

Subject: Call for inputs on promoting and protecting economic, social, and cultural rights within the context of addressing inequalities in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

Inputs on economic policies, legislation, promising practices or strategies and national, regional or local processes that can support Thailand in:

- **achieving Inclusive and green economic growth in line with international human rights norms and standards**

Thailand has implemented the **National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP on BHR)** in accordance with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). The Action Plan provides comprehensive guidelines for business sector and stakeholders on accountability in upholding human rights principles and preventing human rights violations from business activities. The plan emphasizes 4 Key Priority Areas; namely, **(1) labour (2) community, land, natural resource and environment (3) human Rights defenders and (4) cross border investment and multinational enterprise**. Thailand is in the process of finalizing the second action plan, which will be implemented from 2023 - 2027.

Regarding **green economy**, Thailand aims to revise relevant legal provisions and implement policies in line with international human rights and environmental norms and standards. On the aspect of community, land, natural resources, and environment in the NAP on BHR, the **“Dispute Resolution Service Office”** was established by the Ministry of Justice to settle disputes involving communities and land rights, which is one of the remarkable achievements of the first phase of the NAP implementation (2019 - 2021). Furthermore, the Securities Exchange of Thailand (SET) introduced **“One Report,”** which requires businesses to evaluate and disclose the impact of their investment in the area of governance, social, and environment.

Regarding fiscal measures, the Ministry of Finance issued the **“Sustainability Bond”** to finance green infrastructure projects and support Thailand in recovering from COVID-19. Several green infrastructure projects and social impact projects have been funded by the Sustainability Bond such as the Metropolitan Rapid Transit Orange Line and COVID-19 alleviation programme for people affected by the pandemic. Thailand also seeks to develop **Sustainable Finance Initiative (SFI)** in order to provide framework for financing sustainability. Such initiative has already been adopted by state-owned banks. Moreover, the Ministry of Finance provided funds and technical support for the implementation of projects concerning the reduction of greenhouse gas and climate change such as the Climate Change Adaptation in Agriculture for Enhanced Recovery and Sustainability of Highlands project, which has been supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

As an effort to increase incentive for green economic growth investment in Thailand, the Ministry of Finance reduced the excise tax for hybrid electric vehicle and

electric vehicle cars. Meanwhile, gas-powered vehicles will be taxed according to their carbon emission levels.

At international level, as the chair of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 2022, Thailand advocated more regional cooperation that integrates inclusivity and sustainability objectives in tandem with economic goals, including the promotion of the **Bio-Circular-Green economy**.

- **increasing social spending through national and local budgets, for the realization of economic, social, and cultural rights (e.g. rights related to health, food, water and sanitation, housing, education, social protection, and work)**

To ensure that all Thai citizens gain access to COVID-19 prevention kits during the pandemic, the Ministry of Commerce enforced **price control measures on face masks and alcohol sanitizers**. The government also provided free masks for people who live in the high-risk areas. At the same time, Thailand also put in place measures related to the export of masks to secure the adequate supply for the domestic use.

Thailand has introduced a wide range of **social welfare schemes** as relief and recovery measures from COVID-19. Such schemes include providing **Unconditional Cash Transfer (CCT)** to the welfare card holders who are low-income earners in the amount of 3,000 THB for 3 months in 2021, the **Rao Mai Ting Gun (No One Left Behind) Scheme** providing a monthly transfer of 5,000 THB for a period of 3 months in 2020 for informal workers and people who were not being covered by Social Security Scheme, the **Khon La Khrueng Scheme (Co-Payment Scheme)** easing financial burden and encouraging citizens' spending on essential food and products, the **Rao Chana (We Win) Scheme** providing grants to targeted groups to reduce the cost of living during economic recession, and **Shop Dee Mee Kuen (Shop and Payback) Scheme** stimulating domestic spending.

Additionally, the Ministry of Finance has collaborated with the private sector to promote the **Blue Flag Scheme**, reducing prices of eggs, rice, cooking oil, and canned foods for local communities. The Ministry of Commerce also assisted low-income earners by opening shops under the Blue Flag Scheme that sell products at low and affordable prices to local communities across the country. Blue Flag mobile groceries, and Blue Flag restaurants which are also part of the Blue Flag Scheme provided various channels for and different types of affordable goods during the pandemic.

The Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with the Bank of Thailand and Specialized Financial Institutions (SFIs), also introduced several **COVID-19 relief measures** to protect market liquidity and support business owners who were affected by the pandemic, including measures on loans and debt relief, aiming to establish informed and sustainable processes for those affected by COVID-19. On the legal side, the Dispute Resolution Act B.E. 2562 (2019) was promulgated to ease household debt and alleviate uneven economic recovery through the process of negotiation. In addition, the Ministry of Justice organized the **“National Household Debt Mediation Fair”** 78 times throughout 2022 to provide legal advice on debts and loans. The Fair has helped 92,531 individuals and saving them from paying legal fees.

On the local level, Thailand has made a strong commitment to stimulate the grassroots economy and industry sector in a balanced and sustainable manner by emphasizing industrial development and enhance community's production capacities. In order to achieve this goal, the Ministry of Industry has established a number of programs to strengthen and increase competitiveness of local micro-entrepreneurs, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), community enterprises, and One Tambon One Product (OTOP) – a government-supported local entrepreneurship stimulus programme which aims to promote and market unique locally-made products of each sub-districts in Thailand. Emphasizing on low-income earners, elderly, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups, the Ministry of Industry organised **vocational training workshops** on the production of local products according to royal initiatives for 804 individuals, workshops on the strengthening of community enterprises in order for them be resilient in the supply chain for 30 groups and promoted product development to increase the value of local products while maintaining their identity for 200 products. The programmes also seek to utilize local resources while taking into account biodiversity and cultural diversity in order to produce marketable goods and services that will generate income and capital flows for local communities and; therefore, strengthen grassroots economies.

• addressing structural discrimination in economic planning and budget decisions

The 4th National Human Rights Plan (2019 - 2566) addresses pressing human rights concerns in the country with focuses on specific areas and groups of persons whose rights may be at risk of being violated as well as how to better tackle existing structural discrimination. The Draft 5th National Human Rights Plans (2023 - 2027), currently under cabinet consideration, puts particular focus on the allocation of funds in areas of public health, economy and education, as well as Gig Economy and Digital Economy readiness, household debt relief, and SMEs affected by COVID-19, all of which are Thailand's national development priorities.

• maximizing available resources, including progressive taxation, industrial policies and curtailing illicit financial flows, for progressively achieving the full realization of all economic, social and cultural rights

Thailand has been implementing a progressive tax procedure based on individual income and assets for both personal and corporate income tax with an aim to reduce economic inequalities and ensure Thai citizens' economic rights are fully realized. Thailand's tax system also includes financial transaction tax to monitor illicit financial flows.
