



**International Human Rights
Instruments**

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reports of States parties**

Thailand*

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I. General information

1. The present document has been updated from the previous common core document forming part of the reports of Thailand (HRI/CORE/THA/2012). It was prepared in line with the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a core document and treaty-specific documents (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6).
2. The Working Group on Thailand's Common Core Document, established by the Ministry of Justice and comprising all relevant government agencies, the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand and human rights experts, held a series of meetings since March 2019. The present document was finalized in July 2020.

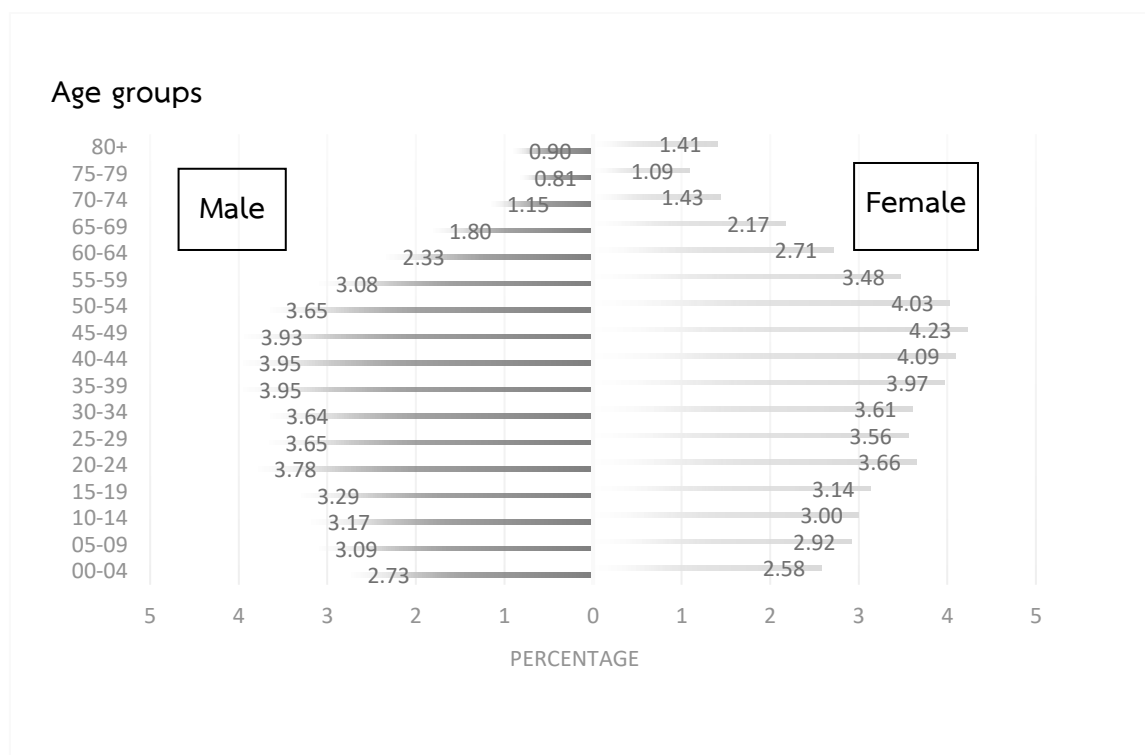
A. Demographic, economic, social and cultural characteristics

Geography

3. Thailand is situated on the mainland of Southeast Asia covering a territory of 513,120 square kilometers. It shares borders with the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) and Myanmar to the North; the Lao PDR, Cambodia and the Gulf of Thailand to the East; Myanmar and the Indian Ocean to the West; and Malaysia to the South.
4. Thailand is divided into four main geographical regions. Each region has, to a certain extent, specific natural features: high mountains in the North; highland plateau in the Northeast; and lowland area in the Central plains, which joins with the South with its long mountain range and narrow plain stretching into the sea. Bangkok is the capital city.

Population

5. As of 31 December 2018, the population of Thailand was approximately 66.41 million, of which 98.62% were Thai nationals, while the rest were, among others, Burmese, Cambodian, and Laotian.
6. Buddhists made up 93.6% of the whole population, while 4.9% were Muslim, and the remaining 1.5% were of Christian and other faiths.
7. In terms of age structure, 17.48% of the population fell into the 0–14-year category, 65.87% into the 15–59 age group, and 16.65% were 60 or above. The 2017 natural population growth was reduced to 0.4%. It is projected that the average life expectancy for females will increase to 76.3 years and for males to 69.5 years.

