

**Statement by
H.E. Mr. Chuan Leekpai
President of the National Assembly and
Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Thailand
At the General Debate
during the 141st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
14th October 2019, Sava Center, Belgrade, Serbia**

Honorable Chair,
Distinguished delegates,
Fellow parliamentarians,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Thailand, I would like to thank the IPU and our host – the National Assembly of Serbia – for their kind hospitality. My delegates and I are honored to be here in Belgrade for the 141st General Assembly of the Inter-parliamentary Union.

2019 is a significant milestone for both the IPU and Thailand. This year, the IPU celebrates its 130th anniversary, while Thailand returns to a parliamentary democracy following our first general elections in eight years. For almost 90 years, Thai democracy has constantly evolved.

We have learned many painful lessons.

We have learned from many difficult challenges and disruption, from the military junta to the money politics.

We have learned that fair enforcement of the law, without discrimination, is an effective way to solve social problems, address economic inequalities and, thereby, prevent exploitation of the disadvantaged.

To further assist them, we are making progress towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Included in this global development agenda is the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, conceived by His late Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. Parliament, with our legislative power, play a crucial part in designing the national legal frameworks; we ensure our obligations are met, not just domestically, but internationally as well.

Thailand continues to support the United Nations in its mission to preserve human rights, protect human security, conserve the environment and support the peace keeping process. We believe the international legal order is our best safeguard for independence and sovereignty. As such, we reaffirm our commitments under international law, including the U.N. and ASEAN Charters.

This year, Thailand served as the ASEAN Chair and our National Assembly assumed the Presidency of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly or AIPA. While AIPA is small compared to the IPU, we remain united in our diversity of nationality, ethnicity and geography.

This year, our goal is to strengthen the ASEAN Community through parliamentary means. Particularly, we worked to harmonize laws within ASEAN to facilitate a strong, rules-based, people-centered community where no one is left behind. AIPA parliamentarians intensified their cooperation at various summits.

But effective governing in the region also requires proper coordination between the Executive and Legislative branches. The ASEAN Summit last June saw both branches coming together in collaboration. On that occasion, I proposed that the Secretariat coordinate a new forum for consultation between ASEAN and the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly or AIPA. As the people's elected representative, no one knows their problem better than us the Parliamentarians. Therefore, it is our duty to convey the peoples' needs to the Executive. Only then will their problems be accurately addressed.

In closing, I wish to emphasize that, democracy works well when we have strong parliament that truly represent the will and the need of our peoples. They help to uphold the rule of law, which is essential for everyone. In particular, we cannot make everyone equally rich but we can make everyone equally treated under the law.

Thank you for your attention.
