



**ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT**  
**Ministry of Social Development and Human Security**  
1034 Krungkasem Road, Pomprabsattuphai, Bangkok 10100  
TEL (662) 659-6436-9 FAX (662) 356-0538

---

---

(Please check against delivery)

**Statement**

**by**

**Mrs. Kanda Vajrabhaya**  
**Deputy Permanent Secretary**

**Ministry of Social Development and Human Security**  
**Thailand**

**at the Fifty-Third Session of the**  
**Commission on the Status of Women**

**New York, 2 – 13 March 2009**



**Mr. Chairperson,**

It is an honour for the Thai delegation to address the opening session of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Commission on the Status of Women. Thailand fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China as well as the statement on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

The outbreak of HIV/AIDS all over the world has not only taken millions of lives, but also creates the substantial burden within the care economy which mostly falls on women. This is why the equal sharing of responsibility between women and men, including care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS, must be highlighted. Among various efforts to increase men's responsibility in the household, let me cite some of Thailand's good practices such as those found in the **Prevention of Mother to Child HIV Transmission (PMTCT) policy**, which incorporates voluntary counseling and testing, antiretroviral treatment and replacement feeding, and essentially promotion of counseling in antenatal clinic for couples in order to enhance equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS. The PMTCT Policy proved to be quite successful as it could reduce infection in children. In 2003, the percentage of vertical transmission was at 6.4% and was reduced to 1.3% in 2006.

An important challenge to the equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women is the traditional gender role, and the perception of women as the traditional, "natural" care-giver. The current **Thai Women's Development Plan**<sup>1</sup> has among its first priorities to bring about change in the traditional misconceived gender roles and stereotypes, by promoting positive attitudes on gender equality, equal values and human dignity of women and men, especially among children and youths. Various other programmes are also under way to promote awareness on the subject, for target groups ranging from community leaders to school children.

The persistence of misconceived gender roles and stereotype leads us to our review topic, the **equal participation of women and men in decision-making process at all levels**. Despite the many benefits of women in decision-making positions revealed by researches in recent years, and the call for equal representation of women at the national level, our achievements thus far remain modest with less than 20% participation of women in both national and local level. Elected female MPs number little more than 10%, female Senates is around 15%, and women in local politics is very low, at just over 5%. Women in the higher levels of administrative positions or women executives in public administration do better at about 25%. These small numbers of women in politics inevitably did not allow for critical influences in the policy making process that effects visible positive changes on people's way of life. It comes as no surprise, then, that it is difficult to persuade people to elect women to political offices. This cycle is hard to break unless there is concrete political will mobilized for this purpose.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Thai Women's Development Plan in the 10<sup>th</sup> Economic and Social Development Plan B.E. 2550 – 2554 (2007 – 2010)

Another critical area that Thailand is focusing on is information gathering and use. We have developed a comprehensive collection and supporting system to promote effective use of gender-disaggregated data in Thailand, namely the **Gender Disaggregated Database and Information System Project** for gender analysis according to the indicators on the promotion of gender equality as specified in international agreements to which Thailand is party, such as the BDPA, CEDAW, MDGs, and other development indicators. Data are collected from units such as the National Statistic Office, the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, etc. The database system [which is available on-line at <http://www.gender.go.th>] will be used as a monitoring system for Thailand's implementation of international agreements and will serve as a basis for policy-making in related fields.

Among the issues that require urgent policy formation / development, and Thailand proposes to monitor the situation through our gender disaggregated database system, is **financial crisis**. As many factories, especially those in the garment and food industries, have been closed down, women workers who form a major part of these businesses are most at risk of losing their jobs. There is also a tendency that many financial institutions will suspend the provision of micro-credits and small loans, and women with no collaterals who benefit most from these particular forms of loans will be most affected as they often have little or no accesses to other forms of loans.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

On the subject of women's human rights, Thailand, like over 70 other countries, has an independent National Human Rights Commission within the national framework. Established by the Constitution in 2001, its major role is to promote and protect all human rights, including women's, at the local, national, regional and international level. The Commission also has a duty to monitor compliance with human rights and obligations under international human rights instruments to which Thailand is party. The role of national human rights institutions is increasingly being recognized among the United Nations human rights mechanisms, and the Royal Thai Government has invited Thailand's National Human Rights Commission to join the national delegation at this CSW meeting. It is our earnest hope and expectation that, with their experiences on the ground, their participation will contribute to the fruitful discussion on how women's rights and gender equality can best be realized.

It has been more than a decade from the 1995 Beijing Meeting, and considerable achievements have been made. The fact that the status of today's women has greatly improved is an indication that the BDPA is the kind of document that dynamically changes people's life. Yet the extent of what it can do, and how, is subject to constant revision and monitoring.

Let me once again reiterate Thailand's firm commitment to continue working closely with all sectors at the local, national, regional and international levels towards the full implementation of the BDPA and the advancement of the status of women, in Thailand and all over the world.

**Thank you very much.**