2017 Thai Population Pyramid¹

8. The population is scattered across regions, with the highest density recorded in Bangkok and its vicinity, the Central region and the Eastern region, respectively. The fertility rate is the highest in the Eastern region, the Southern region and Bangkok and its vicinity, while the highest death rate lies in the Central, Northern and Western regions, respectively, as shown below:

Region	Population	Density (per sq.km.)	Fertility rate (per 1,000 people)	Death rate (1,000 people)	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)
Nationwide	66 413 979	129.0	19.8	7.0	5.9
Female	33 857 708 (50.98%)				
Male	32 556 271 (49.02%)				
Bangkok and its vicinity	10 831 988				
Female	5 699 1255				
Male	5 132 863	1 395.6	12.6	7.1	
Central region	3 034 162				
Female	1 552 237				
Male	1 481 925	182.9	9.1	8.7	
Eastern region	5 003 182				
Female	2 539 439				
Male	2 463 743	137.1	13.6	7.4	
Western region	3 831 952				
Female	1 952 591				
Male	1 879 361	89.0	9.4	7.5	n/a

¹ National Statistical Office, Registered Population aggregated by age genders and provinces, accessed on 8 April 2019 (<http://statbbi.nso.go.th/staticreport/page/sector/th/01.aspx>).

<i>Region</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Density (per sq.km.)</i>	<i>Fertility rate (per 1,000 people)</i>	<i>Death rate (1,000 people)</i>	<i>Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)</i>
Northern region	12 098 164				
Female	6 159 265				
Male	5 938 899	71.3	8.3	8.3	
Northeastern region	21 989 477				
Female	11 051 715				
Male	10 937 762	130.2	8.6	6.8	
Southern region	9 399 578				
Female	4 769 225				
Male	4 630 353	132.9	13.0	6.1	

9. As of December 2019, there were 2,015,385 registered persons with disabilities in Thailand, of which 963,507 were female and 1,051,878 were male. 83,543 persons (4.14%) are below 14 years of age, 850,270 persons (42.19%) between 15–59 years of age and 1,081,572 persons (53.67%) are above 60 years of age.

Languages

10. Thai is the official language of Thailand. While the central dialect is the standard speaking dialect, several local dialects are spoken in different regions. Apart from the Thai language, some ethnic groups speak their languages. For instance, Malayu Muslims in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat speak local Malayu language, while the Karen ethnic group speaks languages of their own tribes and the Hmong ethnic group speaks the Hmong language.

Economics

11. Thailand has become an upper middle-income country since 2011. For the year 2019, GDP value at current prices was THB 16,879.0 billion (USD 543.7 billion). GDP per capita was at THB 248,257.4 per person per year (USD 7,996.2 per person per year), increasing from THB 241,269.6 per person per year (USD 7,467.1 per person per year) in the previous year. The proportion of the population below the national poverty line was 9.85% in 2018 and 8.61% in 2019, a decrease of 12.59%.

12. In 2019 the Thai economy expanded by 2.4%, compared with 4.2% in 2018. On the expenditure side, private consumption and investment grew by 4.5% and 2.8%, and expanded continually from 4.6% and 4.1% in the previous year, respectively. In addition, government consumption and investment increased by 1.4% and 0.2%, compared with 2.6% and 2.9% in the previous year, respectively. However, the export value declined by 3.2%, compared with 7.5% growth in the previous year.

13. On the production side, the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors accounted for 6.16% and 93.84% of GDP, respectively. Agricultural production, forestry production and the fishery sector, the accommodations and food service activities sector, wholesale and retail trade; the repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles sector, and the transport and storage sector expanded by 0.1%, 5.5%, 5.7%, 3.4%, slowing from expansions of 5.5%, 7.6%, 6.6% and 4.4% in the previous year, respectively. The manufacturing sector declined by 0.7%, compared with a 3.2% growth in 2018.

14. The 2019 total national budget was set at THB 3.0 trillion, which was increased by 1% of the 2018 budget.

15. Overall, economic stability remained favorable. Headline inflation was 0.7% and the current account recorded a surplus of 6.8% of GDP.

<i>Per capita income</i>		<i>USD 4615.24 (THB 147 088)²</i>			
Gross domestic product (GDP) in million		USD 313 701.53 (THB 9 997 668)			
Annual growth rate		3.3%			
Gross National Income (GNI) in million		USD 434 612.83 (THB 13 851 111)			
Social expenditures in million baht and as a proportion of total public expenditure		FY 2017	%	FY 2018	%
	Public housing and community	72 423	3.58	70 929	3.32
	Public health	295 207	14.59	304 169	14.27
	Education	534 059	26.39	521 132	24.46
External and domestic public debt (million baht)	External public debt	227 596.51 (USD 7 141.4)			
	Domestic public debt	6 733 028.95 (USD 211 265.42)			
Total		6 960 625.46 (USD 218 406.82)			

Employment

16. Unemployment rate in 2019 stayed low at 0.99%, accounting for 370,000 unemployed. The overall average wage and the average wage for the private sector increased by 2.3% and 3.3% respectively. Labor productivity increased by 3.1% from the previous year.

17. Employment in the service sector continued to increase in 2019, especially in the hotel/restaurant industry (0.8%). In addition, employment in the construction sector and transportation sector also continued to increase by 3.3% and 3.7%, respectively, because of the expansion of public investment and online trading/ordering through various platforms.

18. Thailand's overall employment in 2019 decreased by 0.7%, however. The labor market has been affected both by a cyclical effect due to an economic slowdown which has reduced employment through production and exports, as well as a structural effect including a change in Thailand's labor market structure and a higher opportunity to access to education, which can slow down labor from entering the market, and technological advancement.

