

Stockholm+50 Thailand National Consultations

A Roundtable Discussion on SEP for SDG Localization (Northern Region):

Our Opportunity to Accelerate Action for Sustainable, Balanced, and Resilient Transitions

Date: Friday 29 April 2022 (13:00-17:00)

Le Meridien Chiang Mai, Muang, Chiang Mai

Hybrid Meeting (In-person and ZOOM, with English-Thai and Thai-English Interpretation)

Summary Report

A roundtable discussion on SEP for SDG Localization (Northern Region): Our Opportunity to Accelerate Action for Sustainable, Balanced, and Resilient Transitions was conducted in a hybrid mode, both in-person (at the Le Meridien Chiang Mai Hotel) and virtually on Zoom meeting with simultaneous translation and live streaming to UNDP Thailand Facebook. The second of a series of Stockholm+50 National Consultations in Thailand was hosted by the Embassy of Sweden in Thailand and UNDP in Thailand, in collaboration with the Embassy of Kenya in Thailand. This event aimed to inform key actors and the general public about Stockholm+50, set in motion the multifaceted process of national consultations, and facilitate the sharing of views and expectations of people, particularly those in the northern region of Thailand, that can be taken forward in the High-level Leadership Dialogue discussions at the Stockholm+50 international meeting scheduled on 2-3 June 2022.

The event Master of Ceremonies was Mr. Kesrat Sukasam from UNDP Thailand. The keynote session was addressed by the Deputy Governor of Chiang Mai Province, the representative of the Embassy of Sweden in Thailand, and the UNDP Resident Representative in Thailand. The keynote session was followed by three roundtable discussions. The first roundtable focused on the urgent need for actions to achieve a healthy planet and prosperity of all, the second discussed a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and the third discussed the implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the context of the decade of action. The event was closed by the Ambassador of Kenya to Thailand. The live streamed video of the event can be accessed at: <https://youtu.be/oYM-kuKBYYM>.

There was a consensus that the Stockholm+50 could be the time to take the bold steps towards the action needed. The sessions echoed that pressure on nature and human environment will only be truly reduced through, among others, reconciliation partnership and networking, enabling access to knowledge and innovation, improved and more inclusive data

management, increased opportunities for community-based and nature-based solutions, more equitable sustainable financing and incentive measures, and better coordinated sustainable development initiatives.

Keynote Addresses

Mr. Vorayan Bunarat, Vice Governor of Chiang Mai Province delivered a welcome and keynote address. On behalf of the province of Chiang Mai, he thanked all participants for joining the event to discuss an opportunity to accelerate the SDGs in Chiang Mai and to redefine a direction for Thailand toward a more resilient and sustainable country in line with the UN global goals. He expressed thanks to Sweden and Kenya for their commitment and for hosting the Stockholm+50 international meeting in June. Mr. Bunarat highlighted the importance of the Sufficient Economy Principle (SEP) and how vital it is to be implemented in Chiang Mai for achieving sustainable development. He emphasized that SEP has helped elevating the wellbeing and livelihood of the people, solving ecological problems, and mobilizing development projects in Chiang Mai (i.e., environment, quality of life, agriculture, education and tourism). The SEP has guided the provincial development plans in applying knowledge from communities to find solutions in a sustainable way. The deputy Governor expressed gratitude to the Ambassadors of Sweden and Kenya and to UNDP for bringing the late King's philosophy to share with the local and global communities.

