

WELCOMING REMARKS
Ms. Pornprapai Ganjanarintr
Director-General
of the Department of International Organizations,
at the International Conference on the Implementation of
the Health Aspects of the Sendai Framework for
Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030
10 March 2016, 9.00 hrs.

H.E. Prof. Piyasakol Sakolsatayadorn,
Minister of Public Health

Mr. Robert Glasser,
Special Representative of the Secretary-General for
Disaster Risk Reduction

Dr. Bruce Aylward,
Executive Director ad interim of the Outbreaks and Health
Emergencies Cluster, World Health Organization

Excellencies,

Distinguished participants,

1. On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I would like to welcome all of you to Thailand and to the **International Conference on the Implementation of the Health Aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030**. Unfortunately, the Foreign Minister could not attend today as he has to chair the 14th Asia Cooperation Dialogue Ministerial Meeting. Nevertheless, he conveys his greetings and best regards.

2. Today, we are honoured by the presence of so many key figures in the health and disaster areas from all around the world. Indeed, it is a top gathering of experts and practitioners as well as government representatives who are the most knowledgeable in this field. For this, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to UNISDR and WHO for co-hosting this very important event with the Royal Thai Government.

3. In fact, the idea for this conference started during the meeting of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai in March last year, when UNISDR approached the Foreign Ministry with this initiative and subsequently discussed this idea with the Ministry of Public Health during the World Health Assembly to co-host this important conference together. On the Thai side, I would like to take this opportunity to convey our deepest appreciation to the Ministry of Public Health and to the Ministry of Interior. We highly value close cooperation among the line ministries and concerned agencies in making this Conference happen.

4. This conference is both significant and timely. It is highly significant as it is the first conference that links disaster risk reduction with health under the Sendai Framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Knowledge and experiences from experts and people working on the ground are thus very critical in order to explore and integrate the role of the health community in the Disaster Risk Reduction framework.

5. And it is very timely, as we just recently witnessed the outbreaks like Ebola and Zika viruses. We realize an urgent need to integrate disaster risk reduction approaches in national health policies and strategies. Furthermore, this year marks the first year that we have transited from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. The topics of the Conference clearly respond to at least two Sustainable Development Goals, namely, Goal 3 “Good health and well-being” and Goal 11 “Sustainable cities and communities”.

6. In addition, Thailand, in our capacity as the current **Chair of the Group of 77**, New York Chapter, for 2016 feels that this is an opportune time for us to share among the Group’s members and our friends our experiences and good practices in disaster risk reduction and health. We also attach great importance to the people-centered principle to reduce risks and uncertainties through the empowerment of the local communities, as guided by the **Sufficiency Economy Philosophy** of His Majesty the King of Thailand for more than 40 years.

7. Lastly, I would like to stress how much Thailand values this close partnership with UNISDR and WHO. We look forward to continue working closely together with the two agencies as well as the international community to promote a resilient health system by syncing health and disaster risk reduction plans and strategies and their implementation.

Thank you.