19. As of March 2019, the number of persons in the work force registered with trade unions accounted for 616,492.

Household consumption expenditures

20. In 2019, Thailand's household consumption expenditures mainly comprised food and non-alcoholic drinks (38.31%), alcoholic drinks (1.37%), tobacco products (0.68%), household goods (23.38%), clothing and footwear (2.50%), personal expenditures (3.43%), health (1.78%), transport and communication (23.94%), education (2.02%), recreation, reading, and religious activities (1.77%) and cultural expenses (0.82%).

21. The Gini coefficient relating to the distribution of income or household consumption expenditure was 0.364 in 2019.

Health

22. The country's health expenditures in 2017 amounted to approximately 3.7% of the GDP. As mentioned in paragraph 20, health expenditures of households accounted for 1.78% of household consumption expenditures.

23. Thailand prides itself on achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC). The UHC scheme covers almost a hundred percent of the population. Despite being a middle-income country, Thailand is recognized as a model for UHC, whose experience can be shared with

² Exchange rate from the Bank of Thailand on 27 March 2019.

other countries. At the same time, the country is committed to continually improving its UHC scheme to ensure greater equitable access by all.

24. On sexual and reproductive health, Thailand has progressively implemented related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In 2019, the percentage of women of child-bearing age using contraception or whose partner used contraception was recorded at 78.4%, compared to 72% in 1994. It has been recognized by UNFPA as ‘one of the groundbreaker and front runner countries in achieving population and development targets for the past 25 years’.

25. There were 5,043 cases of medical terminations of pregnancy through Medabon tablets dispensed by the Ministry of Health in 2018.

26. Major causes of death (per 100,000 population) include malignant neoplasms of all forms (120.5), diseases of the circulatory system (103.7), diseases of the respiratory system (64.0), external causes of morbidity and mortality (59.7), certain infectious and parasitic diseases (56.7), diseases of the genitourinary system (35.2), diseases of the digestive system (29.7), endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases (23.9), diseases of the nervous system (17.6), and diseases of the blood and blood-forming organs and certain disorders involving the immune mechanism (1.7).

27. In 2019, the prevalence of major non-communicable diseases in Thailand per 100,000 persons who were treated at hospitals under the Ministry of Public Health, is as follows: (i) coronary artery disease (610.2), (ii) chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (473.6), and (iii) diabetes (5,440.8).

28. As of October 2018, 450,573 persons in Thailand were infected with HIV/AIDS.

Education

29. Thailand has introduced the ‘Education for All’ policy (see paragraph 114). The net enrolment ratio in primary and secondary education, which was calculated from students as a percentage of school-age population, was 102.74% (46.72% female, 53.28% male) and 87.52% (50.25% female, 49.75% male), respectively.

30. The drop-out rates in 2016 were 0.04% in primary education, 0.16% in lower secondary education and 0.13% in higher secondary education, accounting for 5,377 students in total.

31. According to the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey, Thai students’ mean scores in reading, mathematics and science were 393, 419, 426, lower than the OECD average of 487, 489, and 489, respectively. The mean reading score was 16 points lower than in the 2015 PISA survey, while the mean scores in mathematics and science increased by 4 and 5 points, respectively. Girls scored higher than boys in reading by 39 score points, in mathematics by 16 score points, and in science by 20 score points.

32. In the academic year 2018, 510,040 students with special conditions in 26,557 schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission received Equitable Education Fund (EEF) grants. More information on the EEF can be found in paragraph 115.

B. Constitutional, political and legal structure

33. Thailand (previously known as Siam) had been ruled under an absolute monarchy and became a constitutional monarchy in 1932. The ruling monarch is His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua, the tenth king of the Chakri dynasty.

34. The current Constitution was promulgated on April 6, 2017, replacing the Interim Constitution of 2014. The drafting of the 2017 Constitution placed emphasis on public participation, including through social media. The draft was approved by a national referendum in August 2016 with 61.35 percent of votes in favor.

35. According to the 2017 Constitution, the Thai political system embodies four following characteristics; it is (i) a constitutional monarchy, (ii) a unitary system state, (iii) a separation of powers system, and (iv) a bicameral parliamentary system.

36. The sovereign power belongs to the Thai people. The King as Head of State shall exercise the legislative, executive, and judicial powers through Parliament, the Cabinet and the Courts respectively in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution. The democratic character of the Thai political system is assured by the complete separation of the judicial branch from the other branches, thus the independence of the Courts.

The legislative branch: a bicameral parliamentary system

37. The 2017 Constitution specifies that the Parliament is composed of two houses which are the House of Representatives and the Senate.

38. The House of Representatives has five hundred members, consisting of 350 constituency MPs and 150 party-list MPs chosen according to proportional representation.

39. The Senate consists of 200 members installed from a selection by and among persons having the knowledge, expertise, experience, profession or characteristics or common interests or working or having worked in varied areas of society. The division of groups shall be made in a way which enables every person to have the right to apply for selection to belong to any one group. However, the initial House of the Senate which has a five-year term shall consist of 250 members appointed by the King upon the advice of the National Council for Peace and Order.

