equality and women empowerment are ranked second and third. Bearing in mind the great influence of a mother on her child or children, the level of education of a mother can significantly affect those of her children. Consequently, the power of education lies in empowering both the mother and children for lifetime opportunities.

According to the report of Secretary-General under the item “United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all”, the educational marginalization of girls is still a predominant phenomenon in developing countries and some 61 per cent of the world’s illiterate youth are female. Two thirds of the illiterate adult populations are women. These stark statistics show clearly that equal access to education remains the world’s challenge.
Disparity of education quality and standard should alert a major concern. The gap between the rich and the poor is a root cause of the lack of equal access to quality education and uneven distribution of resources.

Mr. Chair,

To promote rights to education, the Royal Thai Government’s education for all policy ensures that all children receive 9 years compulsory education and are entitled to receive 12 equally years basic education. Children with disabilities and children in remote provinces are equally ensured of access to all levels of education.

However, challenges in terms of implementation, quality of education and teachers still exist. We have identified some key suggestions on this matter.

Firstly, providing sufficient quantity and high quality of teachers is a key to achieve quality education for all. This would require a large amount of investment in human resources but the result would be a sufficient number of qualified teachers and funds in a school, urban or rural alike. Furthermore, the educational environment of community must be supported and equipped with necessary education materials to encourage children to pursue higher education for life and career opportunities.

Mr. Chair,

Allow me to share with you a project called “Teach for Thailand” initiated by Thai youths in an attempt to tackle educational challenges, especially with respect to poor quality and uneven distribution of educational resources. The project is inspired by the model youth initiative, “Teach for America.”
Under this project, Thai undergraduates, regardless of their fields of study, will be assigned to affiliated secondary schools in Bangkok for two years. The projected outcome lies not only in the improved quality of education by adding qualified teachers, but also in the fact that these undergraduates are exposed to the challenges of education service. This youth initiative allows these youth participants to realize their potentials and their role in the development of the country. Therefore, they are our hope for the country to achieve another step in improving education standards.

**Mr. Chair,**

We, the youths, are reason. We are the means. And we are tools of development. Our voice and power are ones of strong determination. We pledge our commitment to actively engage in the discussion to promote social inclusion with youths as active players.

Bearing in mind that the future of an inclusive world rests upon us, the youths. The challenges I mentioned above require us to work together hand in hand. As the saying goes “to run a short distance you could sprint alone, but to run far we have to run alongside together.”

We thank you.

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