Ms. Lina Eidmark, Counsellor, Embassy of Sweden in Thailand, delivered a keynote address by thanking all participants for attending the event and expressing her gratitude to UNDP for organizing the event. Ms. Eidmark informed the participants that this event was the second consultation in Thailand leading up to the Stockholm +50, that it would be followed by another consultation in the southern part of Thailand, and that the objective of this event was to stimulate an inclusive dialogue, linking the SEP to the realities on the ground. She emphasized the inclusion of all actors in the consultation process is a Swedish top priority, especially CSOs and the private sector. To address the global environmental challenges such as climate change and loss of biodiversity, Sweden has set priorities on climate finance, committing to reach net-zero by 2045. It is also crucial to find sustainable solutions to such a challenge as waste management. Ms. Eidmark stressed that global cooperation is essential for creating a healthy planet and prosperity for present and future generations. The international meeting in June, that marks 50 years after the first meeting held in Sweden, will accelerate common commitments such as the SDGs, biodiversity goals, and COP26 outcomes. She emphasized that inputs from everyone are needed to make Stockholm +50 a success, and that the Embassy is grateful for all the participants, especially youth as their participation and innovative ideas are needed. Ms. Eidmark closed her remarks by quoting from Mr. Olof Palme, a former Prime Minister of Sweden: "Our future is common. We must share it together. We must shape it together."

In his keynote address, Mr. Renaud Meyer, UNDP Resident Representative in Thailand, expressed his gratitude to the Chiang Mai Vice Governor for hosting the consultation, and to Swedish and Kenyan Embassies for their commitment and partnership. He was convinced that the collaboration will bring the spirit of 1972 conference to Thailand. Mr. Meyer stressed that the Stockholm Declaration placed environmental issues at the forefront of international

concerns and marked the start of a dialogue on the link between economic growth, environmental risks, and the well-being of people. After 50 years, the world is still facing irreversible harm from the man-made environmental crises. Collective actions and changes are urgently needed to sustainably recover from Covid-19 and to live in harmony with the nature. He stated that UNDP counts on all the participants to bring the voices of Thailand to the conference in Stockholm. This includes sharing inspiration from Thailand, including the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, and focusing on an inclusive bio-circular green economy to bring prosperity for all.

Mr. Wichien Cherdchutrakuntong, Vice Chairman, Federation of Thai Industries (FTI) Chiang Mai Chapter delivered his keynote address by saying that he was delighted to give a speech at this meeting, focusing on sustainability and SDGs with inspiration of sufficiency economy philosophy (SEP). The FTI Chiang Mai Chapter works with businesses as well as other partners in an integrated manner to promote sustainable growth in local industries in line with national and global standards. During the past two years, Covid-19 pandemic has been affecting life around Thailand and Chiang Mai province. FTI has worked with local, provincial, regional, national as well as international partners including governments, private sector, academic, CSOs, and local communities to ensure full recovery from the crisis. FTI' policy focuses on three Is: Innovation, Implementation, Investment, aiming to reduce inequality, strengthen capacity, and enhance competitiveness of Thai businesses and industries through technology and innovation during and after the pandemic. Some of initiatives being implemented by FTI Chiang Mai Chapter include applying innovation in the energy sector, BCG model in the agricultural sector, Northern Thailand Food Valley, medical hub, and trade exhibitions (such as Lanna Expo and FTI Expo 2022 focusing on BCG). Key approaches applied include SEP and partnership in supply chain management, which helps improving local SME business and communities' livelihoods. An example is a support to local handicraft products through supply chain collaboration at both ends including exporters. In tourism sector, during the Covid-19 pandemic, FTI has applied a synergy model to support local business through collaboration across three generations (i.e., Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y, and Generation Z and Generation Alpha) to minimize business risks. In Chiang Mai, the private sector has operated through a common platform and ecosystem, comprising FTI, Thai Chamber of Commerce, and Thai Bankers Association as well as SMEs and other partners. Mr. Cherdchutrakuntong closed his remarks by calling on all partners to join hands with FTI in transforming Chiang Mai towards a sustainable and innovation-driven business ecosystem that brings prosperity to all by 2030.

Summary of Key Messages from the Roundtable

The first roundtable discussion was moderated by Ms. Sukanya Thongthumrong from UNDP Thailand. The topic of discussion was 'reflecting on the urgent need for actions to achieve a healthy planet and prosperity of all'.

