

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Narong Sasitorn,
Deputy Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Thailand
Head of the Delegation of Thailand,
at the 20th OSCE Ministerial Council
6 December 2013, Kyiv, Ukraine**

ENGLISH only

**Mr. Chairman,
Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,**

First and foremost, allow me to express our deepest sorrow on the passing away of Mr. Nelson Mandela. Mr. Mandela is no longer with us, but his legacy of selfless struggle for peace, human rights and freedoms, and his compassion and humility will live on and continue to inspire all of us.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Ukraine for the warm hospitality extended to me and my delegation.

Since becoming an Asian Partner for Co-operation of the OSCE 13 years ago, Thailand has continuously strengthened our partnership with this very important organization. We believe in what OSCE stands for. We share common values in the promotion and protection of human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and rule of law, all of which contribute to enhancing security in our respective regions and beyond.

Mr. Chairman,

In our view, one cannot achieve real and comprehensive security without democracy. It is both a means and an end. Democracy creates an environment whereby all persons are able to exercise their rights and freedoms on an equal basis. This, in turn, contributes to a fair and just society where security can flourish in all its dimensions.

However, recent events in many parts of the world, including even in a country like Thailand, remind us that democracy can never be taken for granted. We have to constantly nurture, defend and protect democracy because it will always be subjected to tests and challenges.

We recognize the role of the OSCE in promoting, protecting and defending democratic values. Indeed, all of us, individually and collectively, must continue to support democracy as well as efforts to strengthen democratic institutions.

As we are aware, democracy entails various important components. But we strongly believe that we cannot achieve a strong democratic society without the rule of law.

Thailand deems the rule of law as being a particularly vital element in the people's empowerment, the promotion of democratic and inclusive societies, as well as sustainable economic growth. Last month, we hosted the Bangkok Dialogue on the Rule of Law, presided by HRH Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol, Thailand's Ambassador and Permanent

Representative to the UN in Vienna and the OSCE. This meeting successfully highlighted the importance of the rule of law for our societies. The meeting also recognised the importance of this principle, which should be deliberated in the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

We strongly believe that development and security are intertwined and mutually reinforcing.

In a world that is increasingly interdependent, we need to look beyond our own borders and work with our friends and neighbours to tackle common threats and achieve common security for our regions.

In this regard, Thailand attaches high importance to extending economic and technical cooperation to our friends. We are glad to have been able to support our neighbours in reducing development gaps. We fully support the political and economic reforms in Myanmar under the leadership of President Thein Sein. We believe that the reforms in Myanmar are taking a firm root in the society and will lead to sustainable development in Myanmar, which would positively contribute to peace and security in the country.

Similarly, in Afghanistan, Thailand has shared our experience in eliminating illicit drugs and eradicating poppy cultivation through alternative development programmes. We are determined to work more closely with our neighbors and friends to help enhance security for our region.

Mr. Chairman,

The year 2015 marks an important milestone for both the OSCE and ASEAN. As the OSCE looks to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in 2015, ASEAN is also on its path towards becoming a Community by that same year. ASEAN has made much progress in strengthening our community building efforts in all three pillars, be they political-security, economic or socio-cultural.

In the political-security pillar, we believe that strengthening Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) is an important approach to prevent disputes within our region. These CBMs, among others, include the ASEAN Security Outlook 2013, which enhances regional exchanges, dialogues and consultations among ASEAN defense officials, promote greater transparency and build up institutional framework to strengthen the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) process.

The human dimension of security is also very important to our region. Therefore, Thailand fully supports the establishment of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights and the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, which are also vital for the ASEAN community building process.

Mr. Chairman,

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the OSCE share common objectives in comprehensive security. It should therefore be in our own mutual benefit to explore a forward looking approach of cooperation between our two organizations. As the only representative of ASEAN in the OSCE, Thailand supports a closer partnership between our two regions.

We are currently undertaking the necessary steps to elevate our relations with the OSCE. We wish to seek your kind support in this endeavor.

Thank you.
