

## **Part One: Overview of achievements and challenges in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment**

### **a) The national policy on the gender equality and the empowerment of women**

The Women's Development in the Tenth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2007-2011) has been implemented. The plan seeks to focus on changing attitudes of Thai society towards gender equality, while continuing to build women's capacity to enable them to live to their full potential as both actors for and beneficiaries of national development. The objectives are 1) to achieve better respect of human integrity and gender equality among children, youth, women and men, 2) to increase the numbers of women in politics and administration at all levels, 3) to improve participation of women representing different groups in the area of health policy formulation, and promote access to quality health care and reproductive health services, 4) to decrease significantly cases of violence against women, while improving access to resources and services when such cases occur, and 5) to create conditions for improved women's economic participation and benefit sharing.

Five strategies to promote women's advancement and gender equality are designed as follows: 1) Mobilize all stakeholders to promote attitude change towards gender equality; 2) Increase women's participation in political decision making; 3) Improve access to health care services; 4) Strengthen women's rights to human security and 5) Foster women's economic participation

### **b) The impact of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the concluding comments**

Elimination inequalities, gender equality promotion and women empowerment are one of top priority issues which Thailand concerns to take a serious effort and make an advancement concerning these issues. Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD), Ministry of Social Development and Human Security acts as a national mechanism which is responsible for promoting gender equality and empowering women by creating policies, developing measures, and working through networks for gender equality. The Tenth National Women's Plan is being used as a guideline for other organizations to create gender equality and women empowerment and integrate the plan into their projects and activities. The Tenth National Women's Plan focuses on changing attitudes of Thai society towards gender equality, while continuing to build women's capacity to enable them to live to their full potential as both actors for and beneficiaries of national development.

Additionally, Thailand provides both national and practical machineries for being a focal point on implementing gender equality issues. National Commissions on Women's Affairs and Family Development, Chief Gender Equality Officer (CGEO) and Gender Focal Point (GFP) are machineries for passing through gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming into their policies and plan, for example; there are Five Year Master Plan for Gender Equality (2007 – 2011) in every departments to be guidelines for officers and agencies to create gender equality in their agencies as well work with their target groups by concerning on gender sensitivity. Another clear signifier of CEDAW impact is the fact that a number of laws have been reviewed or adopted in recent years through a participatory process in order to improve gender equality or benefit women. For example, Additional Amendment of Penal Code that criminalizes marital rape ,and the definition of "victim" has been expanded so that men, can file rape charges against a woman or another man. Pregnant women who are sentenced to death now have their sentences commuted to life in prison. Additional Amendment of Commercial Code is also amended on matters which deprive women's right such as grounds for divorce. In addition, Protection of Persons in Domestic Violence has been enacted since September 2007. This law is another step for specific machinery in dealing with domestic violence.

Furthermore, OWAFD has a five years project (2007 – 2011) to establish Gender Equality Information Center via [www.gender.go.th](http://www.gender.go.th) in order to be the center of gender information, for example; e-learning, gender statistic. In 2007, OWAFD cooperating with UNDP implement Thailand Gender Disaggregated Database and Information System.

Finally, OWAFD supports and empowers women's potential both in politics and economy. There are many activities to empower women to enter in politics such as training women in being leaders, and preparing them to be ready for the election, community brain storming for raising social awareness of an important of women's political participation, a radio and television spot productions both official

language and dialects to campaign women's political participation. As women's economic development is another way to develop women's potential. Thailand tries to encourage women's economic potential throughout projects and activities, for examples; Business Incubation Centre, Skills development for women labour and self- employed women, and ICT trainings for women entrepreneurs.

**c) The main legislative and policy-making achievements in the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment over the past decade**

**The Act on the Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence B.E. 2550 (2007)** has been declared in the Royal Gazette on August 14, 2007, and enacted in Thailand since November 12, 2007. The act addresses domestic violence, which is defined as 'any action intended to inflict harm on a family member's physical, mental or health condition and any use of coercion or unethical domination to compel a family member to commit, omit or accept any unlawful act, except for that committed through negligence.' The act aims to protect family members, which include spouse, former spouse, ones who live and cohabit together or used to do so as husband and wife with out marriage registration, legitimate child, adopted child, family member/ any dependant one who has to live in the same household.

**d) Gender-responsive budgeting**

Gender budgeting in Thailand started in 2006. The Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD) and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung have jointly organized several workshops on gender budgeting as to promote knowledge creation and recognition of gender budgeting for Chief Gender Equality Officers (CGEOs), Gender Focal Points (GFPs), government officials, academics, women leaders and others who are interested in using gender budgeting in their organizations. The objectives of the workshops are 1) to promote knowledge creation and understanding on integrating gender perspective into the budgeting process; 2) to gather opinions and assess the possibility of applying the concept of gender budgeting in the Thai context; 3) to draft the guidelines for developing the work plan to promote gender budgeting, both in terms of researches, body of knowledge and campaign; 4) to create network of people working on gender budgeting.

**e) The Millennium Development Goal (MDGs)**

Thailand has already achieved most of the MDGs, and are very likely to achieve all before the year 2015 i.e the 1<sup>st</sup> , 3<sup>rd</sup> , 6<sup>th</sup> goals have already been achieved, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> goals are enjoying good progress, while the 4<sup>th</sup> , 5<sup>th</sup> goals are not applicable to Thailand. As for the 8<sup>th</sup> goal, the government of Thailand is ready to cooperate, assist and to share our experiences and best practices with other countries who are our companions along the path of pursuing MDGs. Thailand's first MDG report has already been presented to the UN National Assembly in the year 2005. Perceiving MDGs as contributing to our national course of economic and social development and the enhancement of our people's life opportunity and human security, Thailand strives to do even better by setting more challenging goals, stately the 'MDG Plus' (MDG+) , as to make MDGs more corresponding to Thailand's context of development, and to express our firm commitment to improve the life quality of Thai people. The MDG+ concerning with women are 1) double the number of women's participation in the parliament, local administrative organizations and senior administrative positions in public offices. (MDG3+) and 2) reduce the number of maternal mortality by half, essentially in mountainous areas, some northern provinces and 3 southern border provinces (MDG5+).

**f) The Thai government's major policy discussion and/ or parliamentary debates where gender perspectives and the concerns of women have been taken; recent major reforms that have been taken place; major problems that have been debated**

Apart from the discussion and approval of the Act on the Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence B.E. 2550 (2007) and the draft acts in concerned with the issues of women and gender equality already mentioned, the Cabinet has also discussed and approved the proposal from the Office of the Civil Service Commission on December 4, 2007 regarding the leave grant for female officials' religious practices. A leave of 3-month for religious practice per one government official has been officially approved by the cabinet, yet the grant is subject to consideration of the ministry/department whereby the officials are working.