40. Currently, there are 78 female MPs (15.6%) and 25 female senators (10%).

The executive branch

41. The executive branch headed by the Prime Minister is responsible for the administration of the State's affairs and the implementation of laws. It is responsible to the Parliament for all its actions and decisions.

42. The administrative structure of the country is divided into three levels: central administration, provincial administration and local administration:

- Central administration. The central administration consists of 20 ministries, responsible for discharging duties according to the Government Restructuring Act B.E. 2534 (1991) in providing public services. The head of the Cabinet is the Prime Minister, who is responsible for all ministries;
- Provincial administration. The country is administratively divided into 76 provinces, 878 districts, 7,255 sub-districts and 75,032 villages. A village is the most basic form of administration, led by a village head in charge of keeping law and order. A sub-district is a collection of villages, headed by a sub-district chief (Kamnan). Village heads and sub-district chiefs are government representatives, but they are elected by the local people and report directly to chief district officers who fall under the direct responsibility of a provincial governor. Chief district officers and provincial governors are civil servants, centrally appointed by the Ministry of Interior;
- Local administration. The local administration is the main mechanism for taking care of and providing public services for the benefit of people in localities. They have the capacity to self-govern their own affairs. Each local administrative organization has the legitimacy to independently make their own administrative, financial and fiscal policies and carry out their specific power and duties, but with due consideration to provincial and national development policies. The Government will provide only necessary supervision as provided by the law, in order to continuously enhance the decentralization process. In 2018, local administrative organizations comprised of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, the City of Pattaya, 76 Provincial Administrative Organizations, 2,442 Municipalities, and 5,332 Sub-District Administrative Organizations, were headed by executive chiefs elected by popular vote.

43. The government administration is carried out under the national budgetary system, with the annual budget allocation scrutinized and approved by the Parliament. The fiscal year starts on 1 October and ends on 30 September of the following year.

44. The Government may be defeated in the House of Representatives by a vote of non-confidence and, in that case, the House Speaker is required to appoint another leader who can maintain the confidence of the Parliament, or else the Prime Minister can dissolve the Parliament by issuing the writs for an election.

The judicial branch

45. The judicial branch consists of the Constitutional Court, the Courts of Justice, the Administrative Court and the Military Court.

46. The Constitutional Court is responsible for deliberating on whether provisions of the law are contrary to or inconsistent with the Constitution.

47. The Courts of Justice have the power to try and adjudicate all cases except those specified by this Constitution or the law to be within the jurisdiction of other Courts. Based on the Act Promulgating Law on the Organisation of the Court of Justice B.E. 2543 (2000), there are three levels of courts of justice in Thailand: courts of first instance, courts of appeal, and the Supreme Court. Since some types of cases require expertise and special procedures, special courts and divisions are established to deal with cases concerning elections, drugs, labour, tax, bankruptcy, human trafficking, intellectual property, environmental cases, international trade, juvenile and family, corruption and misconduct, as well as criminal cases for persons holding political positions.

48. The Administrative Courts have the power to try and adjudicate on cases of dispute between government agencies, state officials and private individual(s), or among state officials themselves. There are Administrative Courts of First Instance and the Supreme Administrative Court.

49. The Military Courts have the power to try and adjudicate cases in which offenders are subjected to the jurisdiction of the Military Courts.

Independent Organizations under the Constitution

50. Under Chapter 12 of the 2017 Constitution, five independent organizations have been established as mechanisms to carry out functions which need specialization and impartiality, namely the Election Commission, the Ombudspersons, the National Anti-Corruption Commission, the State Audit Commission and the National Human Rights Commission.

51. The Election Commission is responsible for controlling and holding elections and/or selecting members of the House of Representatives, the Senate and a local assembly and local administrators, as the case may be. They also set duties for the interim Cabinet, and oversee the voting in a referendum to ensure that it proceeds in an honest and fair manner.

52. The Ombudspersons are responsible for (i) considering and inquiring into the complaint/s for fact-finding in the following cases: (a) failure to perform in compliance with the law or performance beyond the powers and duties as provided by the law of a government official, an official or employee of a government agency, a state agency, a state enterprise or a local government organization; (b) performance of, or omission to perform, duties of a government official, an official or employee of a government agency, a state agency, a state enterprise or a local government organization, which unjustly causes damage to the complainant or the public; (ii) taking action in connection with ethics of holders of political positions and state officials; (iii) monitoring, evaluating and preparing recommendations on compliance with the Constitution; and (iv) conducting inquiries in cases where such act threatens to cause harm to the public at large or there is a need to safeguard public interests.

53. The National Anti-Corruption Commission is responsible for inquiring into the facts and preparing opinions on removal from office of holders of political office and high ranking officials to be submitted to the Senate or the Supreme Court of Justice's Criminal Division for Persons Holding Political Office; inspecting assets and liabilities of persons holding political office; and monitoring the morals and ethics of persons holding political office.

54. The State Audit Commission is responsible for inspections, prescribing standards and rules for state audits and advising and recommending remedial measures on state audits in an independent and neutral manner.

