

Thailand's Statement for General Debate during the 145th IPU Assembly by Hon. Ms. Theerarat Samrejvanich, Member of the House of Representatives

**Distinguished delegates,
Honorable colleagues,**

1. While Thailand was among the first Asian countries that granted women the right to vote and has done well in global ranking on women at the top of business positions, there is still much more to be done to improve Thai women's empowerment in politics and increase their representation in public decision-making at all levels.

2. With that in mind, the Thai delegation is here with our mission to reaffirm Thailand's full commitment to promoting women's empowerment, and the **Goal Number 5** of the SDGs. I am very pleased to present today some significant efforts made by the Thai Parliament to legally advance gender equality by integrating international principles and instruments into our national legislation and policies.

3. After CEDAW and Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Thailand's journey to gender equality began in 2017 with **the Constitution** of the Kingdom of Thailand which clearly specifies that 'men and women shall enjoy equal rights' and prohibits all forms of discrimination including gender discrimination, among others.

4. Aiming to facilitate women's participation in public life, the Constitution of Thailand and its **Organic Law on Political Parties** require Thai political parties to take gender balance into consideration when preparing their party lists of MP candidates. And for the first time, the Thai State is required by the Constitution to incorporate a concept of **Gender Responsive Budgeting** in the preparation of national budget and encourage relevant agencies to collect gender-disaggregated data for their project planning.

5. The Parliament of Thailand has continuously adopted many legal instruments to help improve women's status and gender sensitivities in line with international standards, for example, the groundbreaking **Gender Equality Act 2015** to protect everyone not only women but also LGBTQ persons from gender-based discrimination.

6. Inside the Parliament of Thailand, notable gender mainstreaming has been initiated to promote a more gender-sensitive parliament and zero tolerance against sexism. **The Code of Conducts** for Members of Parliament issued in 2019 in both houses and the **Code of Ethics** for Parliamentary Officials explicitly prohibit all forms of sexual harassment against women in parliament. The anti-harassment enforcement mechanism has been put in place to deal with complaints against the accused MPs, which might lead to a reference to the National Anti-Corruption Commission for further legal action.

7. And since 1996, **the Thai Parliamentary Women's Caucus** has been very active in promoting women empowerment across party lines, both within the context of legislative activities and in collaboration with its multi-sectoral partners, such as helping those in need during the height of coronavirus outbreaks.

8. In this upcoming November, Thailand will play host to two major regional forums, namely, the 30th Annual Meeting of the **APPF** in late October hosted by the Thai Parliament and the Government's **APEC summit**. In both venues, Thailand will encourage initiatives across all the workstreams of APEC and APPF to advance **La Serena Roadmap for Women and Inclusive Growth** by strengthening women economic empowerment and greater inclusion of women in the Asia-Pacific's economy, especially in the context of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Honorable colleagues,**

9. The Parliament of Thailand will continue to address the remaining challenges, especially the traditional mindset regarding the role of women, to shift gender stereotypes and social barriers against women in politics. I do hope that the experience of Thailand will contribute to the global efforts in empowering women and closing gender gaps by sharing our meaningful learnings with other countries that strive for a gender-equal world.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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