**g) Women's involvement in armed conflict.**

The role of Thai women in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution is not really an issue in Thailand. Nevertheless, female soldiers do currently serve in the Royal Thai Armed Forces. Some of these are stationed in military bases located in the various regions of Thailand. Up to now, their role have been more in regular security operations and not in conflict resolution. Women also involve in negotiation, mediation, and facilitation, for examples; women represent 54.55 % in the National Human Right Commission, while there are 10% in the National Reconciliation Commission.

**h) The effect of globalization on women**

Globalization and IT advancement has enabled the accesses to information and knowledge that are useful for the development of women's potentiality, as well as promoting women's roles. However, the IT advancement also facilitates the reproduction and spread of women's negative images, prejudice and negative attitude towards women. Also, the use of new technologies in factories instead of labor force, as well as lots of cheaper labour and products from overseas, notably agricultural products, have affected a notable number of women in labour and agricultural sector, whereas women entrepreneurs have to catch up with the rapid advancement of ICT may require a serious attempts to catch up, which could mean needs for developing various skills necessary for entering the global market.

**i) The sector areas that have specific policies, strategies and action plan for the promotion of gender equality**

Recognizing that women's participation in decision-making especially in politics is highly crucial for generate political will for the promotion of gender equality, Thailand has developed, and is currently implementing **The Memorandum of Understanding on the Campaign and Promotion of Women's Participation in Local Politics and the Protection of Women's Rights**. The units/ organizations participated in the MOU propose to promote and support the development of women's academic and practical potentiality in order to prepare them for participation in local politics, campaign and promote recognition among the local community regarding the significances and benefits of women's participation in local politics, promote and support women's participation in politics as voters, candidates, and efficient local executives as well as collect and analyze the results of elections of local administrative officers at all levels in order to illustrate the development of women's participation in politics, election and positions in public offices.

**j) The partnerships with NGOs, the civil society, private sector and other stageholders in support the national efforts on gender equality and empowerment of women.**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Women development plan of Thailand had emphasized the promotion of partnerships among stakeholders, which include the public, political and private sectors, local administrative organizations and the civil society in promoting women's participation in politics and decision-making. Political parties are encouraged to develop policy for women, and the promotion of women's participation in development at all level, as well as to nominate women for decision-making position in politics, the local administrative organization

**k) The efforts to engage men and boys in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.**

As a part of the campaign on November as the Campaign Month for Ending Violence against Women, the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development and its partner organizations, including the media and the private sector has also launched the White Ribbon Campaign and the Gentlemen against VAW Campaign as to engage men and boys in addressing violence against women. The campaigns, which are regularly launched in November every year, include the collection of signatures, as well as the distribution of 'white ribbon' necktie pins for men and boys, notably public figures such as the prime minister, politicians and celebrities, to put on as a sign of commitment to end violence against women. The main message of the campaign is that men and boy can, and should play a part in the elimination of violence against women by 'Not Committing, Not Approving and Not Neglecting' should violence against women happens.

### **l) The impact of climate change, food and energy crises on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women**

Thailand has concerned on Global warming and climate change because these problems affect on our world as well as Thailand in many aspects, for examples; variable of weather, biological varieties, agriculture and water source, etc. In addition, these problems will effect on people' s quality of life in many areas such as health and socio-economics. Thailand established national machinery, Commission on Natural Resource and Environment, the National Legislative Assembly, in 2006 for considering and studying feasible laws and actions relating on natural resources and environment prevention, protection, and reservation. Climate change is one of the priority issues that the commission concerns. The commission pushes Thailand to review laws related on environment focusing on controlling pollution and environment problems.

### **m) The impact of financial crisis on the promotion of gender equality**

An NESDB research on the impacts of Thailand's 1997 financial crisis found that the unemployment rate of men was higher than women. However, the effect of financial crisis on women is revealed by the fact that female labour tended to receive lower wages. Consequently, the wage gap between male and female labour is wider during the time of economic crisis.

A study on the impact of economic crisis on rural community found that community women felt that the economic crisis generated more family conflicts, rising thief cases and promoted more gambling. Also, women were most concerned for their children's education in the time of economic crisis.

## **Part Two: Progress in implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and the further initiatives and actions identified in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly**

### **A. Examples of successful policies, legislative change and programmes and projects**

Successful actions, and specific commitment of Thailand in relation to the critical areas of concern in the Platform of Action are as the following:

- **Women and Poverty**

Economic and income development always remain top priorities in Thailand's national agenda. The government of Thailand has been continuously attempted to implement policies and measures to tackle the problems of poverty, while urging for cooperation from concerned partners such as the private sectors, NGOs and financial institution. Though the Thai government do not have specific policies to address the problem of women's poverty, many of their policies are useful for promoting women's accesses to resources and public services. Examples of successful policies implemented in the past years, which have been adopted and improved by the current government of Thailand, are:

1) **Short-term debt suspension programmes for farmers, small-scale agricultural producers and poor people** – This programme builds on the 3-year-debt suspension for small-scale agricultural producers of the past government by expanding the target groups to cover other groups of poor people, and including career and skill development training in the programme. As to ensure that the programme effectively improve life quality for the target groups, only those who have completed the training course will be granted debt suspension.

2) **Improvement of the One Tambon One Product programme** – In continuation from the previous government's 'One Tambon One Product' or community product development programme, this programme seeks to promote and improve the community's use of native materials and resources, including cultural wisdom, to promote development of unique community products. Meanwhile, the government will promote more accesses to modern production technologies and capital for the communities, as well as the development of their management and marketing capacity.

3) **SML Loans and the People's Bank** – This programme builds on the Village Fund programme of the previous government by means of broadening the target group to cover other forms of community e.g. poor people's communities in urban areas. The provision of loans will take the size of the population (Small, Medium, Large – SML) into consideration. The funds provided by the government are intended to be the seed fund for communities to develop their capacity to solve problems and to develop programmes that generate sustainable incomes, develop the communities' wealth, protect and preserve natural resources and environment, as well as develop linkages among the use of natural resources at the national, provincial and local levels. The allocation and management of SML loans provide basis for the development of the People's Bank, as to be the centre for fund-circulation in the community, promotion of accesses to credits for people with less income as to promote their career and income development opportunities.

Apart from the programmes/projects already mentioned, the Thai government, recognizing the immediate problems which result from the global economic crisis, seeks to ameliorate the situation by means of stabilizing the currency values, as well as the prices of goods and energy products, at an appropriate level. Also, the government will create a system to promote stability of agricultural products prices as to help small-scale agricultural producers who are affected by natural disasters.

Though these programmes/projects are designed and implemented for the benefit of the target groups as a whole, it is hoped that, with the collection of sex-disaggregated data, and the promotion of researches on the development of these programmes/projects using gender analyses, the programmes/projects on poverty eradication of the Thai government shall be further revised to better address the feminization of poverty.