55. The National Human Rights Commission is responsible for examining and reporting facts on violations of human rights to the relevant state agencies and/or the private sector; and for rendering recommendations on measures or guidelines for the promotion and protection of human rights to the National Assembly, the Council of Ministers and relevant agencies. The Organic Act on the National Human Rights Commission, which came into force on 13 December 2017, reflects the country's efforts to revitalize the strength of this key human rights mechanism in accordance with the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (the Paris Principles).

State Attorney

56. The Office of the Attorney General has the power and constitutionally guaranteed independence to decide whether to prosecute a case or not and perform their functions under the Constitution in a just manner. The Office is a key player in protecting the human rights of citizens.

The electoral system

57. To be entitled to vote in an election, a person must be a Thai citizen (if Thai nationality is acquired through naturalization, that person must hold it for not less than five years) and have reached the age of 18 on election day.

58. In the 2019 election, 51,419,975 persons were eligible to vote, of which 26,618,448 were female and 24,801,527 were male.

59. As of 13 May 2019, there are 88 recognized political parties at the national level. The distribution of legislative seats by party is as follows:

<i>Party</i>	<i>Seat(s)</i>
Pheu Thai Party	136
PalangPracharath Party	116
Future Forward Party	80
Democrat Party	53
Bhumjaithai Party	51
Thai Liberal Party	10
Chartthai Pattana Party	10
New Economics Party	6
Prachachart Party	7
Puea Chat Party	5
Action Coalition for Thailand	5
Chart Pattana Party	3
Thai Local Power Party	3
Thai Forest Conservation Party	2
Thai People Power Party	1
Thai Nation Power Party	1
People Progressive Party	1
Thai Civilized Party	1
Palang Thai Rak Thai Party	1
Thai Teachers for People Party	1
Prachaniyom Party	1
Thai People Justice Party	1
People Reform Party	1
Thai Citizens Power Party	1

<i>Party</i>	<i>Seat(s)</i>
New Democracy Party	1
New Palangdharma Party	1

Crime and administration of justice

60. In 2019, criminal cases increased by 23% from the previous year. Among them, narcotic cases and offences against property cases increased by 27.7% and 4.3%, respectively. Crimes against life, body and sexual assaults decreased by 6.1%, however. Figures in the following tables are based on available data as of March 2019.

Incidence of violent death and life-threatening crimes, offences against body and sexual offences reported per 100,000 persons 6.98

Number of persons and rate (per 100,000 persons) who were arrested / brought before a court for violent or other serious crimes (such as homicide, robbery, assault and trafficking)	<i>Offences</i>	<i>Asserted</i>		<i>Persecuted</i>	
		<i>Number</i>	<i>Rate</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rate</i>
	Arson	317	0.55	594	0.89
	Rape	3 523	5.3	7 334	11
	Other sexual offences	1 559	2.35	3 078	4.6
	Murder	2 660	4	6 242	9.4
	Attempted murder	4 762	7.17	12 035	18.1
	Unintentional killing	503	0.76	1 309	1.97
	Other homicide offences	111	0.17	257	0.39
	Offences against body	14 770	22.24	20 858	31.4
	Robbery	1 005	1.5	2 983	4.5
	Gang robbery	598	0.9	2 571	3.88
	Human trafficking	555	0.83	461	0.69

Share of public expenditure on police/security and judiciary (million baht) 408 569.7 (approximately 14% of the total budget)

Convicted prisoners, disaggregated by offenses and the court's adjudication (as of 3 April 2019)	Please refer to the attached tables.
Accused and detained persons who apply for free legal aid	744 cases in 2015 757 cases in 2016 624 cases in 2017 595 cases in 2018 576 cases in 2019 275 cases in 2020 Total 3 571 cases
Victims and the accused compensated by the Compensation and Expenses for the Accused in Criminal Cases Act B.E. 2544 (2001) and as amended 2016	THB 2,827,160,938.28 paid to 57,948 victims and THB 77,473,528.00 paid to 438 accused (1 October 2015–30 June 2020)

61. In 2018 Thailand enforced an execution order for the first time in nine years. It should be noted that cases involving the death penalty are given careful consideration while undergoing due process. Nonetheless, each case is unique with different circumstances. Further information can be found in paragraph 100–101.

Access to justice

62. People and communities adversely affected by human rights abuses have a wide range of options for making complaints or seeking redress, including through hotlines, coordination centers, including Damrongdharma centers and those of different agencies, the National Human Rights Commission, as well as through the courts.

63. Thailand attaches great importance to ensuring access to justice for all, particularly for the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups who have disproportionately experienced legal hardships. This is reflected in the expansion of legal aid to cover all channels including online and video calls as well as line applications, as well as initiatives to create standard sign language for court proceedings and the registration and training of sign language interpreters, among others.

64. The Justice Fund Act of 2015 provides financial assistance to enhance access to legal aid, lawyers, and judicial proceedings. This includes proofs and evidence gathering, court fees and bail, compensation for victims of human rights violations, as well as the public dissemination of basic legal knowledge.

