

Statement by Delegation of Thailand
General Suphot Malaniyom,
Secretary – General , Office of the National Security Council
General Debate, 73rd UNHCR Executive Committee
....day October 2022, Room XIX, Palais des Nations
(5 minutes)

Mr. Chairman,
High Commissioner,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. On behalf of the delegation of Thailand, I congratulate Mr. Chairman and members of the Bureau for your success in steering the Executive Committee through this session. I also wish to express appreciation to the High Commissioner for his leadership and tireless dedication and welcome the recent UNGA decision to extend his term for 2 more years.

2. Several new emergency situations have emerged this year from conflicts, violence, prosecution, or disasters, causing a record number of forcibly displaced persons. At the same time, fights against pandemic continue to pose a challenge. In this context, Thailand strongly believes that the principle of **international burden and responsibility-sharing** should continue to be upheld so that the host communities can maintain their level of humanitarian assistance and commitments. We appreciate efforts by states, UNHCR, and civil society, to provide the much needed support and protection to all refugees, IDPs and stateless persons globally.

3. On the part of Thailand, I am pleased to share important progress made this year as follows.

4. **First**, with regard to over 77,000 **Myanmar Displaced Persons** that still remains in Thailand, we continue to take care of them in line with our longstanding humanitarian tradition and

through good collaboration with UNHCR and civil society organizations. While the bilateral mechanisms for voluntary return have been stalled in recent years, we continue to look for other viable solutions. **The Working Group on the Solutions for Myanmar Displaced Persons** has been established under the Office of the National Security Council (NSC) to examine current policy towards Myanmar Displaced Persons, explore new possibilities, and propose recommendations to higher authority.

5. **On Myanmar people fleeing unrest** into Thailand, we have developed an **SOP**, which provides guidelines for relevant agencies in handling the evolving situation in the border areas in line with international obligations and domestic laws. Thailand stands ready to assist people in need and reaffirms that we will not force them to return to danger.

6. **Second**, with regard to the **National Screening Mechanism (NSM)**, we are in the process of finalizing the rules, procedures and logistic necessary for its operationalization. The eligibility criteria has just been approved by the Cabinet last week. I would like to thank the UNHCR for its continued support through all this long process that would help pave the way to the more systematic mechanism to distinguish people with international protection needs from economic migrants in Thailand.

7. **Third**, on **alternatives to detention for migrant children**, it is my pleasure to share that 4 years after the adoption of the MOU among relevant Thai agencies, more than 300 children and their families have been released from immigration detention centers and received support in community and government's shelters. We are also in the process of implementation review aiming to assess areas that would need further improvement.

8. To further strengthen our international commitment, Thailand is also currently drafting the plan and roadmap with a view to withdraw **our reservation on Article 22 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child** related to refugee children.

9. **Fourth**, on efforts to end **statelessness**, last year the cabinet approved **the revised criteria for the determination of legal status** to accelerate the registration of approximately 400,000 remaining persons with status problems and to enable them to apply for permanent resident status in Thailand. As of last month, 53,000 persons have been granted status. The Ministry of Interior will continue to work closely with agencies concerned and partners to facilitate its implementation in order to achieve the set target and bring more concrete results benefiting much wider applicants.

10. **Lastly**, Thailand shares the concern of international community on the situation of the **Rohingyas**. Thailand maintains its policy to provide humanitarian assistance to people in need while seeking solutions and will continue to advocate the importance of addressing the root causes including through constructive engagement with and cooperation among countries and partners concerned.

I thank you.

(660 words)