- **Education and Training of Women**

Thailand has already achieved MGD goal 3 with regard to the elimination of gender disparity in education with the equal access for education at all levels for girls and boys. The number of boys are slightly more than girls in primary school level with the ratio of 1:0.93, while at higher levels, there are slightly more girls than boys i.e. 1:1.01 at the secondary school level, and 1:1.15 at university level. The Article 43 of the Constitution of Thailand B.E. 2550 (2007) specifies that people have equal rights to receive at least 12-year basic education of good quality and free of charge. The same article also emphasizes that the state's provision of education must consider and promote the participation of local administrative organizations and NGOs, and that the education provided by the vocational schools or private institutions under the state's supervision must be protected by law. Moreover, the Act of Compulsory Education B.E. 2545 (2003) specifies that the father, mother or parent of a child of 6 years old must provide the child with basic education for at least 9 years.

At the higher level of education, it is found that more women than men tend to pursue their education in higher degrees such at masters and doctoral levels i.e. 52.37% of graduates, or 16, 058 graduates who completed postgraduate degrees are women, which may be divided into 306 PhD graduates (53.40% of all PhD graduates) and 14, 561 masters degree graduates (51.75% of all masters degree graduates). Additionally, women who cannot participate in normal school system are encouraged to enroll in the informal system of education. Statistics from the Office of Informal Education Administration of the Ministry of Education in the year 2005 revealed that more women have enrolled for informal education than men i.e. 1.320, 959 women (60.13%) have enrolled in comparison with 875,909 men.

As to further address the persisting problems of gender inequality of education, which result from gender stereotypical attitudes, the Thai government, with the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development and the Ministry of Education as focal points, have worked closely with NGOs, the private sectors and civil society in 1) promoting gender mainstreaming in the master plan of the Ministry of Education; 2) collecting and using sex-disaggregate data in all aspects; 3) promoting works of Chief Gender Equality Officers (CGEOs) in all universities./ colleges; 4) promoting knowledge and information as to correct the attitudes for parents, students and teachers regarding gender roles by means of amending the curriculums and educational media; 5) promoting educational/training institutions and units/organizations that provide educational and vocational trainings to collect sex-disaggregate data so that the problems of gender inequality be reflected; 6) promoting opportunities for women with unwanted pregnancy to attend and complete their education; 7) promoting and supporting studies and researches in human dignity, values and gender equality.

- **Women and Health**

Recognizing that the issue of women and health covers more than just the health of mother and child and the accesses to healthcare services, Thailand seeks to promote women's decision making power with regard to their own health, as well as accesses to community's and social resources.

In the past few years, several draft laws that specifically address the problem of women and health have been proposed. Examples are the **Draft Act on Reproductive Health Protection B.E. ...**, which proposes to promote reproductive rights and reproductive health processes that women currently bear more burdens, and the **Draft National Health Act B.E.....**, which proposes to promote women's accesses to fair and comprehensive healthcare services. The draft act addresses the roles of women as the receivers of healthcare services, caregivers, and the family healthcare. These acts are now under the consideration of the Office of the Juridical Council.

The article 52 of the Constitution of Thailand B.E. 2550 (2007) stipulates that people have equal right to receive standard public health services, and that underprivileged people are entitled for free healthcare services from the public hospitals and healthcare centres. According to the article, the state's provision of healthcare services should be comprehensive and efficient. Local administrative organizations and the private sector are encouraged to participate in the provision of public

healthcare as much as possible. Meanwhile, the current Thai government has the policy to promote healthcare development of people by means of providing universal healthcare coverage, promoting more and improved accesses to healthcare services, and reforming the public healthcare administration with regard to treatments, recovery, prevention of diseases and health promotion. Although these policies do not have specific objectives or goals on women, they ensure that women shall not be denied accesses to healthcare services and benefits provided by the government.

- **Violence against women**

Realizing that violence against women severely violates women's human rights, as well as undermine their well-being, livelihood and life quality as a whole, the issue has been set among the top priorities of Thailand's national agendas. The Constitution of Thailand B.E. 2550 (2007) includes the provisions with regard to the protection of women's rights, and especially to cases of violence against women as the following:

**Article 4** Human dignity, rights, freedom and equality of people must be protected.

**Article 40 (6)** Children, youth, elderly and persons with disability must be properly treated in legal cases whereby sexual violence is concerned.

Additionally, **The Act on the Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence B.E. 2550 (2007)**, which is a specific law on violence against women, has been declared in the Royal Gazette on August 14, 2007, and enacted in Thailand since November 12, 2007. The act addresses domestic violence, which is defined as 'any action intended to inflict harm on a family member's physical, mental or health condition and any use of coercion or unethical domination to compel a family member to commit, omit or accept any unlawful act, except for that committed through negligence.' The act aims to protect family members, which include spouse, former spouse, ones who live and cohabit together or used to do so as husband and wife with out marriage registration, legitimate child, adopted child, family member/ any dependant one who has to live in the same household.

As to further promote coordinated implementation and monitoring of the act, the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development has established the **Coordinating Centre for the Act of Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence B.E. 2550 (2007)** and has dedicated 5-10 staff/civil servants to work for the centre. The main functions are to promote recognition and knowledge about the act for concerned units/organizations and the public by means of organizing seminars and provide trainings for officers, as well as coordinate actions among concerned units/organizations both in public, private sectors and civil society. Also, **the Operation Centre for the Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence** has been established through a regulation of the Act of Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence B.E. 2550 (2007) since August, 2007 under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. The mandates are to 1) provide immediate services for DV victims; 2) coordinate, support and follow-up the practice of temporary protective orders; 3) coordinate with concerned officer/court regarding case settlement; 4) coordinate with local networks and administrative authorities and 5) collect data and information on DV and report to the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development. Meanwhile, Pathumthani Hospital has launched the **Pilot Project on the Multidisciplinary Mechanisms and System for Monitoring the Act on the Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence B.E. 2550 (2007)**. Having successfully integrated their existing multidisciplinary practices in dealing with DV cases into the implementation of each article of the act and taken into consideration the relationship between the new act and other existing legal mechanisms, the project will serve a role model for other hospitals to develop similar projects in following years.

Another best practice of services provided for women who are victims of domestic violence is **the One Stop Crisis Centre (OSCC)** which is a multidisciplinary unit providing comprehensive services for victims of violence in Thailand. Based in hospitals, both at the tertiary and community levels, the centre is equipped not only with medical doctors and nurses, but also representatives from the police department, the office of attorney, GO/NGO emergency home, and social workers from the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. Thus, in the case that legal advice, or provision of place in a sheltering home is needed, victims may get access to immediate services

and assistance. An OSCC usually assumes multifunctional roles i.e. as a call centre to receive reported cases of VAW, a coordinating centre with other units, e.g. police station, the court or the ministry, if needed, and a centre for VAW information, mental supports and advice along with the physical treatments.