65. The Ministry of Justice has initiated an outreach program “Justice Care” which combines several complex existing means to assist injured persons and victims of crime into one single platform. This program deals with complaints promptly and effectively. This service is available to everyone regardless of their race or nationality. Through this channel, people are able to request for legal advice, legal assistance, restitution, state compensation, witness protection, and other forms of support pursuant to relevant legislations such as the Justice Fund Act 2015, the Damages for the Injured Person and Compensation and Expenses for the Accused in Criminal Cases Act 2001, and the Criminal Procedure Code (Section 44/1).

66. To facilitate access to justice, the Courts of Justice officially launched the E-Justice Conference Center (EJCC) in 2016. The EJCC provides an additional method for supplementing traditional in-court witnesses and interpretation services through a videoconferencing system. This would help expedite judicial proceedings by reducing travel time and expenses for those who need to appear in court as well as protect minors and other vulnerable witnesses from confrontation with the suspect. The Courts of Justice also maintain a list of foreign language interpreters for any court wishing to examine witnesses who have difficulty communicating in Thai.

67. On 1 November 2018, the Courts of Justice launched the “e-Notice System” to allow online filing of court documents such as written pleadings and notices and to announce schedules for deliberations. The launch aims to use technology to save time and reduce the financial burden in the correspondence of documents.

68. The timely delivery of justice without discrimination is another area of Thailand’s strength. Thanks to a strict case management policy with the support of the electronic litigation system and off-hour trials, the conduct of trials has been accelerated, and most cases under the courts of first instance were adjudicated within one year.

Effective remedies

69. Victims of human rights violations are entitled to receive state compensation through the Damages for the Injured Persons and Compensation and Expenses for the Accused in Criminal Cases Act B.E. 2544 (2001), which was amended in 2016. The act aims to provide financial assistance to victims of crime such as medical fees, physical and mental rehabilitation fees, compensation for loss of income and in the case of death. Those accused who were detained during trial and later acquitted as they were found innocent are eligible to receive state compensation through the aforementioned Act.

70. The 2003 ‘Witness Protection Act’ covers those who have reasonable fear or who are in jeopardy even if the case is not yet under police investigation. Since the Act came into force, all witness protected under the Act have been saved at a rate of 100%.

71. On 8 February 2019, the NLA approved the draft Mediation Act as proposed by the Ministry of Justice. Once in effect, the Mediation Act would provide an alternative dispute settlement mechanism for civil claims with relatively low monetary value and certain criminal claims. This alternative method will save time and money for parties to the dispute and at the same time reduce the caseload of the courts.

The Justice System Reform Plan

72. The Justice System Reform Plan of 6 April 2018 established a policy framework to enhance various aspects of the judicial system, including access to justice, timely and adequate protection, improvement of physical and psychological recovery, access to remedy for victims and witnesses in criminal cases, and improvement of conditions in prisons and detention centers across the country.

Religious law

73. In principle, no religious law has legally binding effect in Thailand except for the limited case of family and succession laws concerning Muslims residing in Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Satun provinces.

Customary law

74. For customary law, it will be of concern only on matters of civil disputes where no written law is applicable to the case, and there is no available statutory law analogy which can be used to fill the legal gap. In the case of criminal law, Thailand strictly observes the principle of *lex scripta*.

II. General framework for the protection and promotion of human rights

A. Acceptance of international human rights norms

75. Thailand was among the first 48 countries that adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. Since then, Thailand has been a party to a number of international instruments related, directly or indirectly, to human rights.

76. Thailand is committed to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process and has been under review twice, in 2011 and 2016. Thailand has also voluntarily submitted UPR mid-term reports in 2014 and 2019.

UN main human rights instruments

77. Thailand is currently a party to seven main UN human rights treaties and a signatory to the ICCPED. Details are as follows:

<i>Treaties</i>	<i>Status</i>
CAT	Accession on 2 October 2007
ICCPR	Accession 29 October 1996
ICCPED	Signature on 9 January 2012
CEDAW	Accession on 9 August 1985
CEDAW-OP	Ratification on 14 June 2000
CERD	Accession on 28 January 2003

<i>Treaties</i>	<i>Status</i>
ICESCR	Accession on 6 September 1999
CRC	Accession on 27 May 1992
CRC-OP-AC	Accession on 27 February 2006
CRC-OP-IC	Ratification on 25 September 2012
CRC-OP-SC	Accession on 11 January 2006
CRPD	Ratification on 29 July 2008
CRPD-OP	Accession on 2 September 2016

