



Thai Working
Group on
Climate
Justice



PRESS RELEASE

Issue date: 14 September 2009

THAILAND'S CLIMATE CHALLENGES DISCUSSED IN PREPARATION FOR WORLD SUMMIT IN COPENHAGEN

Bangkok, 14 September 2009 – Thailand's negotiating position at the 15th Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change was the main focus of discussions today at a Development Cooperation Seminar entitled "*Thai Voices are Heard in Copenhagen*", held at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre.

World leaders will be responding to one of the greatest challenges facing humanity at the climate negotiations in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2009. As countries attempt to reach agreement on the international climate change regime beyond 2012, Thailand's negotiating team will have to present a coherent and strong case that reflects the wide range of opinions and voices in the country.

Today's seminar, organised by the Royal Thai Government in partnership with Thai civil society and the United Nations, was aimed at consolidating Thailand's negotiating position in Copenhagen by taking into account the key concerns and perspectives of a wide range of stakeholders throughout the country. It was an opportunity for civil society organizations to express their views on climate change, and for the Royal Thai Government to consider the opinions of different groups and communities in this regard.

Climate change poses significant threats to the millions of people in Thailand who depend on the agricultural sector to sustain their livelihood. It also threatens the country's natural resources, and impacts communities who depend heavily on these resources.

"One degree or warming could destroy the rice crops that are central to the Thai economy, and a few centimetres of sea level rise could submerge Bangkok and devastate coastal tourism. The most vulnerable communities are already affected by climate extremes and this is only expected to get worse," warned Ms. Gwi-Yeop Son, UN Resident Coordinator in Thailand. "Thailand will therefore have to adapt to some future aspects of climate change – no action is just not a realistic option," she added.

"Thailand still needs development for the benefit of its people but should also show responsibility by considering voluntary greenhouse gas emission reductions through sustainable development," said Khun Nisakorn Kositratna, Secretary-General of the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, in her key note address on behalf of the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment. "There are greenhouse gas emissions for survival, and emissions for luxury," she added, underscoring the need for society to re-think the way it consumes its resources. The Government also stressed the need to support farmers in adopting appropriate agricultural practices to adapt to the impact of climate change, while ensuring food security for the people.



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Khun Penchom Saetang, Coordinator of a coalition of civil society organisations entitled “Thai Working Group for Climate Justice”, presented a discussion paper highlighting the main concerns of civil society and grassroots organisations. “We need to promote community participation in conserving our natural resources and to pay attention to local wisdom when planning Thailand’s response to climate change,” she said. “Furthermore, at the global negotiations on climate change, Thai civil society would like to see developed countries show a real commitment to emission reduction and to supporting developing countries in their adaptation efforts. This must go beyond applying traditional carbon market mechanisms. Carbon trading means shifting the responsibility from one place to another, which undermines climate justice, and so does not work.”

The consensus and key recommendations from today’s discussions will be captured in a report to be presented to the Prime Minister of Thailand in his capacity as chair of the National Climate Change Committee. The aim is to have these recommendations voiced by Thailand’s negotiating team in Copenhagen this December.

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