

Opening Remarks
by H.E. Mr. Vijavat Isarabhakdi
Advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand
at the Asia-Pacific Regional Commemoration
of the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation
12 September 2018
Conference Room 4, United Nations Conference Center, Bangkok

Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP,
Ms. Deirdre Boyd, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP
Resident Representative in Thailand,
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps
and the United Nations Agencies,
Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, it is a great pleasure and honour for me to be here today to warmly welcome you to the Asia-Pacific Regional Commemoration of the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation.

Today, the 12th of September, is an annual occasion for the international community to highlight the progress, and to celebrate the achievements, of South-South cooperation, which has contributed so greatly towards development throughout the world. This year—2018—is particularly important as we mark the 40th anniversary of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, or BAPA, which has played such an instrumental part in promoting and implementing technical cooperation among developing countries. Indeed, this landmark initiative was adopted by the Member States of the United Nations on this very day, exactly 40 years ago, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Since the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action in 1978, **South-South cooperation** has expanded by leaps and bounds to include cooperation in nearly all areas and aspects of people's lives. The magnitude of South-South cooperation has gone far beyond BAPA's original intentions regarding technical cooperation. The role of South-South and triangular cooperation today has taken on even greater significance as the international community is earnestly working towards the attainment of **the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

Guided by the principles of equality and solidarity, South-South cooperation has assisted developing countries to overcome existing challenges despite their socio-economic and geographical differences. South-South cooperation offers a unique approach that allows countries to learn from each other, and to share knowledge and experiences, through **different means**, with **different modalities**, and in **different dimensions**. South-South cooperation provides the advantage of relatively more adaptive, locally relevant, and cost-effective development solutions. It is a significant and widely-acknowledged

complement to the traditional North-South cooperation, embracing the potentials of “North-South-South” and “South-South for South” cooperation.

The Asia-Pacific Region, in particular, has seen one of the most vibrant manifestations of South-South cooperation, through various unique intra- and inter-regional and sub-regional development cooperation modalities. Through this dynamism, South-South cooperation has become an impactful platform for developing countries as both providers and users in the region. And through this dynamism, we have also witnessed a significant increase in South-South engagements and complementarity in the areas of trade and financial flows, transfer of technology as well as human resources development and capacity building.

As the incoming Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for 2019, Thailand, together with UNOSSC and the ASEAN Secretariat, is currently conducting a mapping of South-South cooperation within ASEAN. We hope to build on the momentum of South-South cooperation and to serve evidence that such cooperation is critical in forging development and regional integration.

Distinguished Guests and Participants,

The late United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, once said at the dawn of the new millennium: *“More than ever before in human history, we share a common destiny. We can master it only if we face it together. And that is why we have the United Nations.”* This global togetherness and partnership is precisely the spirit of South-South and triangular cooperation. It is with this same spirit that the United Nations was created in 1945. Seventy years later—in the year 2015—this spirit was reiterated in the SDGs Goal 17: Global Partnership for all the Goals. Achieving **sustainable development for all**, therefore, requires a global partnership at all levels, across all sectors, and by all countries, big or small.

It is with this belief in the power of partnership, and to follow up the successful outcome of *the Regional Consultation on South-South Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific* and *the inaugural Asia-Pacific Forum for South-South and Triangular Cooperation*, which Thailand co-organized with ESCAP and UNOSSC in June this year, we are pleased to once again co-host this important commemorative event. Partnership and dialogue serve to better the way we undertake South-South and triangular cooperation, and provide us all with a better chance to attain development that is both sustained and inclusive.

It is also with this belief in the power of partnership that at the heart of Thailand’s international development cooperation initiatives lies the practical application of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, or SEP, our home-grown approach to sustainable development, as articulated and bestowed by His Majesty the late king Bhumibol Adulyadej. South-South and triangular “SEP for SDGs” partnerships have been fostered and shared within the region and

across the world through all possible modalities of cooperation, with partners from within the South and with developed partner countries alike.

Distinguished Guests and Participants,

We have come a long way from Buenos Aires in 1978 to Nairobi, Kenya in 2009 when the first High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation took place. As we now look ahead towards the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40) to be held in Buenos Aires in March next year, it is important to remind ourselves that in order to achieve **sustainable development**, we must face the challenges together and work together as one through **sustainable partnership**.

As we mark this morning the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation, I would like to conclude by inviting you all to reaffirm your commitment to South-South cooperation as an invaluable means to achieving sustainable development. Let us together seize new opportunities to move forward in this new era of cooperation for **“Sustainable Development through Sustainable Partnership”**.

I wish you a successful event this morning and thank you for your kind attention .