78. Thailand currently has reservations and declarations, as follows:

<i>Conventions</i>	<i>Reservations and declarations</i>
CAT	<p>Interpretative declarations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With respect to the term “torture” under Article 1 of the Convention, although there is neither a specific definition nor particular offence under the current Thai Penal Code corresponding to the term, there are comparable provisions under the aforesaid Thai Penal Code applicable to acts under Article 1 of the Convention. The term “torture” under Article 1 of the Convention shall accordingly be interpreted in conformity with the current Thai Penal Code. The Kingdom of Thailand shall revise its domestic law to be more consistent with Article 1 of the Convention at the earliest opportunity. 2. For the same reason as stipulated in the preceding paragraph, Article 4 of the Convention which stipulates: ‘Each State Party shall ensure that all acts of torture are offences under its criminal law. The same shall apply to an attempt to commit torture and to an act by any person which constitutes complicity or participation in torture,’ shall be interpreted in conformity with the current Thai Penal Code. The Kingdom of Thailand shall revise its domestic law to be more consistent with Article 4 of the Convention at the earliest opportunity. 3. Article 5 of the Convention which provides: ‘Each State Party shall take such measures as may be necessary to establish its jurisdiction over the offences referred to in Article 4.....’ is interpreted by the Kingdom of Thailand to mean that the jurisdiction referred to in Article 5 shall be established in accordance with the current Thai Penal Code. The Kingdom of Thailand shall revise its domestic law to be more consistent with Article 5 of the Convention at the earliest opportunity. <p>Reservation: The Kingdom of Thailand does not consider itself bound by Article 30, Paragraph 1, of the Convention.</p>
ICCPR	<p>Interpretative declarations: The Government of Thailand declares that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The term “self-determination” as appears in Article 1, Paragraph 1, of the Covenant shall be interpreted as being compatible with that expressed in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993.

<i>Conventions</i>	<i>Reservations and declarations</i>
CEDAW	<p>2. With respect to Article 20 of the Covenant, the term “war” appearing in Paragraph 1 is understood by Thailand to mean war in contravention of international law.”</p> <p>Declaration: The Royal Thai Government wishes to express its understanding that the purposes of the Convention are to eliminate discrimination against women and to accord to every person, men and women alike, equality before the law, and are in accordance with the principles prescribed by the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand.</p> <p>Reservation: The Royal Thai Government does not consider itself bound by the provisions of Article 29, Paragraph 1, of the Convention.</p>
CERD	<p>Interpretative declaration: The Kingdom of Thailand does not interpret and apply the provisions of this Convention as imposing upon the Kingdom of Thailand any obligation beyond the confines of the Constitution and the laws of the Kingdom of Thailand. In addition, such interpretation and application shall be limited to or consistent with the obligations under other international human rights instruments to which the Kingdom of Thailand is a party.</p> <p>Reservation: The Kingdom of Thailand does not consider itself bound by the provisions of Article 22 of the Convention.</p>
ICESCR	<p>Interpretative declaration: The Government of the Kingdom of Thailand declares that the term “self-determination” as appears in Article 1 Paragraph 1 of the Covenant shall be interpreted as being compatible with that expressed in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993.</p>
CRC	<p>Reservation: The application of Article 22 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child shall be subject to the national laws, regulations and prevailing practices in Thailand.</p>
CRC-OP-AC	<p>Declarations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Military service is compulsory by law. Thai men reaching the age of 18 have a duty to register on the inactive military personnel list. At the age of 21, selected inactive military personnel will become active military personnel. Inactive military personnel may also voluntarily apply to become active military personnel to serve in the national armed forces. Women are exempt from compulsory military service both in times of peace and in times of war, but are subjected to other duties assigned by law. 2. In times of war or national crisis, inactive military personnel (men aged over 18) may be recruited to participate in the armed forces. 3. Admittances to military schools such as Army Non-commissioned Officer School, Air Technical Training School, Navy Non-Commissioned Officer School, Armed Forces Academies Preparatory School and Army, Naval, and Air Forces Academies is on a voluntary basis, depending on the success in the entrance examinations and subject to the consent of parents or legal guardians. 4. High school and university students regardless of gender may voluntarily apply to receive military training from the Army Reserve Command, with the consent of parents or

<i>Conventions</i>	<i>Reservations and declarations</i>
	<p>legal guardians, without any exception. Students who complete 3 years' training are exempt from military service (as active military personnel) when they reach the age of 21.</p> <p>5. Non-governmental militias are prohibited by law, regardless of the age of persons concerned.</p>

79. Thailand is also a party to other UN human rights and related conventions:
1. The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction on 1 November 2002;
 2. The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption on 1 August 2004;
 3. ILO Conventions No. 14, 19, 29, 80, 88, 100, 105, 111, 122, 127, 138, 159, 182, 187, 188, the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, and ILO's Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930;
 4. The Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled on 28 April 2019.

Derogations, restrictions or limitations

80. On 4 June 2020, Thailand notified other States Party to the ICCPR via the UN Secretary General regarding the declaration of an emergency situation, by virtue of Section 5 of the Emergency Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situations B.E. 2548 (2005), in all areas of Thailand until 30 June 2020 in response to the outbreak of the Coronavirus 2019, and thus the exercise of the right of derogation under Paragraph 1 of Article 4 of the ICCPR.

81. Thailand considered it necessary to adopt temporary, urgent measures in order to protect the public health, safety and peaceful living of the people, as well as to suppress the spread of COVID-19. Some of these temporary urgent measures may involve a derogation from some of its obligations under the ICCPR, particularly Article 12. The non-derogable rights as set forth in Articles 6, 7, 8 (Paragraphs 1 and 2), 11, 15, 16 and 18 of the Covenant have not been affected by the said temporary urgent measures. This notification became effective since 5 June 2020.