General Vinai Tansri, Senior Volunteer of Brain Bank, National Economic and Social Development Council, stressed that to restore and generate a positive relationship with nature, data is needed for applying the King's Science (SEP) in Thailand and to connect to progress made towards the SDGs. He expressed his views on several aspects, including that

human and nature are linked and co-dependent, people must consider the importance of mother nature and respect it, climate change and environmental crises are evidence of negative relationship between human and the nature and the need to restore and regenerate positive nature-human relationships. General Tansri informed the audience that Thailand's highland areas in the northern region are not only sensitive ecosystems but also the home of a vast ethnic and cultural diversity. He highlighted that the SEP has been applied as guidance for the national development plans in addressing social and environmental issues, including deforestation, floods, droughts, soil degradation and landslides, air pollution (forest fires and PM 2.5), and Covid-19. The King's Science (SEP) through royal initiatives has secured livelihood opportunities for rural and urban communities during the pandemic, conserved natural resources and environment particularly in watershed areas for downstream benefits, and balanced growth and applications in the northern region and across Thailand. The impacts of SEP and its applications through the royal initiatives have extended beyond their immediate scope and are applied in various areas of sustainable development, as well as adapted and practiced by different countries through lessons learned, best practices and knowledge sharing

Ms. Walaitat Worakul, Gender and Sustainable Development Promotion Specialist, presented her views and experiences through UNDP-supported initiatives to develop the potential of the people who belong to vulnerable groups, defined as people who might not be able to support themselves after crisis, or that are lacking resilience from crisis. She described how the SEP and SDGs have been applied to build local capacities and resilience through adaptive management approach, focusing on ethnic minorities, women, youth, and the poor. Ms. Worakul highlighted an initiative aiming to sustainably manage the landscape of Mae Lao River (one of tributaries of the Mekong in Chiang Rai Province) where different ethnic minorities are in vulnerable and marginalized conditions (i.e., lack of social and economic rights/opportunities, lack of water resources, and mobility inequality). She outlined some lessons learned including landscape assessment through 10 indicators of resilience and sustainability, participatory approach by engaging the communities particularly women in designing action plans and outcomes, application of SEP to minimize the effects of Covid-19 pandemic, and localizing SDGs to build sustainable communities.

Mr. Sopon Tangpetch, Director, Northern Region Economic and Social Development Office, NESDC, emphasized the need for a balanced and inclusive approach to redesign social and economic indicators for measuring sustainable development. He stressed that, based on the SEP, multi-dimensional metrics and indicators must be developed to track progress in increasing balanced growth and sustainable development in a Thai context. In this context, Mr. Tangpetch proposed that sustainability indicators should consider four key development dimensions: economic prosperity for all; social equity and quality of life; environmental protection; and institutional and human capacity.

The participants discussed key challenges and identified solutions for restoring and regenerating a positive relationship with nature, including: (a) the need for mindful engagement with nature; (b) creating equal opportunities for all (especially ethnic minorities, youth, and local farmers) to use and management natural resources; (c) redesigning economic

development activities that fits local ecosystems and circumstances (i.e., decrease the intensity of crop production that causes air pollution or PM2.5); (d) ensuring that minority voices and concerns, particularly on their rights and livelihoods, are heard, understood, and acknowledged (i.e., through legal, institutional, social and economic background assessment); (e) Stockholm+50 follow-up including SDG localization; (f) protecting the rights of nature to exist and flourish; (g) proactive collaboration between government authorities and communities; (h) addressing climate change and sustainable livelihoods through landscape connectivity and assessment; (i) aligning vision, values and objectives of the digital age with sustainable development; and, (j) development of a mutual understanding to identify the policy needs and define key principles and the environmental goals.

The second roundtable discussion was moderated by Ms. Sukanya Thongthumrong from UNDP Thailand. The topic of discussion was ‘achieving a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic’.

