

EMPOWERING PEOPLE

THE THAI WAY

The Thai Practical approach
to Alternative Development

Five Decades of Walking
the Walk

M.R. Disnadda Diskul

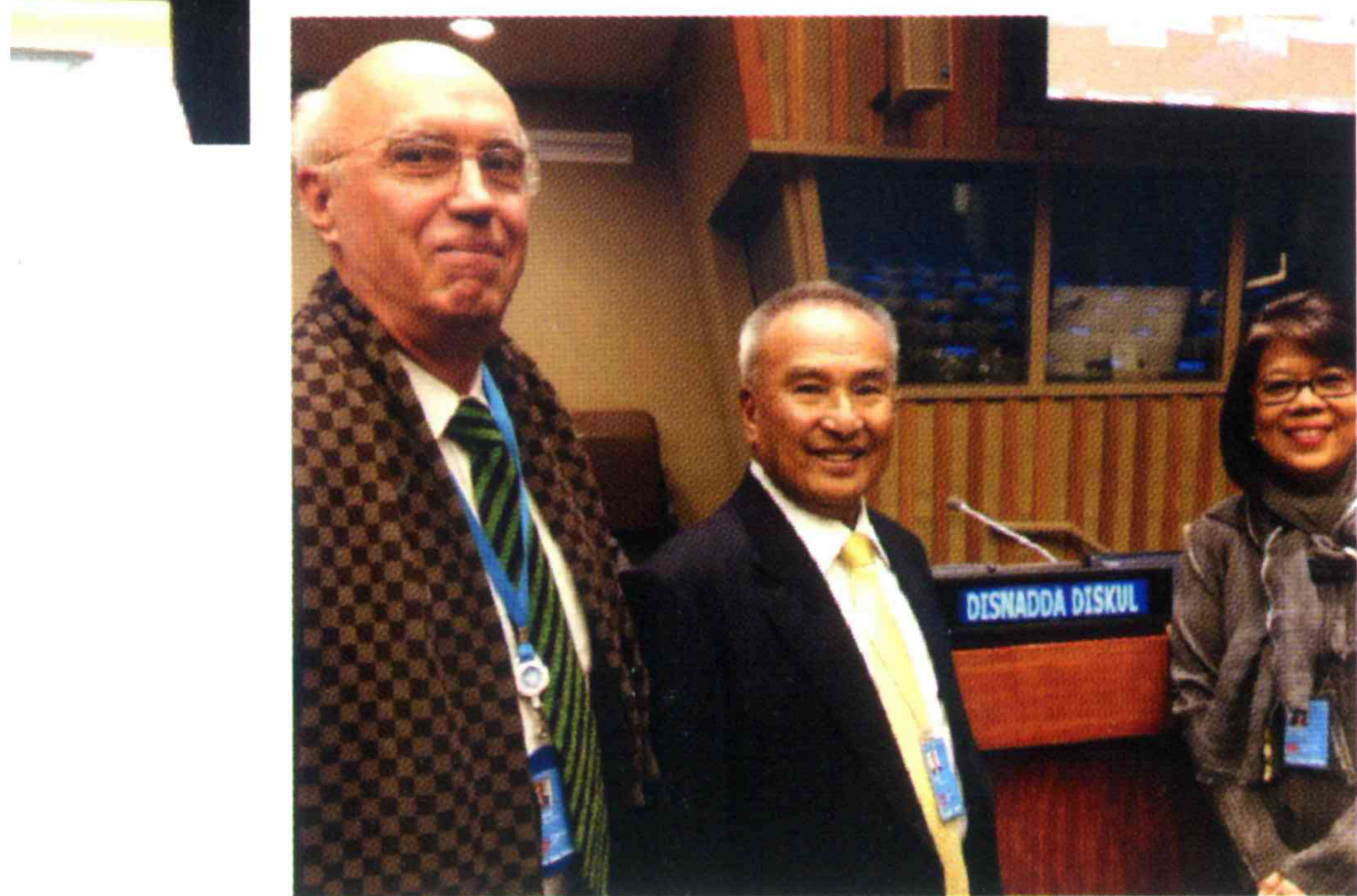
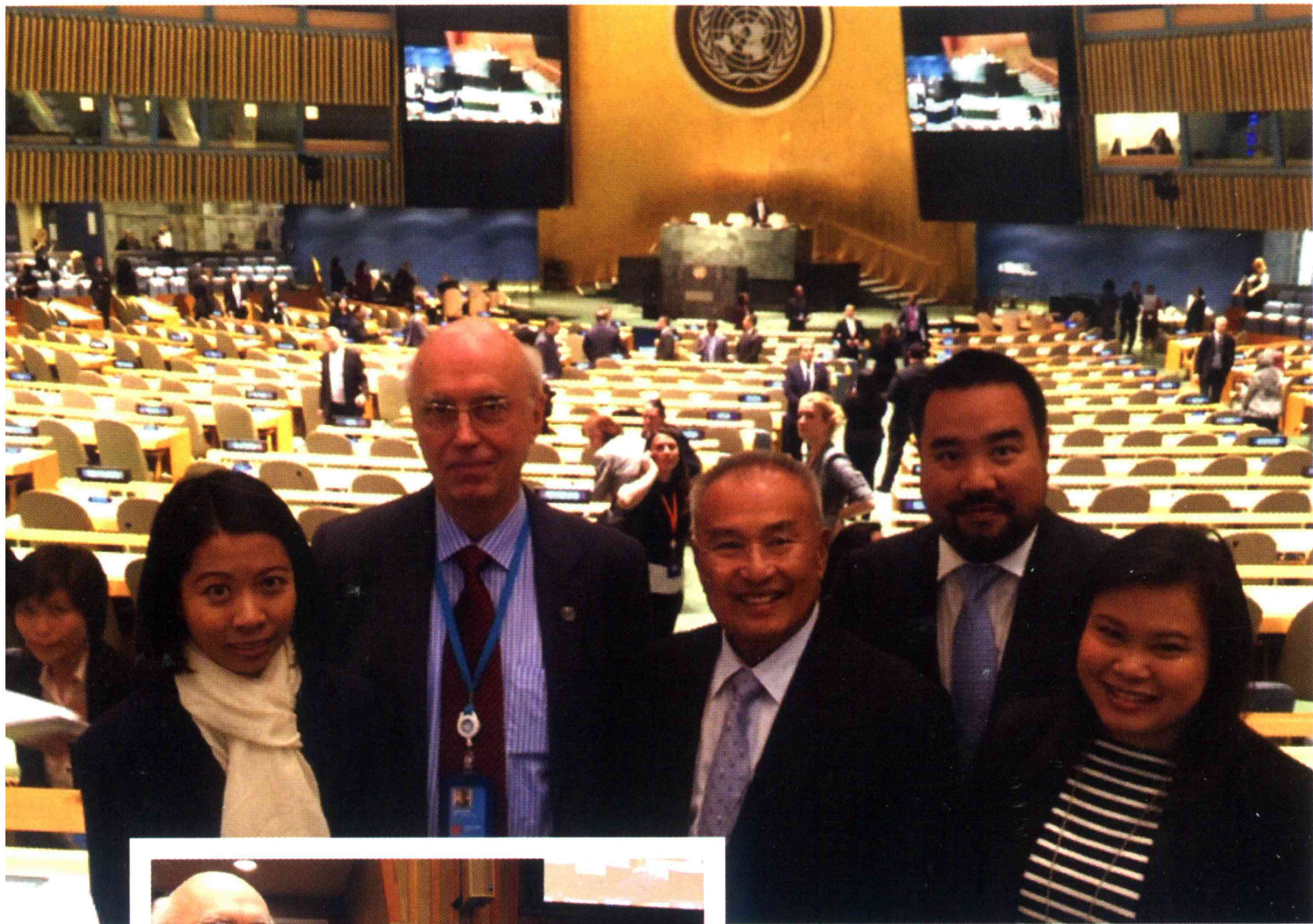
*Chairman, the Mae Fah Luang Foundation
Under Royal Patronage*



