

## Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

25 March 2021 – UNV remarks

*Delivered by Mr Toily Kurbanov, UNV Executive Coordinator*

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Greetings from the headquarters of UNV. I thank UNESCAP for organizing the session and the Royal Government of Thailand for the presentation of the second Voluntary National Review.

I understand 9 is a lucky number in Thai tradition. Therefore, let me limit my intervention to 9 main reflections.

1. Building on Thailand's first VNR in 2017, which provided the country's SDG baseline, the new VNR takes stock of the SDG progress. The progress is commendable.
2. This progress is thanks to Thailand's *Sufficiency Economy Philosophy*. Resting the Agenda 2030 on a homegrown development approach is a good lesson for all of us.
3. Another SDG enabler is inclusive collaboration among all stakeholders led by the National Committee for Sustainable Development. This was also the case in VNR preparation.
4. I appreciate the VNR's focus on the impact of the global pandemic and the nation's response. The whole-of-society approach, including Thai volunteers, remains critical.
5. I thank Thailand for reflecting how volunteerism helps SDGs. The recognition of volunteers has been strong in more than half VNRs from the ESCAP region thus far:

*Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, India, Indonesia, Laos, Mongolia, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Turkey and Uzbekistan.*

6. Thailand's VNR reflects support of the UN system led by the UN resident coordinator. Globally, the convergence of VNR priorities and the UN Cooperation Frameworks is critical during the Agenda for Action.
7. The next Thailand Human Development Report with UNDP will focus on the intrinsic linkages between the *Sufficiency Economy Philosophy* and the 2030 Agenda. This will provide further impetus to the achievement SDGs.
8. As a country with 13 million volunteers, Thailand is a good friend of UNV. We value this partnership. I also thank Ms.

Wanalee for sharing the Thai experience in empowering volunteers at a APFSD side event earlier this week.

9. I conclude with Thai saying: *putting a gold leaf on the back of the Buddha image* (meaning, do something good without seeking attention). Exactly what volunteers do: they seek not fortune nor fame. Yet they make critical contributions to COVID response and to the 2030 Agenda.

And this is exactly what Thailand and other ESCAP members have done in their VNRs: by empowering and recognizing volunteers in our societies.

Thank you.