Apart from the aspects of treatments and protection of VAW, Thailand also seeks to promote nation-wide recognition of November as the campaign month for ending violence against women, The Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development has coordinated with, and requested cooperation from the media i.e. the country's main television channels, newspapers and radio programmes to broadcast spots, news pieces and articles, which includes statistics on violence against women notably in November of every year, and regularly should there be any other occasions that the issue may be brought into light. The most recent campaign of the year 2008 has been themed as the **"Say No to Violence" Campaign**, which includes organization of a national seminars and a popular campaign. Co-organized by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Office of the Supporting Fund for Healthcare, Ramathibodi Hospitals, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Justice and the Friend of Women Foundation, Thailand's princess and the UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador, HRH Princess Bajarakitiyabha Mahidol, has been invited to preside over, and to deliver a public statement at the opening of the national seminar entitled **'The 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Act on the Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence B.E. 2550 (2007): The Innovation for Professionally Tackling with Domestic Violence'** on November 22, 2008. The total audience of approximately 1,200 people includes high-level government officials and practitioners from public/ private sectors and the media.

In the mean time, the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development and its partner organizations, including the media and the private sector has also launched the **White Ribbon Campaign and the Gentlemen against VAW Campaign** as to engage men and boys in addressing violence against women. The campaigns, which are regularly launched in November every year, include the collection of signatures, as well as the distribution of 'white ribbon' necktie pins for men and boys, notably public figures such as the prime minister, politicians and celebrities, to put on as a sign of commitment to end violence against women. The main message of the campaign is that men and boy can, and should play a part in the elimination of violence against women by 'Not Committing, Not Approving and Not Neglecting' should violence against women happens.

- **Women and Armed Conflict**

It must be said that the role of Thai women in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution is not really an issue in Thailand. A number of women soldiers do currently serve in the Royal Thai Armed Forces. Some of these are stationed in military bases located in the various regions of Thailand. Up to now, their role have been more in **regular security operations and not in conflict resolution, as there is no armed conflict in Thailand**. Thus most of them are playing supporting roles in areas such as military intelligence and field nursery. We also have female rangers in a light infantry force which is deployed in the border provinces. These female rangers are involved in border patrol operations, managing sporadic acts of violence by criminal elements or managing protests that involve cultural and gender sensitivities, and providing support in times national emergencies and natural disasters. Women also involve in negotiation, mediation, and facilitation, for examples; women represent 54.55 % in the National Human Right Commission, while there are 10% in the National Reconciliation Commission.

- **Women and Economy**

Thai women play important roles in economic development. The percentage of Thai women participating in the work force is 65.1% of the total number of women who are over 15 years old all over Thailand. The percentage of women who have accesses to the labour market also increased from 52.41% in the year 2002 to 59.45% in the year 2006. Moreover, the collection of sex-disaggregated data from the Department of Skill Development, Ministry of Labour during the years 2002 – 2006 revealed that the percentage of women who received skill development trainings in the year 2006 is 48.3% (50, 211 women from the total number of 103,846) , a 7.46% increase from 40.89% in the year 2002. Statistics in the year 2006 reveal that most women are in the service



sectors (61.8%) and education (59.3%); 54.3% of women work in production sectors, while 33% are in public administration. Apart from the formal sector, women also contribute a valuable aspect to the informal i.e. caring economy by means of taking care of the family, nurturing children, as well as taking care of sick family members and old people.

**Article 86 Constitution of Thailand B.E. 2550 (2007)** specifies that the state must promote people in working ages to have formal work, protect labour, especially child and women labour, establish labour network and social protection system, as well as assuring fair wages. Also, Thai labour are protected by **the Act of Labour Protection B.E. 2541 (1998)** which states in article 15 that male and female labour are subject to equal treatments unless the type of work does not permit so; article 16 that sexual harassment by employers/ inspectors must be prohibited; article 53, in following the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 100, that male and female employees are to receive equal salary and over-time wages for work of the same type, quality and amount. Women who work in the informal sector are also protected by **the Regulation of the Ministry of Labour B.E. 2547 (2004)**.

- **Women in Power and Decision Making**

Thailand's strong determination to promote women in power and decision making may be seen from the attempt to set additional target for the MDG goal 3 in gender equality, stately the MDG+. That is to say, apart from the standard goal in promoting gender equality in education, Thailand seek to double the number of women's participation in the parliament, local administrative organizations and senior administrative positions in public offices. In accordance to this, Thai Women's Development Plan in the 10<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan, B.E. 2550 – 2554 (2007 – 2011) has set one of its principle objectives as *enhancing women's opportunities to participate in politics and administration*. The target of this objective is for Thai women to enjoy equal participation in political and administrative decision-making processes, including the decisions at the highest level that shape the national agenda and development directions. Furthermore, this objective underlines the significance of encouraging more women to participate in local politics and administration, as it implies their justified share and equal accesses to resources and benefits from the country's course of development.

At present, the number of elected female MPs in the year 2008 is 56 from the total number of 480 MPs. (11.7%), whereas the number of elected female members of the Senate in the year 2008 is 12 from the total number of 76. (15.8%). The number of women in high level of administrative positions/ executives in public administration is 131 from the total number of 510 (25.69%). It is expected that, with the establishment of CGEOs/GFPs in every public office, the glass ceiling for women to be in higher position should be gradually reduced in near future.

- **Human Rights of Women**

Thailand has abided by international commitments on human rights i.e. the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action on Human Rights, Sexual Violence and Harassment, Cultural Prejudice and Human Trafficking, the 1994 Declaration and Plan of Action on Population and Development -- Sexual and Reproductive Rights, and Sexual Expression, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA) on Women's Rights, Gender Equality and Development, of which the government pledges to change to the unequal power structure between women and men in the Thai society. The National Mechanism on Human Rights, namely the National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR) has been established in 2001, and has been cooperating closely with the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development on the issues of women's human rights i.e. monitoring implementation of CEDAW and the BPFA.

**Article 30 of the Constitution of Thailand B.E. 2550 (2005)** defines that people are all equal and equally protected by law. Men and women have equal rights, and discrimination with regard to difference in place of birth, nationality, language, sex, age, education or political orientation shall

be prohibited. Meanwhile, measures specified by the state to eliminate obstacles or promote certain groups of people to enjoy equal rights with the others shall not be considered as discrimination.

Apart from the Act on the Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence B.E. 2550 (2007) which has been recently declared, another clear sign of progress on women's right in Thailand is the Act on Women's Titles B.E.... , which gives married women the rights to choose their own title either 'Miss' or 'Mrs.'. In addition, the penal code article 276 concerning the rape cases has already been amended to include penalty for marital rapes. Thailand is currently working on the next step to further promote women's equality and rights by means of proposing the draft law on gender equality.

