

**Opening Remarks by H.E. Mr. Thani Thongphakdi
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand**
*Relevance of technical cooperation to support national and regional
efforts on the CRPD implementation*
at a side event at the Social Forum 2016
**“Technical cooperation and capacity-building
in monitoring the rights of persons with disabilities”**
on 5 October 2016, 08.15-09.45 hrs, Room XXIV, Palais des Nations

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first express my sincere appreciation to all the co-organizers of this side event. Thailand is honoured to be one of the co-sponsors, alongside the IDA, the IDDC and the Permanent Mission of Peru. We remain committed to working with all partners to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

Indeed, just last week, the Thai Mission co-hosted a side event during the 33rd session of the Human Rights Council on “Promoting mine victims’ rights: making the rights real”. The objective was to encourage the sharing of experiences and challenges in integrating victim assistance into broader human rights and disability frameworks, as well as good practices in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities across relevant disarmament and human rights conventions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a new and favourable context in which we can work to advance the rights of persons with disabilities. Against this backdrop, the opportunity to build partnerships and strengthen international cooperation to promote disability-inclusive development has never been greater.

Today, as we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the CRPD, we should not only reaffirm our shared commitment to technical cooperation. We must use this opportunity to also deliberate on how we can make technical cooperation more effective in order to create a truly barrier-free society for persons with disabilities, including women and children with disabilities, and ensure their full and equal participation in society.

Allow me to share with you a few lessons drawn from my own country's experience in the implementation of the CRPD.

First, we recognize that technical cooperation can help States **harmonize national laws and policies with the CRPD**. However, these laws and action plans must not remain static. Rather, they must evolve over time to ensure better protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. In this unending process of reviewing and fine-tuning the legal and policy frameworks, States can benefit from international cooperation and recommendations offered by relevant bodies and stakeholders.

This is why Thailand acted upon the recommendations made by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by amending our Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act in 2013 to further ensure accessibility and provide better welfare. Further amendments to the Act to eliminate all forms of discrimination are also being considered. We are also working towards the Accessibility for All Act.

In addition, we recently became a State Party to the Optional Protocol to the CRPD and are reviewing domestic laws that will enable us to sign the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled. Looking ahead, we will keep looking for ways to improve our domestic laws and policy platforms.

Second, **inclusiveness** is vital. We must involve persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the law- and policy-making process. This inclusive exercise is especially important if we are to devise action plans that address the specific challenges faced by vulnerable groups with disabilities. As such, persons with disabilities are fully engaged in the ongoing development of our National Plan on Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, the Strategic Plan on the Empowerment of Women with Disabilities, and the disability-inclusive disaster management plan.

Third, **regional dialogue and cooperation** are an important means to share know-how, build capacities and deliver tangible results in the implementation of the CRPD. For this reason, Thailand has deepened cooperation with countries in the Mekong Subregion. At the ASEAN level, we have championed the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities in the realization of the ASEAN Community. We hosted two regional dialogues on this theme and are advocating the establishment of an ASEAN Task Force for this purpose.

Last but not least, we believe in the active and constructive **roles of the OHCHR, the Human Rights Council and the Special Rapporteur** on the rights of persons with disabilities in strengthening technical cooperation, on the basis of genuine consultations with and the consent of the States concerned.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have an important and challenging task ahead of us. Sharing ambitious goals, we have to work together to achieve them. I am confident that the experiences and best practices we share today will serve not only as models, but also as inspirations for future efforts. We have achieved a lot over the past ten years. But through partnership and cooperation, we can accomplish even more in the second decade of the CRPD.

I thank you.