United Nations General Assembly

New York, USA

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*The Mae Fah Luang Foundation
(Under Royal Patronage)*

*Delegation at the United Nations
General Assembly*

*Special Session in New York, USA
as members of the Royal Thai
Government Delegation*



UNGASS SIDE EVENT

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT:
NEW APPROACHES AND KEY
ELEMENTS FOR THE POST –
UNGASS FRAMEWORK

*20 April 2016, 14.30-15.30 hrs,
UN New York Headquarter, Conference Room 11*

*10 mins on
"The future of AD:experience of AD implementation on the ground and
key elements of success"*

1. Excellencies, Distinguished Panelists, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am honoured to be on this panel amongst likeminded dignitaries addressing an esteemed audience at this historic moment. Over the past decade, I believe alternative development has come a fair way. In these past two days at UNGASS, we hear member states and organizations echoing calls for more balanced, development-oriented, people-centred drug control policies. The recently launched “Sustainable Development Goals” and the “United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development”, which Thailand is proud to have played an active role in helping shape, serve as valuable references to guide our AD efforts.
2. However, our work is far from over. We need to ensure that we move forward from words and recommendations to ACTUAL IMPLEMENTATION on the ground with MEASURABLE and SUSTAINABLE outcomes. So please allow me as a development practitioner to speak frankly based on over 50 years of experience working on the ground directly with the people.
3. In 1960s, Thailand was the largest opium growing country in the world. His Majesty King has led over 50 years of continuous efforts to develop the rural areas of Thailand and improve the livelihoods of the impoverished highland ethnic minorities. His Majesty’s approach has led to long-

term national development policies, let me mention again, has led the long-term national development policies, to tackle opium cultivation through improving the people's well-being. As a result, Thailand was officially removed from the UNODC's list of opium growing countries in 2003.

4. Based on our lessons learned, Thailand has reached out to assist other countries – such as the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Indoneasia, and Lao People's Democratic Republic.
5. From these experiences, I wish to highlight several critical factors we believe are fundamental to the success of AD programmes.
6. First, we need to recognize that AD is not just about drugs but about PEOPLE and their LIVELIHOODS. The problem of illicit drug cultivation can only be addressed by solving the problem of poverty, providing the people with viable livelihood opportunities, and ensuring overall sustainable development of an area. Only with legal choices in life can people stop illegal activities. Therefore, viable livelihood alternatives need to be in place before eradicating illicit crops. Importantly, development assistance should not be based on any conditionality. We must provide aid to entire communities to uplift their livelihoods rather than targeting only those who grow drug crops.

7. Second, it is important to adopt a holistic and integrated area-based approach, addressing the problem sets of an entire area and whole community. We need to make sure that the basic factors for their development are in place- for instance, water management systems and access to productive land. These basic requirements must be met while we plan for longer term activities such as capacity building, value addition, marketing and branding.
8. Third, we must involve all levels of stakeholders in the entire development process- central government, local authorities and the grassroots community. The local community must be on board and participate in the project from the very beginning and throughout, in order to foster a sense of ownership and empower them to stand on their own two feet over the long run. Women, in particular, are often the breadwinners of the family and key drivers of the community's development. We also need to work with the young generation who will be the ones leading their community in the future.
9. Fourth, AD programmes must be accountable and properly measured. The success of AD cannot be assessed based on the reduction of illicit crop cultivating areas. We must take a longer term view that is "human-centred". So "outcomes" rather than "inputs and outputs" must be



measured. “What do the people get out of it?” or the direct impact on the lives of the people and all aspects of their well-being – socially, economically, environmentally, and culturally must be the indicators, in line with the SDGs.

10. Fifth is the importance of trilateral, regional and international partnership and cooperation in sharing best practices and enhancing the effectiveness of AD programmes. Thailand has been and will continue to be a donor country in ‘software’ – providing our experiences in partnership with other donor countries to assist communities on sustainable alternative development programmes. We are delighted that, through the Mae Fah Luang Foundation, we will be partnering with the Federal Republic of Germany on the “Global Partnership on Drug Policies and Development” to assist countries and communities wishing to implement AD.
11. Ladies and Gentlement, I believe that alternative development and rule of law are two sides of the same coin and one cannot be attained without the other. Rule of law creates conducive conditions for AD to be possible and AD enhances rule of law from the grassroots level. Participation of communities in the AD process fosters a culture of lawfulness and governance within the community, promoting peace and national security.

