

Statement by the Delegation of Thailand
Ms. Piyaporn Putanapan
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
General discussion on rural women
7 October 2013
*** * * * ***

First of all, I would like to thank chairperson of the CEDAW Committee and panelists for their presentation.

As a developing country with a large proportion of rural population, including women living in rural areas, we view that the general discussion is timely. We share the committee's view that rural women are a group of women with specific needs. To uplift their well-being and ensure the protection of their rights, policies and measures at national and local levels have to take into consideration that all rights are intertwined. It requires a holistic approach to address the issue, from socio-economic and cultural rights to enhancing political participation and decision-making.

Thailand underscores the importance of promoting the principle of non-discrimination in order to enable them with access to services and opportunity and contribute to the well-being of their families and communities. We place rural women on high priority and the allocation of sufficient resources and financial support to enable them to live with dignity and the betterment of female headed households. Towards this goal, empowering women through ensuring the realization of their economic, social and cultural rights is therefore prerequisite of an inclusive society where every member can lead a full and productive life.

Here, we take good note of the suggested new provisions as proposed in the concept note. We are of view that these provisions further elaborate on what the committee expects from State Parties, as well as main challenges faced by the committee, which we see the merit for its inclusion in the guidelines.

In this regard, I wish to share some of Thailand's initiatives to increase women's participation in economic sphere. The Thai Government has established the first National Women's Development Fund to support and promote women's role and provide them with financial resource for investment to improve women's potential and career opportunities. Universal access to education for all, regardless of their status and documentation, is viewed as the key driving force for human resources development. One other initiative is the set up of the ICT community learning centre as a way to empower rural and urban women through the use of ICT.

Lastly, we regret that the Special Rapporteur on safe drinking water and sanitation could not stay until the end of the meeting. Thailand concurs with the Special Rapporteur that human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation is a progressive realization. We admit that challenges remain and we wish to ensure that these challenges are being addressed as they result from implementation gap, not because of policies. However, a conclusion should not be drawn that migrant workers are discriminated against in this regard. Thai workers engaged in employment on temporary work sites also encounter similar problem and the Government spares no efforts to address the issue.
