Thailand’s National Statement

2016 Nuclear Security Summit

Thailand attaches importance to the promotion of nuclear security, which has to be undertaken in parallel at the national, regional and international levels. In fact, nuclear security issue is interlinked and should be carried out with other closely related matters, which are safety and safeguards.

Indeed, the issue of nuclear security is closer to us than we think. If a nuclear incident occurs, its impact is widespread and indiscriminate. The collaborative network within and across national borders is necessary to contain the consequences. That is why we are here today to renew and reaffirm our political commitment.

Thailand believes that it is a fundamental responsibility of states to maintain effective security of nuclear and other radioactive materials as well as nuclear facilities under their control, including military ones. Therefore, at the national level, the Royal Thai Government takes action seriously as nuclear technology is widely used in various peaceful applications in Thailand, so it is a priority to ensure nuclear security in all types of public and private facilities, where nuclear and radioactive materials are used -- hospitals, factories, research laboratories, and nuclear waste disposal facilities. Attention has to be given also to the security of transportation, importation, and exportation of nuclear and radioactive materials.

In terms of national legal frameworks, relevant regulations pertaining to exportation and importation of dual-use goods have been updated. The amended Customs Act has empowered Customs officials to inspect, search and confiscate suspected merchandise in transit or transshipment. In addition, the amended Nuclear Energy Act is now under consideration of the National Legislative Assembly. This Act has been amended to cover all relevant dimensions of peaceful use of nuclear energy, as well as impose penalties on those who violate any provision of this Act. Once the Nuclear Energy Act is enforced, Thailand will be able to ratify a number of international instruments, including the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of
Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) and the Convention of the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials (CPPNM). As a state party to these conventions, Thailand will be able to do more under her international obligations to further enhance nuclear security.

Our efforts include an establishment of a national coordinating mechanism, the Sub-Committee on Coordinating for Prevention and Solution of Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in 2013. This mechanism helps strengthen the coordination and collaboration among all relevant government agencies concerned, both at national and local levels, in efficiently and effectively fulfilling Thailand’s obligations and commitments. At present, a whole-of-government Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is being drafted to ensure efficient and integrated implementation and coordination in cases of interdiction of suspected merchandise entering or passing through Thailand by sea, land and air. Several outreach and awareness-raising activities and programmes, including visits to ports and border checkpoints, have also been conducted throughout the countries, particularly frontline officers in the border areas prone to risks of illicit entry of persons or goods with ill intention, which could be used for malicious purposes.

As people are at the centre of nuclear security, it is therefore crucial to continuously develop and further enhance the capabilities of relevant agencies and their staff to be able to strictly comply with international standards and requirements, in order to ensure effective nuclear security. It is also necessary to raise the awareness of the general public as nuclear security is an issue very close to our daily lives and should not be overlooked in order to reduce potential risks from ignorance or negligence. Thus, Thailand gives importance to reach out and raise awareness among various target groups, including industrialists, entrepreneurs, healthcare personnel, exporters and importers, law enforcement agencies, academia, and civil society. Nuclear security should always remain in the public interest as minor issues can cause major consequences. If nuclear waste has not been properly disposed of, radiation will be harmful to health, food and water sources, and the environment. Moreover, the impacts of radiation will be long-term, making it hard to determine the extent of damage, as well as how to contain and mitigate the detrimental consequences.

States also need to build up global nuclear security culture in nuclear facilities both at national and international levels. This will alert all stakeholders of potential risks which could arise at anytime, anywhere and in any form -- insider threats, outside trespassers, or through cyber space. Therefore, clear codes of conduct, stringent preventive and effective response measures must be
Building up nuclear security culture will reduce risks from nuclear threats and protect everyone in a systematic and sustainable manner.

At the regional level, freer flow of people and goods in a borderless world, especially within the ASEAN Community, has increased the number of tourists as well as the volume of imports and exports passing through the borders. The Thai authorities concerned have boosted up their capacities in response to the changing environment by upgrading their systems and equipment, and training of staff. These efforts have helped improve the screening process and reduce risk of ill-intentioned entry and transit through Thailand and smuggling of illegal items, thereby contributing to the prevention and countering of unnecessary tragic incidents.

Beyond national borders, regional cooperation is very important to Thailand as regional countries are our “neighbours”. It is thus necessary to keep our community harmonious as well as well integrated and coordinated. For ASEAN, Thailand initiated the setting up of the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy, or ASEANTOM, which was welcomed by the ASEAN Leaders in 2011 and has been functioning since 2012. It is a collaborative network of nuclear regulatory bodies and relevant agencies to share information, experiences, and best practices, as well as to discuss issues relevant to nuclear safety, security and safeguard. It is a confidence building measure within the region. ASEANTOM is complementary to other existing mechanisms, such as the Asian Nuclear Safety Networks (ANSN) and the ASEAN Nuclear Energy Cooperation Sub-Sector Network (NEC-SSN). These mechanisms represent work in the 3 pillars of nuclear safety, security, and safeguard for peaceful use which have to be carried out in parallel, in order to ensure sustainability. Thailand stands ready to cooperate and implement our obligations in all 3 pillars, including nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It is our hope that all participating States, International Organisations and Initiatives also give equally emphasis on all 3 S-pillars.

At the international level, global efforts will certainly help strengthen efforts at the national and regional levels, through sharing of accurate, reliable and timely information and intelligence for preventive actions, as well as capacity building and technology transfer from more advanced countries to those which may be faced with implementation challenges, in order to achieve truly robust nuclear security at the global level. In this regard, Thailand has cooperated with the IAEA in hosting regional meetings, seminars and training for capacity building in nuclear related matters for countries in the region. Thailand has also established a Master’s degree program on nuclear
security education -- the only one in the ASEAN region -- and receives on a regular basis, students from the region and beyond.

Cooperation at all levels is important in order to reduce potential risks and mitigate potential damage as the impact of nuclear accident or sabotage will be widespread and indiscriminate. States also need to be vigilant and cooperate more closely to prevent cybercrime and terrorism.

All efforts undertaken by Thailand under various international frameworks have so far been complementary, and the Nuclear Security Summit has played an important role in bridging all the elements of nuclear security and further strengthening those frameworks in a comprehensive manner. The Nuclear Security Summit also helps promote international cooperation in this field in a sustainable manner through various collaborative measures set out in the 5 action plans, in line with the mandates of UN, IAEA and INTERPOL, as well as other international initiatives. These international organisations and initiatives will play significant roles to our efforts and help strengthen our national capacities.

When all countries join hands together and sustain our efforts to fulfill our obligations, promote international cooperation at all levels, and work with relevant international organisations, our world will be a safer and more secure place for all.