- **Women and the Media**

Statistics from the Department of Public Relations show that the number of women working in the media has risen from 25.99% (229 women from the total number of 881 registered media) in the year 2002 to 41.04% (314 women from the total number of 818 registered media). The Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development is currently working with partner units/ organizations, especially through CEGOs/GFPs in related ministries/ organizations, in promoting trainings to create understanding on gender equality, gender roles, respect and non-violation of women's human rights, the appropriate representation of women in the media i.e. non-stereotypical and more diverse roles of women so that the society realize the potential and valuable contribution of women's equal participation. Also, the MediaMonitor campaign has been launched to monitor and attempt to decrease the representation of women the reproduces negative images of women or gender prejudice in all types of media. The campaign also proposes to promote cooperation, exchanges of opinions and experiences among the media regarding women's roles and the promotion of gender equality within the media.

- **Women and the Environment**

The current Thai government has attached high importance to the roles of good environment and natural resources in enhancing the quality of life for its people as well as the nation's competitive capacity. Importance has been attached to the administration that integrates the economic and social aspects into the management of natural resources and environment protection, while encouraging people and community's participation. With the establishment of Chief Gender Equality Officer and Gender Focal Points in all in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, it is expected that gender awareness in environmental issues will be developed and mainstreamed. Also, in the area of climate change, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security has proceeded parallel with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in promoting women's participation in all processes including initiator, decision maker, manager and participant on the benefit of development. In addition, Thailand focuses on local wisdom which is one factors of sustainable development. Furthermore, collecting sex- disaggregated data in the Ministry of National Resources and Environment will help to analyze an effect of projects and programmes and plan policies which create sustainable development and equity for all.

- **The Girl Child**

Thailand has made consistent steps to revise and enact legislation to harmonize its national laws with the principles and provisions of CEDAW and CRC in order to protect and promote the rights of girls to equal treatments and opportunities. The Thai Government, for example, enacted the Child Protection Act in 2003 as a primary mechanism to safeguard the rights of the child regardless of their gender. Thailand has also given its attention to provide forum for children to express their opinions. In 2005, the Thai Government initiated a process that led to the establishment of children and youth councils in four provinces, which later on was expanded throughout the country in 2006. These councils become places where girls can suggest what should be done to elevate their status and well beings. Through this channel, their voices can be heard. Furthermore, Thailand's achievement to be highlighted is the elimination of disparity among boys and girls in primary and secondary levels of education which is, in fact, the goal no. 3 of the Millennium Development Goals. Within the first few years of working towards this goal, Thailand successfully reached the

objective. Then, Thailand welcomes the further challenge in this matter by aiming to reduce gender disparities in education at the tertiary level. The statistics from 1999-2001 indicates pleasant result that the number of female undergraduate students has continually increased in all fields including some non-traditional ones such as Law, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery. This trend points out to the positive future that Thailand will be able to achieve this challenging goal in the near future. In addition, Thailand is aware that violence against girl child occurs both in family and in private sphere. Therefore, our policies and plans to address this issue target these two areas especially. Campaigns to strengthen the relationships among family members are organized with the objective to prevent violence in all forms against women and girls in domestic area. Annual campaign to eliminate violence against women and children are also held to raise public awareness about violence and its impact on the victims so that the whole society unites to fight against it. Thailand also established 109 One Stop Crisis Centres throughout the country in public hospitals with multidisciplinary approach to provide supports physically and mentally to the victims of violence such as counseling, welfare assistance, treatment, home visit, legal assistance and sheltering. In 2005, approximately 5,800 children received helped from the centers.

### **B. Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining challenges**

Main obstacles, gaps and challenges encountered in the implementation of some notable critical areas of concerns may be described as the following:

- **Women and Poverty**

Thai women, especially those in rural areas, still lack opportunities and accesses to resources and services, especially financial services. The large part of the reasons necessarily lies in the enduring traditional attitude. That is to say, Thai women still have to depend largely upon their husbands, or male members of the family when coming to income questions or making economic decisions. Moreover, the facts that more Thai women become educated thanks to the government's universal 12-year education policy, and more women labour flock into the market present at least 2 more obstacles that worsen the situation of feminization of poverty, and consequently undermine women's life quality, namely that 1) women do equal work, but usually get less income than men and 2) there are more female-headed households nowadays, meaning that more and more women have to take up double sets of duties – both indoor and outdoor, which increases stress, and, most certainly, does not permit them time do both things efficiently. Not surprisingly, statistics reveal that most women-headed households are often poorer than men.

- **Education and Training of Women**

Gender inequality in education can still be perceived when considering the Thai female and male students' subjects and specializations, especially at the vocational schools and university level. Statistics from the Office of the National Commission on Vocational Education in the year 2005 revealed that 91.52% of female vocational students tend to take courses in domestic sciences; 88.78% take courses in commercial sciences; 84.62% take courses in tourism and 68.08 in fabric industry, while 98.76% of male students tend to take courses in industrial sciences; 52.81% in communication technology and 68.56% in agricultural sciences. Also, female students with unwanted pregnancy are not permitted to attend school/ university class during their period of pregnancy.

- **Women and Health**

The fact that the life expectancy of women is longer than men (The life expectancy of Thai women in the year 2009 is 76.74 years in comparison with 69.56 of Thai men) also signifies that they are more likely to suffer health problems in their old ages. With their more complex reproductive system, women tend to face different and more risk factors with regard to sexual transmitted diseases, and HIV/AIDs. Women are also 6.5 times more likely to develop cancer in their reproductive organs. Also, it is noted that, due to the persisting gender prejudice and unequal power relationship between women and men in the Thai society, women tend to bear most of reproductive health burdens, such as family planning, including abortion. Recent statistics from the Department of Health, the Ministry of Public Health reveal that while 76.3% of women seek for family planning

services, 45% of pregnancies are unwanted, while 16% of pregnancies end with abortion. Also, a research conducted on sexual behaviour of high school students reveals that only 23.3% of male students use condoms, whereas most women are either afraid or shy to ask or insist that their partners use condoms.

- **Violence against Women**

Despite the fact that in recent year, many policy interventions, mechanisms and services have been developed to tackle the problems of domestic violence and violence against women in following the implementation of the Act on the Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence B.E. 2550 (2007), there have been very little attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of most of them. For most of the time, the evaluation is conducted by the initiator of the interventions and mechanisms or the service providers themselves i.e. the evaluation of the hotline service and the shelters provided by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security is done by the ministry itself, whereas the Ministry of Public Health also conducts its own evaluation of the OSCCs, etc. As a result, the attempts of evaluation are mostly quantitative, and thus do not reflect clearly the key challenges of implementation.

