Country Statement

By
Police General Suwat Chanitthikul
Advisor of the Minister
the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand


November 30th, 2017, Beijing, People's Republic of China

******************

Mr/Madam Chairperson,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Royal Thai Government, it is a great honour for me to join this meeting. Also, it is a good opportunity for Thailand to let you know what we have done, what we are doing and what we are going to do in the near future on the Persons with Disabilities complying with the Incheon Strategy Goals.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In our country, the National Committee on Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities chaired by Mr Prime Minister is the main mechanism to set up policies and plans on the empowerment of persons with disabilities together with related ministries and disabled people’s organizations. Then, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities under supervision of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security will take such policies and plans to implement as the national focal point. This is our overview organisational structure.

According to our record, there are now 1.8 million persons with disabilities or 2.7% of population in our country. To deal with them professionally, our Ministry always focuses on 3 keywords as our main concepts; namely, Opportunities, Respect and Encouragement. On these concepts, we have used them as our philosophy to change the persons with disabilities from “being burden” to be “powerful human”.

No doubt, we always concentrate on their rights such as mobilising accommodations and accessibilities to meet their needs, providing them disability allowance, sign
language interpreters and personal assistants, as well as employing them in both government and private sectors.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to highlight what we have done to protect the rights of the persons of disabilities according to the Incheon Strategy Goals.

Firstly, we are so proud to say we have now real-time automatic link of the information of persons of disabilities with other relevant units across the country.

Secondly, we launched a project so-called “From Street to Stars” which enhances the persons with disabilities who have skills of music and singing to be professional singers and musicians. From this project, we got a big musical band in which all band members are the persons of disabilities. This band has just showed its performance as representatives of Thailand in New York, United States at the United Nations Headquarters during 17-21 August this year.

Thirdly, we joined with the private sectors and local administrations, set up the Disability Service Centres to take care the persons of disabilities across the country.

Fourthly, we improved all facilities in every tourist spot for all Thai and foreign persons with disabilities spending their services and travelling independently.
Lastly, we have never walked alone. Instead, we have worked very closely on this issue with other countries, in particular ASEAN member countries, to prepare ourselves to organize the ASEAN+3 Meeting on Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities. These are our highlights from all what we have done.

To promote full participation, we indeed support Mr. Montian Buntan as a representative of Thailand to be a member of the Committee on the Rights with Disabilities for second term.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Next, we also would like to let you know what we are doing on this issue. According to our human right-based approach which is to ensure the persons with disabilities can live confidently and independently in the society, we are implementing the Fifth National Plan of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (2017-2021) with a strategic programme so-called EQUAL, which mainly mobilize the Incheon Strategy.

Also, we are drafting the Second Strategic Plan on Empowerment of Women with Disabilities to promote their more participation in society, strengthen their
integration, and eradicate all forms of discrimination against them.
For the way forward, to implement our policies as the whole-of-government approach, we are going to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on National Action Plan for Operationalising the Incheon Strategy Indicators in December, which collaborates with ESCAP. This MOU will enable all relevant units in our country working together effectively and systematically. Also, we are preparing to set up the Guide Dog Centre for Persons with Visual Disabilities.

In relation to international dimension, after we have already ratified the CRPD and its optional protocol, we are going to become a state party of the Marrakesh Treaty very soon. Relevant measures are being addressed to facilitate visually impaired persons and persons with print disabilities to have access to published works.

Mr/Madam Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once again, on behalf of the Royal Thai Government, thank you very much for our opportunity full support from ESCAP and Government of People's Republic of China for organizing this significant meeting. I just would like to say...if a man can choose to be born, he will not certainly choose to be a person with disabilities. Also, being
apersons with disabilities does not mean he has no any chance in society.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to bring to you a part of our previous King’s speech on 22 March 1984 regarding to the person with disabilities. His Majesty said “All disabled people do not want to be disabled; instead, they want to help themselves. If we cannot make them able to do anything for their lives and for their families, their lives will become far more terrible and finally they will be burdens for our society. Therefore, the best solution is...making them able to help themselves and stand by themselves. They will then be valuable people for society.”

That’s why our strong commitment on the persons with disabilities is... “No one will be left behind.” Thank you for your kind attention.

-End-