

Intervention
on Water Management in Thailand
for the Meeting of the Standing Committee
on Economic and Sustainable Development Affairs of
the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA)
by Hon. Gen. Nipat THONGLEK
Member of the National Legislative Assembly
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Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Mr. Chairperson,

Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Thai Delegation, I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation to the Senate of Pakistan for organizing this important meeting and hospitality extended to us since our arrival in Islamabad and to the Secretary General of the APA, Dr. M.H. Nejad Hosseinian, and his team of the APA Secretariat for their contribution and dedication to this meeting.

I come here today to reaffirm that Thailand is fully committed to cooperate with APA in all dimensions to achieve economic and sustainable development in Asia and support the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We are ready to work on building new initiatives and put together a plan for ensuring the promotion of an economically, socially and environmentally viable future for our planet and next generations.

Sustainability requires that humankind must learn to live in harmony with nature and lead a balanced life but nowadays, as a result of rapid economic, technological, industrial, and social development bring us to face the problem of environmental deterioration. Thailand, as an agricultural country has highly concerned about environmental issues particularly, the water issue.

Water is essential for human lives, ecosystems and national economics. Unplanned uses of water resources can take a negative impact to humans and their environment. Therefore, the sustainable water resource management should be formulated in accordance with Goal 6 of SDGs related to water and sanitation.

In fact, similar to other countries, Thailand has faced major challenges with regard to climate change and served drought and flood including poor water quality, which affected agriculture, industry and community. In order to ensure the continuity of country's development, we set up the Master Plan on Sustainable Water Resource Management, running from 2015 to 2026 for both urgent and long term. The Master Plan adopted His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's initiatives and the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy as guiding principles.

Under the master plan comprising six strategies, Thailand will implement water resource management at three levels. The first level, we emphasize the importance of water resource management and focus on restoring deteriorated forests and watershed areas and preventing soil erosion. This will help maintain an ecosystem and enhance a nature balance. We also plan to store the water by diverting it from natural sources in order to prevent the water shortages in a long term and to bring about water security.

The second level involves the water consumption. A target has been set to provide over 7,000 villages throughout the country with access to clean water by 2017 in order to reduce unequal access to this basic necessity. Since agricultural and industrial sectors sustain the country's rural economy, there is a need to ensure water security for these sectors and provide sufficient water sources, as well.

In the third level, which involves waste water management, Thailand aims to reduce waste water from its original sources. It will also increase the efficiency of waste water treatment plants and prevent seawater from pushing inland.

Distinguished Delegates,

Aside from the Strategies, Thailand implemented the royal initiatives on water management. Some of the important royal project examples are as follows:

(1) “Royal Rain Making Project” or known as Artificial Rain Making to solve shortage problem in the dry season to farmers and increasing water reservoirs,

(2) “Moisture Retention Dam Project” by making a small check - dams to help the forest more fertile and stop flood in rainy season,

(3) “Monkey Cheeks Project” (Kaem - ling), which will retain excess water to ease floods and store water to ease drought problem, and

(4) The prevention of soil degradation and erosion by using the Vetiver Grass.

Further, Thailand has been active in the sub – regional such as the Mekong River Commission (consists of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam) which was established to cooperate in a constructive and mutually beneficial manner of sustainable development and management of the Mekong River Basin water and ASEAN cooperation on Water Resources Management which aims to promote the sustainability of water resources to ensure equitable accessibility and sufficient water quantity of acceptable quality.

In addition, the Draft Water Resources Act is in the consideration of legislative process which will provide a framework of water resource management in all dimensions. We are ready to adopt the approach taken by this Meeting to formulate the legislation.

Lastly, I believe that water is an important tool for sustainable development. The key to success of sustainable development is to find the right balance between protecting the ecological system and economic development. I realize that all of us have their own development approaches. We stand ready to learn and exchange experiences and knowledges for our better world.

.....Thank you very much.