- **Women and the Economy**

Despite the fact that Thai women contribute greatly to the business/private sectors as labour and producers, the number of women in decision and policy in this field remains very small. The percentage of women participating as members of the board of committee in companies registered in the Stock Market is merely 22% (139 women from the total number of 642) , while the percentage of women member of the board of committee of companies registered with the Ministry of Commerce is 35.37% (413, 253 women from the total number of 1,168, 131)

- **Women in Power and Decision Making**

In contrast to Thailand's current policy and attempts to promote more women's participation in politics at all levels the number of women participating in local politics remain very modest e.g. the number of women who are presidents of the local councils, member of local administrative organizations, members of the provincial and district councils is 13,143 from the total number of 223,361 (5.88%)

Researches on the issue reveal the structural constraints for women's low political participation in Thailand as the following: 1) The financial and human resources needed for the promotion of political knowledge and capacity for women are still very limited; 2) Women with no or little political background have very limited opportunities to run for national or local elections. Also, election campaign requires a large financial resources, while most women have only limited resources; 3) Voters, including women voters, do not recognize the importance of having female politicians. Also, the small number of women in politics at present do not allow them to critically influence the policy making process that render considerable positive changes for people's way of life; 4) Policy makers do not pay enough attention to the changing of laws and regulations that may potentially impact women's equal participation.

- **Human rights**

Additionally, the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development, together with partner organizations/ networks, has proposed a number of draft laws with regard to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, such as: 1) **The Draft Law on Reproductive Health B.E.....** which promotes the reproductive rights of women, as well as the sharing of reproductive responsibility between women and men.; 2) **The Draft Law on the National Health B.E.....** which promotes women's equal and non-discriminated accesses to healthcare services and other services concerned, considering the roles of women as the receivers of healthcare service, caregivers and the healthcare budget managers in the family and 3) **The Draft Law on Gender Equality Promotion B.E.....** which promotes protection of women's human rights and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, especially with regards to career advancement, education and training and accesses to public services.

### **C. Lessons learned**

#### **• Main lesson learned**

On the overall implementation of the critical issue areas of the BPFAs, the main lesson learned is that despite the achievements that have been done so far, there are still many rooms for improvement especially with regard to enhancing the capacity of the national gender equality mechanism, as well as other unit/ organization working on the issues, to participate more in the making of and influencing national policy and strategy development in each critical issue area, promoting officials' capacity development, promoting people and stake holders' participation, the developing effective monitoring system, and enhancing network cooperation with regard to gender equality and gender sensitization. These, however, would subject to certain structural changes. That is to say, the concerns for gender issues and gender equality should be mainstreamed into the topmost level of national agenda, i.e. by means of the potential establishment of ministerial position responsible for gender equality or women's affairs within the government/ the cabinet, which would not only guarantee that every government, or virtually every political party must develop and implement national agenda and policies for women, but also assure that there will always be someone who speak up on women's issues in the cabinet, as well as to ensure that enough, and steady budget must be allocated for women. Also, the ministerial position is the best position to promote awareness both on the political party and the public's part on gender issues as an essentiality, which will certainly smoothen the course of work for the national gender equality machinery, and in the mean time enhance the impact of the work of the national machineries for the advancement of women, such as effective gender budgeting, the drafting, passing process, as well as implementation and monitoring of the Gender Equality Legislation.

#### **• Successful interventions**

An attempt that may be considered as Thailand's successful intervention in the area of promoting women's participation in decision-making, particularly in politics and administration is **The Memorandum of Understanding on the Campaign and Promotion of Women's Participation in Local Politics and the Protection of Women's Rights**. Being signed and started implementing in the year 2007 -2008, it is hard to estimate the achievements/ impact of the MOU at the present moment. However, the attempt may be judged successful from the fact that 10 notable organizations/ units, which include partners from all sectors, have agreed to sign and pledged to implement the MOU. The signing organizations/ units are the Department of Community Development, the Department of Local Administration Promotion, the Department of Public Relations, the Office of the National Election, Sukhothai Thammathirat University, the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development, the Association of Thai Community Women Leaders, the Association of Provincial Administration Organizations of Thailand, the League of Municipality of Thailand, and the Tambon (District) Administration Organization Association.

Necessarily, the objectives of the MOU are:

- 1) To campaign and promote women's participation in politics according to the democratic system.
- 2) To protect women's rights, as well as to prevent and ameliorate the problems of human's trafficking.

The units/ organizations participated in the MOU propose to:

- 1) Promote and support the development of women's academic and practical potentiality in order to prepare them for participation in local politics.
- 2) Campaign and promote recognition among the local community regarding the significances and benefits of women's participation in local politics.
- 3) Promote and support women's participation in politics as voters, candidates, and efficient local executives.

- 4) Collect and analyze the results of elections of local administrative officers at all levels in order to illustrate the development of women's participation in politics, election and positions in public offices.
- 5) Promote protection of women's rights, prevention and ameliorations of violence against women and human trafficking both as parts of the units/organizations' missions, and among the risk groups.
- 6) Promote knowledge and understanding for people regarding the protection of women's rights, prevention and amelioration of violence against women and human trafficking.
- 7) Conduct systemic monitoring and reports of the information regarding the violation of women's rights.
- 8) Make the plan of action to promote concrete implementation of no. 1-7.

### **Part 3: Institutional Developments**

#### **a) National mechanism**

The principle national mechanism for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in Thailand is the **Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD)**, which is a departmental level unit under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. The core mandates of the OWAFD include 1) promoting the development of women's capacity, gender equality and the strength of family institution; 2) developing policies, measures and mechanisms to promote and support other units both in the public and private sectors to implement policies on the development of women's capacity, the protection of women's human rights; the promotion of gender equality and social justice; 3) promoting strength for family institution as to be the mechanism to promote the development of women and men's capacity, especially with regard to community and social development. The OWAFD is currently equipped with 245 staff in the year 2008, a 20% increase from 194 in the year 2003. The staff may be divided into 3 main groups working on the promotion of gender equality, the promotion of family institution and network promotion and development.

While the office is based in Bangkok, the OWAFD's works have been taken to the local level throughout networks such as networks of local administrative organizations, NGO, civil society, women and families' groups and networks. With policy guidelines on gender equality and the development of women's capacity and some seed money from the OWAFD, these groups and networks will decide and operate projects in accordance to the local needs. Meanwhile, the OWAFD will organize annual meetings for these local networks in 4 regions of Thailand, specifically northern, northeastern, southern and eastern and central regions, as to monitor the level of success of the policies/projects/ programmes implemented for women and family, to identify main obstacles, to single out best practices, as well as to mobilize opinions and suggestions that may be used for policy revision and development of new policies. Regular trainings on the specific issues concerning women, gender equality and family development are also provided. Examples are trainings on gender mainstreaming in different areas of work, training for trainers on the promotion of women's capacity and family development, trainings on gender equality and domestic violence legislation.