Mr. Chatchawan Thongdeelert, President, Chiang Mai Breathe Council, stated that the world is facing both climate and health crises, leading to an economic crisis, as has been in the case of COVID-19 pandemic. He highlighted the importance of people living in harmony with nature, as the two are connected. Mr. Thongdeelert identified key challenges for shaping an equitable, inclusive and sustainable recovery, focusing on inequality affecting forest communities. He expressed his viewpoints on forest management and development policies that need to be changed if peaceful and sustainable co-existence of forest and natural ecosystems, ethnic minorities and local communities as a way of saving forests can be achieved. Mr. Thongdeelert called on changes in policies and laws and the way local/forest communities are treated, including securing the peoples’ livelihoods using local wisdom that relates to nature and protection, strengthening grassroot economy, empowering social enterprises, development that fits the local context, promoting universal healthcare, improving high-quality education for all, and engaging local communities in a transparent governance system.

Dr. Nattawut Sareein, Environmental Science Research Center, Faculty of Science, Chiang Mai University, stressed the need to provide knowledge and education to all to promote and conserve natural resources, particularly focusing on water management and efficiency. He emphasized that SDGs are important in a classroom, stating that SDGs 1-5 can help achieving a better and more sustainable future for individuals and their family as well as the society, while the rest of SDGs focus on achieving a healthy planet for all. Dr. Sareein highlighted the concept of One Health, recognizing the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment. Based on this collaborative, multisectoral, and transdisciplinary approach, he believed that the new skills needed for the existing and new generations have to be multidimensional and cross culture, integrating analytical thinking and innovation, as well as linking the experience and knowledge of the older generations with the skills of the new generations.

Mr. Narongsak Phachareon, SME Strategic Planning Specialist, shared his experiences as a lecturer, an academic and a business person, having worked more than 20 years on SEP, for example, to promote the use of vetiver grass for soil and water conservation. He stressed that

it is critical to accelerating the recovery of COVID-19 without causing negative impacts on the nature, while building inclusive resilience to reduce inequality and increase sustainability. Focusing on sustainable business recovery, a key challenge is the supply chain disruption caused by recent crises including the coronavirus pandemic and wars. Mr. Phachareon emphasized that Chiang Mai offers high potential opportunities for development of local economy that can be captured through the SEP policies to support local communities particularly the vulnerable groups and the ethnic minorities. He highlighted local value chain development base on the concept of coffee cluster, linking coffee products with tourism industry that helps promoting local driven initiatives and strengthening competitive advantage (through value innovation, differential originals, emotional functions, and networking) which will be more sustainable in the longer term.

The audience voiced their views on linking economic development with nature conservation in a more meaningful way to achieving a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This included (a) sharing the findings from Stockholm+50 national consultations with universities and research institutions as well as other interest groups for knowledge exchange and follow up; (b) recognizing our strengths and weaknesses with mindfulness, and taking actions to exploit opportunities such as in the cases of food security and healthcare system; (c) integrating ESD (education for sustainable development) and ESG (environment, social, governance) in local schools; (d) improving cooperation and integration between industries and communities through a sandbox model focusing on, for example, tourism and healthcare industries; (e) promoting synergies between digital innovation and local wisdom values; (f) engaging local communities throughout the development process, from planning to evaluation; (g) addressing the rights and needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups in recovery from the pandemic, particularly stateless people, refugees, and migrants; (h) the SEP principles can be adapted and applied to every aspects of development, particularly during and after the pandemic; and, (i) applying sustainable village/community awards (e.g., eco-tourism, sustainable coffee production) to support and empower local communities through mutual learning and knowledge exchange.

The third and last roundtable discussion was moderated by Ms. Sukanya Thongthumrong from UNDP Thailand. The topic of discussion was ‘accelerating the implementation of the environmental dimension of Sustainable Development in the context of the Decade of Action’.