12. In addition, I would like us to seriously consider the implementation of AD in urban settings, particularly when two thirds of the world population will live in urban areas in the future. Poverty, marginalization, lack of employment, lack of dignity and lack of opportunity also exist in urban areas. Therefore, I truly believe that AD approaches can be applied as problems of poverty and crimes in slums and urban areas can also be addressed through a “people-centric” approach-addressing the problem at its root cause and providing the people with basic needs, job and educational opportunities, empowerment, respect, and a sense of dignity.
13. Finally, I wish to re-iterate that alternative development and sustainable development are fundamentally linked. Central to both alternative development and sustainable development is addressing PROBLEMS and NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE, let me repeat again, the two links between alternative development and sustainable development is addressing problems and needs of the people, and empowering each individual to be able to lead self-reliant, dignified lives over the long run. If well-being and resilience are fostered at the individual level, we will have strong communities, regions, and countries not only more resistant to drugs and other crimes, but ready to develop and carry on sustainable livelihood. Thus, AD programmes

properly carried out will contribute to realizing the SDGs. Thailand provides concrete evidence of successful projects fulfilling the SDGs, resulting in the community's improved well-being and deterrence of illicit cultivation.

14. Thailand stands ready to share the real living proofs for those who are interested. We believe our experiences and lessons learned can benefit communities in need, fostering more peaceful and inclusive societies and creating a strong foundation for countering the world drug problem in a sustainable manner.

THANK YOU ALL SINCERELY

UNGASS ROUNDTABLE ON ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

*21 April 2016, 14.00-17.00 hrs,
UN New York Headquarters, Conference Room 4*

5 min. intervention on behalf of Asia Pacific Group

1. Your Excellency Co-Chairs, Distinguished Panelists, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 1960s, Thailand was the largest opium growing country in the world. His majesty King Bhumibol led over 5 decades of continuous efforts to improve the livelihoods of the impoverished highland ethnic minority, which inspired long-term national development policies. As a result, Thailand was officially removed from the UNODC's list of opium growing countries in 2003.

2. Based on these lessons learned, Thailand has reached out to assist other countries facing similar situations, and from these experiences, I wish to highlight some key takeaway points for your consideration in deliberating the ways forward on AD post – UNGASS 2016.

3. FIRST AND FOREMOST, alternative development and sustainable development are fundamentally linked. Central to both is addressing PROBLEMS and NEEDS and WANTS OF THE PEOPLE and empowering each individual to stand on his or her own feet over the long term.

Ladies and gentlemen, sustainable development cannot be attained without the rule of law. Any action that gives importance to one, but not the other, becomes part of the problem, rather than the solution. Only through embedding the culture of lawfulness in the community alongside realizing development efforts, is sustainability ensured.

4. My SECOND POINT is we must take a longer term view that is “human-centred” in measuring the success of AD programmes. If well-being and resilience are fostered at the individual level, we will have strong communities, regions, and countries not only more resistant to drugs and other crimes, but ready to develop and carry on sustainable livelihood. So “outcomes” rather than “inputs and outputs” must be measured. “What do the people get out of it ?” or the direct impact on the lives of the people and all aspects of their well-being – socially, environmentally, economically and culturally must be the indicators. As a result, AD programmes properly carried out will contribute to realizing the SDGs.
5. My THIRD POINT is we must involve all levels of stakeholders in the entire development process-central government, local authorities and the grassroots community. We must align the understanding and commitment of all stakeholders and ensure participation in order to foster a sense of ownership so that the local people can take over the project over the long run.
6. My FOURTH POINT is we need to consider the implementation of AD in urban settings. Poverty, marginalization, lack of employment, and lack of opportunity also exist in urban areas. Therefore, I truly believe that AD can be applied and



problems of poverty and crimes in slums and urban areas can also be addressed through a “people-centric” approach -addressing the problem at its root cause and providing the people with basic needs, job and educational opportunities, empowerment and respect.

7. LASTLY, we come to the global community now that the “United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development”, which Thailand is proud to have played an active role in shaping. I strongly urge all of us, member states, to take into consideration the implementation of the UNGPs on the ground - put the principles into actual practice and make sure the impacts are measurable and sustainable.

Thailand is delighted to say that we, through the Mae Fah Luang Foundation, and the Federal Republic of Germany, through GIZ, are partnering in the “Global Partnership for Drug Policies and Development” to assist countries and communities wishing to implement AD in order to realize more effective and sustainable programmes on the ground. I believe that sharing best practices and lessons learned amongst countries in improving AD programmes is crucial. Thailand has been and will continue to be a donor country in ‘software’ – providing our experiences in partnership with other donor countries to assist others

on sustainable alternative development programmes.

Ladies and Gentlemen, 2016 is TIME we start putting all the principles and intentions we lay out today into REAL ACTION and REAL BENEFITS for the people on the ground.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