With regard to decision-making process at the national level, the OWAFD, in its capacity as the national mechanism, will be responsible for mobilizing opinions and policy suggestion from networks, and proposing for the consideration of the **National Commission on the Promotion and Coordination of Women's Affairs (NCPCWA)**, which consists of the Prime Minister, or the Deputy Prime Minister designated by the PM as the president of the Commission. Members of the NCPCWA include 15 committee and 11 experts in the fields of economics, social sciences, culture, the protection of women's human rights, gender equality promotion, mass media, healthcare and law. Policies, strategies and national plans on the promotion and coordination of women's affairs considered by the NCPCWA are to be directly submitted to the Cabinet for approval.

Apart from the local networks as already mentioned, other established networks working on the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women in their own respective areas in Thailand are, for example, 1) **Chief Gender Equality Officers (CGEOs) and Gender Focal Points (GFPs) network**, which is the network of key officers responsible for the promotion of gender equality in line ministries/ departments; 2) **Network of international organizations (IOs) and non-governmental organization (NGOs) working on women's issues**, including UNIFEM, UNDP, the Friends of Women Foundation, the Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women and Thai WomenWatch, among others; 3) **Thai Women Parliamentarians network**, which is the network of female members of the Parliament and the Senate and 4) **Network of academics and researchers working on women's issues**. These networks are highly effective in mobilizing the information, knowledge and resources in their own respective areas, whereas the

OWAFD functions mainly to coordinate among them in certain occasions, such as the organization of national seminars, conferences or forums.

The 245 members of staff of the OWAFD may be classified into 153 women and 39 men. Most of the staff have been allocated for the office by the Office of the Civil Service Commission (OCS) of Thailand. The allocated officers are to be interviewed again at the OWAFD for their attitude and basic knowledge on gender issues. The annual budget as allocated by the Thai Government in the year 2008 is 251,526,000 baht (approximately US\$ 7,186,457), while the amount of budget received from external sources i.e. local donors and international organizations is 5,702,000 baht. (approximately US\$162,914). A large part of budget from external sources are given to the OWAFD by means of co-organizing projects/ activities on the development of women's capacity and gender equality, or funding for the OWAFD's publications.

**b) The focal points for gender equality, monitoring mechanism and the level of capacity for promoting gender mainstreaming**

As to promote concrete and continual implementation of the framework for the integration of women within all areas of policy-making, the focal points for gender equality, which also function as monitoring mechanism to measure progress in the implementation of gender equality mainstreaming in each line ministry/ department, namely the **Chief Gender Equality Promotion (CGEOs)** at the ministerial level, and the **Gender Focal Points (GFPs)** at the departmental level, have been created in all line ministries of Thailand.

The CGEOs and GFPs promote gender equality in the public sector by means of developing the master plan on the promotion of gender equality, while the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD), Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, functions as the focal point to promote coordination in the implementation of the plan. Success in gender equality promotion has been achieved by means of promoting body of knowledge for CGEOs and GFPs, especially with regards to gender analysis, gender integration, collection of sex-disaggregated data, promoting women's participation and new issues such as gender budgeting.

Several remarkable examples of CGEOs/GFPs' programmes/projects with integrated gender concerned and/or promote gender equality as reported to the OWAFD during the year 2007 – 2008 are:

**1) The Department of Fisheries of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives** gives priority to the collection of sex-disaggregated data and use them in the analysis of gender roles in workplace and the integration of gender aspect into its core missions and projects, e.g. Fishery programmes for schools, restoration and job-creation for fishermen, housewives, and the fishery communities

**2) The Department of Corrections of the Ministry of Justice**, which considers gender roles and aspects in assigning officials in charge of certain jobs, such as inmates' examination and interrogation, as well as establishes a childcare center called "Bunyathorn Home" for female inmates' infants. Additionally, the 'Kamlungjai' or 'Inspire' project is a project newly initiated in 2008 by HRH Princess Bjarakitiyabha Mahidol in close cooperation from the Government of Thailand. Starting with the princess' private fund of 300,000 baht (approx. 8,580 USD), the project propose to support women prisoners during imprisonment and after their release. The target groups include pregnant female inmates, children of inmates, and inmates who are children and youth. With cooperation from the Department of Corrections and the Red Cross, the project include teaching female inmates regarding healthcare as well as improving the life quality of inmates and their children. The Kamlungjai project is now implemented in numbers of prisons all over Thailand, including the Central Women Prison, Chiang Mai Women Prison, Udon Thani Central Prison and Pisanulok Women Prison. As to further promote the gender-sensitivity in treatment of female inmates as a standard practice/ promote gender mainstreaming in the prison system, the project also looks forward to develop a comprehensive strategy and guidelines for the



treatment of women inmates, which may further serve as a road map and/or recommendations for the amendment of “**UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners**” (Bangkok Rules)

3) **Office of the Council of National Security**, which implements policies to promote cultural strength in coping with violence in 3 southern provinces of Thailand, of which the target group includes women communities leaders.

3) **The Department of Industrial Promotion** of the Ministry of Industry, has implemented the project called ‘**Junior Industrialists**’, which encourages productive use and management of free time for girls and boys during their semester breaks. This project has also been found useful in the way it assists the families in taking care of their children while the parents are working. Other projects are projects to promote gender equality and economic stability for SME and community enterprises. Another very active unit

4) **The Office of SME Promotion**, of the Ministry of Industry is currently attempting to establish trading networks, as well as promote capacity building and competitiveness for women entrepreneurs by means of providing and facilitating accesses to resources, such as the Internationalization Fund (indirect promotion i.e. by organizing a road show), Intellectual Property Fund, Consultancy Fund, Machine Fund and Knowledge Management, etc. Additionally, the office seeks to create and enhance opportunities for women’s groups by initiating many other innovative project, cooperation and activities.

#### c) **Indicators**

To render the concrete picture of gender inequality, and how that affects people’s life, Thailand recognizes that the development of comprehensive collection and supporting system to promote effective uses of gender-disaggregated data are utterly indispensable. In this light, we have encouraged governmental units to specify in their master plan on gender equality promotion that any work plans/ projects and activities must consider the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data. Besides, in the year 2007, we have cooperated with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Thailand, in implementing the **Thailand’s Gender Disaggregated Database and Information System Project**, which studied, analyzed and collected gender disaggregated data according to the indicators on the promotion of gender equality as specified in international agreements, such as the Beijing Platform for Action’s 12 critical areas of concern, CEDAW, MDGs, and other development indicators suitable to the Thailand’s context. Data are collected from units such as the National Statistic Office, the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Education. The database system is put on the website <http://www.gender.go.th> to promote the use of the data among the public, while the complete version of Thailand’s **Report on Gender Disaggregated Data** has been launched on March 6, 2008, to provide statistical resources for governmental, private sectors and the people for using in the promotion of gender equality both within their own organizations and in the society. The report also provides information on the situation concerning gender disaggregated data in Thailand. In the year 2008, we will proceed further in developing the gender- disaggregated data system, as well as the Gender Development Index+ (GDI+).