Dr. Pairach Piboonrungrroj, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Economics, Chiang Mai University, presented on challenges in the Decade of Action. He emphasized key challenges as including stakeholder collaboration (emphasizing transformative partnerships among governments, businesses, and civil society organizations) to achieving SDGs, identifying win-win solutions (accepting that natural capital – the environment – cannot be replaced by any other capital – humans and man-made), and measuring and managing sustainable impacts (applying the SDG impact assessment tool to help assessing impact of solutions, research activities, organizations, projects or other initiatives). He highlighted lessons learned from Chiang Mai University’s initiative on solving air pollution with sustainable innovations through a collaborative approach between key and relevant actors, adoption of a strong sustainability

approach by communicating the need for uncompromised reduction of PM2.5, and integrated impact measurement in the university's management system.

Ms. Kesaraporn Sreechun, Highland Research and Development Institute (Public Organization), highlighted key enabling environment factors for delivering SEP on the ground and localizing SDGs in highland community development. This includes (a) decentralized public service delivery through a hybrid public-funded organization (operated with less bureaucratic process); (b) area-based development approach engaging local communities in need assessment and transformation; (c) customized research and development on food security and decent jobs through innovation and alternative technologies for highland communities; (d) mainstreaming SEP in management and self-assessment at individual, organizational, and community levels; (e) joint planning and implementation through policy framework and action plans; and, (f) integrated governance through vertical and horizontal coordination to improve resource allocation and optimize resource utilization.

Dr. Narong Kongprasert, MD, Pracharath Rak Samakkee (Social Enterprise) Co., expressed his views on linking the SEP with business as a way towards sustainability by considering about the well-being of their stakeholders. He focused on SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals) as the most important goal to build business sustainability – to actively engage various stakeholders and improve cooperation. The business sector needs to take the lead in facilitating partnerships and collaboration between stakeholders at local, social entrepreneurs and multinationals to change the system by addressing the root causes of relevant environment issues (i.e., air pollution). Dr. Kongprasert emphasized that businesses need to contribute to long-term solutions for addressing sustainability issues, including sustainable production and consumption, as well as for better connecting with customers and communities in which they operate while building partnerships, networking and collaborating among businesses.

The participants discussed factors for accelerating implementation and follow-up activities from Stockholm+50. They focused on (a) a need for each person to take their own responsibility; (b) business should take responsibility for the whole life cycle of their products; (c) SDG communications to reach as many people as possible including on the social and other aspects; (d) partnerships are key to problem solving, with the use of information, technology and knowledge sharing to better engage with the communities; (e) empowering youth and women for positive change; and, (f) call on everyone to take initiatives and actions towards the sustainability of Chiang Mai province through partnerships and commitments, an innovative approach to bring existing know-how to process, and positive thinking to identify inclusive and sustainable solutions.

Closing

The closing remarks was delivered by H.E. Mr. Kiptiness Lindsay Kimwole, the Ambassador of Kenya to Thailand. He expressed his gratitude to all the participants and organizing partners for their contributions in the consultation, highlighting the progress made in the consultations around Thailand and the importance and relevance of local action at the global level. He stressed that local communities are the stewards of the vital natural ecosystems and should have the rights and responsibilities to protect them. To reiterate the need for protecting the

nature, the Ambassador quoted an African proverb which says, 'you must treat the earth well. It was not given to you by your parents. It is loaned to you by your children'. He called on every individual, community, city and country to take immediate action to deal with the causes of climate change, pollution and nature loss, hoping to have a clean and healthy planet for the future generations. The Ambassador congratulated Thailand for the foresightedness of its leadership in coming up with the SEP. He encouraged all (government, industry, youth, women, communities, parliamentarians, and other stakeholders) to continue to examine opportunities and constraints attendant to SEP, particularly in the cases of plastic and air pollution, to ensure an opportunity for sustainable development. Some urgent actions to be taken were recommended, including identification and publication of polluters, upscaling environmental awareness on environmental pollution, and placing law for zero pollution. The Ambassador emphasized the importance of inclusivity, transparency and collaboration at all levels to be involved in the search for solutions and in action. He concluded by urging everyone to act now and challenging all to transform Chiang Mai to become the new green city of Thailand.