#### d) **Roles of different stakeholders**

The OWAFD’s cooperation with relevant bodies may be illustrated by a number of joint-projects. Some notable examples of programmes/ projects are :

1) The MOU on the campaign and promotion of women’s participation in local politics and women’s rights protection, specifically the **Memorandum of Understanding on the Campaign and Promotion of Women’s Participation in Local Politics and the Protection of Women’s Rights**, which enjoy active cooperation from 10 participatory units/ organizations from all sectors, stately the Department of Community Development, the Department of Local Administration Promotion, the Department of Public Relations, the

Office of the National Election, Sukhothai Thammarat University, the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development, the Association of Thai Community Women Leaders, the Association of Provincial Administration Organizations of Thailand, the League of Municipality of Thailand, and the Tambon (District) Administration Organization Association.

- 2) **“Promoting network for women’s development” Project**, which propose to promote cooperation among local administrative organizations all over Thailand that have and implement programmes/ projects on the development of women’s life quality. Supporting seed funds are available for the groups of women/ local administrative organizations that submit the action plan/project to the OWAFD. Also, awards of good performance will be presented to heads of women’s groups/ local administrative organizations whose action plans/projects are considered as best practices. Additionally, the OWAFD has regularly organized an annual seminar in 4 regions of Thailand, namely Northern, Northeastern, Southern and Central areas including Bangkok, to promote cooperation, as well as to monitor the project implementation for women’s groups/ local administrative organization in each respective area.
- 3) **“We Love Sunday” Project**, which promote cooperation from ministries/units/organizations both in the public/private sectors to organize activities to promote quality time use for family, including the concern for the equal sharing of household responsibility between men and women.

Moreover, The OWAFD has been cooperating international organization(s) such as the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Development and regional organization such as the Association of the South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in organizing workshops for policy makers and officers dealing with VAW, as well as public campaigns to promote recognition and understanding of VAW as a public issue. Example are the organization of the East and Southeast Asia Regional Workshop on Domestic Violence Legislation (2003), the ASEAN regional workshop on Gender-Sensitive and Coordinated VAW Services, focusing on the best practice of One Stop Crisis Centers (OSCC) in Thailand (2004), and UNIFEM’s public campaign ‘Say NO to Violence against Women’. (2008)

#### **Part 4 :Remaining challenges and actions to address them**

The earlier parts of the answer to the questionnaire have clearly illustrate many notable achievement and progress of Thailand with regard to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and outcome of the twenty-third session of the General Assembly. Nevertheless, it is worth nothing that the global situation, especially recent financial crisis that has had tremendous effects on countries all over the world, notably 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries, has presented us a great challenge. Potential impacts of financial crisis on women and girls, as already been felt in some parts of Thailand, notabl in the labour and small industry sectors, are that :

- 1) Many women working in manufacturing and exportation have lost their jobs because of the economic contraction.
- 2) Workers in informal sectors i.e. subcontractors in garment and food industries in , which are mostly women, are subject to no job security, and are most likely to be the first to get laid off.
- 3) Provision of micro-credits and small, unsecured loans are mostly suspended in the time of financial crisis, and women, who benefit most from these particular forms of loans, will be most affected because they often have little or no accesses to other forms of loans.
- 4) Financial crisis is likely to worsen the food crisis, and women, as the major food producers and providers of food for the household, are the first to be affected.
- 5) The government may have to spend a lot of money on other programmes/ projects to promote financial recovery, which may result in cutting budget on social programmes/ projects that benefit women, such as in healthcare, education and sanitation.

Although the figures, and the extent of how, and how many Thai women are affected by the 2008 global financial crisis are not yet available at the present moment , an NESDB research on the impacts of Thailand's 1997 financial crisis found that, though the unemployment rate of men was higher than women in the time of crisis, female labour tended to receive lower wages. Thus, it may be well assumed the wage gap between male and female labour is wider during the time of economic crisis. Also, A study on the impact of economic crisis on rural community found that community women felt that the economic crisis generated more family conflicts, rising thief cases and promoted more gambling. Also, women were most concerned for their children's education in the time of economic crisis.

Thus, the priority area that Thailand will pledge to improve the implementation in the next 5 years is the area of Women and the Economy, which would not only to help women coping with the changing world, but also aid the course of Thailand's economic development in the age of globalization and free trade. In this light some projects that have already been developed are:

- 1) Survey conducted by the Office of SME promotion and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as to promote Thai exports under JTEPA
- 2) e-Training courses developed by the Ministry of ICT to promote women entrepreneur's competitive capacity and access to information, including necessary rights and gender equality.
- 3) Thai women entrepreneur club – as a network to promote inspiration and development of Thai women's entrepreneurs' knowledge and knowledge management system.
- 4) Incubation center for Thai women entrepreneurs by the Office of SME promotion

5) Job promotion and various job training programmes e.g in finance, accounting, including job training for elder women organized by the Department of Job Promotion and Department of Skill Development, Ministry of Labour

6) Distance learning programmes and the development of on-line community product shop managed by the Ministry of ICT

The next steps, thus, lay in the efforts to ensure that gender perspective is incorporated in policy response to financial crisis and that gender responsive budget are systematically used to allocate resources to financing for gender equality and women empowerment. This necessary means that the following measures, which have already been identified and included in the action plan to promote the implementation of Thai Women's Development Plan in the Tenth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2007-2011, must be taken :

1) The collection of gender-disaggregated data, which also includes qualitative details on gender issues.

2) The promotion of gender recognition for policy makers and executives, officials responsible for gender issues.

3) Capacity building programmes for all sectors / personnel concerned e.g. budget planners, researchers, etc.

4) Campaigns in all target groups concerned.

5) Creation of mechanisms for gender-responsive budgeting as a part of the unit/organization,

6) Analysis of how budgeting render different impact on women and men.

7) Increase of the number of women in decision-making position with regard to budgeting.

The outstanding new commitment that need to be made to accelerate the implementation in this relation is to promote concrete implementation of **gender budgeting**, which essentially require that : 1) the public sector, especially policy makers and people in higher administrative positions need to be promoted to recognize gender issues concerning different areas of work so they can design policies and strategies to tackle the issues of gender inequality in each particular area and 2) Government officials who are responsible for national budgeting must recognize the different impacts of budgeting on men and women.