B. Legal framework for the protection of human rights at the national level

The 2017 Constitution

82. In line with its predecessors, the fundamental rights recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights treaties to which Thailand has been a party, have been enshrined by the 2017 Constitution. It guarantees the rights and liberties of the people, focuses on equality of persons before the law and prohibits discrimination on any ground. This Constitution further guarantees the exercise of a person's rights and liberties, even if not explicitly listed in the Constitution, as long as they are not prohibited or restricted by the Constitution or laws, insofar as such exercise of rights and liberties does not affect national security, public order or good morals, and does not violate the rights and liberties of others.

83. The 2017 Constitution has embraced the gender-responsive budgeting principle. According to Section 71, the State should take into account the different necessities and needs with respect to gender, age and conditions of persons while allocating the budget.

84. Among the innovative elements, the 2017 Constitution, Section 77, requires that prior to the enactment of every law, the State should (i) conduct consultations with stakeholders,

(ii) analyze any impacts that may occur from the law thoroughly and systematically, and (iii) disclose the results of the consultations and analysis to the public, as well as to take them into consideration at every stage of the legislative process. It requires that when a law has come into force, the State undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation of the law at every specified period of time, for which consultations with stakeholders shall be conducted, with a view to ensuring that all laws are suitable to and appropriate for the changing contexts.

The National Strategy

85. The 20-year National Strategy (2018–2037) is the country’s first national long-term strategy developed pursuant to Section 65 of the 2017 Constitution. It shall be pursued to ensure that the country achieves its vision of becoming “a developed country with security, prosperity and sustainability in accordance with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy”. The Thai people’s happiness and well-being are the main and ultimate goal of the National Strategy.

86. Six groups of indicators will be used to evaluate the National Strategy’s success. These include (1) the well-being of the Thai people and society, (2) national competitiveness, economic growth and income distribution, (3) the development of human capital, (4) social equality and equity, (5) the sustainability of national biodiversity, environmental quality and natural resources, and (6) Government efficiency and better access to public services.

87. National development during the Strategy’s time-frame shall focus on an appropriate balance between social and economic development and environmental stewardship. The six key strategies are (1) national security, (2) national competitiveness enhancement, (3) human capital development and strengthening, (4) social cohesion and just society, (5) eco-friendly development and growth, and (6) public sector rebalancing and development.

The National Reform Plans

88. The 2017 Constitution has prompted the promulgation of national reform plans covering 11 areas, including politics, public administration, laws, justice system, economy, natural resources and environment, public health, mass media and IT, social issues, energy and anti-corruption. The plans provide guidelines for the country to move forward in line with the innovation-driven ‘Thailand 4.0’ agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The plans are legally binding for government agencies to implement.

89. The national reform plans have addressed a wide range of human rights issues. For example, the National Reform Plan on Social Issues focuses on unlocking barriers and obstacles of the disadvantaged groups in all aspects in order to create social inclusion. The target groups include children, women, persons with disabilities, older persons, persons with low income, incapacitated persons and persons without nationality or legal status under the law on civil registration, former prisoners and persons living with HIV/AIDS.

The National Economic and Social Development Plan

90. The country’s development is guided primarily by a series of five-year National Economic and Social Development Plans, first adopted in 1961. The current one is the twelfth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017–2021).

91. The development objectives of the Plan over the next five years, which is linked cumulatively with the 20-year National Strategy (see paragraph 85–87), have adopted the following core principles/direction:

1. The Twelfth Plan is based on the principles of the “Sufficiency Economy Philosophy”, which has been a vital foundation since the Ninth Plan. The Philosophy promotes balanced development by embracing the concepts of moderation, reasonableness and resilience or risk management;
2. “People-Centered Development” seeks to create a sustainable quality of life and health conditions for Thais. It aims to develop quality citizens who are disciplined, receptive to learning, knowledgeable, skillful and creative. They should also have a good attitude, social responsibility, morality and ethics.

- People of all ages are developed and well prepared for an ageing society. They can live with and make use of their environment harmoniously, as well as preserve and rehabilitate natural resources;
3. The Vision of the 20-Year National Strategy is “Thailand as a developed country with security, prosperity and sustainability in accordance with the principles of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy”. Together with the national slogan of “Security, Prosperity and Sustainability”, they are a framework underpinning the Twelfth Plan;
 4. “The Targets of Thailand in 2036” are targets of the 20-year National Strategy and they are used as a benchmark in setting major and minor targets for the first five years. Each target and indicator is consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and has been derived from an assessment of the major issues found in development, the patterns of development and the nature and trends in main production and services sectors in Thailand;
 5. The Twelfth Plan encourages “a form of economic growth that contributes to the reduction of inequality and promotes a greater level of productivity based on local wisdom and innovation.” The Plan focuses on inclusive growth to expand the middle-class population group. It sets a goal of increasing economic opportunity, social opportunity and incomes of the bottom 40% of the population with the lowest income;
 6. The Twelfth Plan will be brought “into action in order to achieve long-term development goals.” The Plan is the mechanism that connects, oversees and takes the development directions and goals of the 20-year National Strategy through to implementation at all levels and involving all aspects, harmoniously;
 7. The Twelfth Plan also determines high-priority development issues that require integrated implementation, sets programs and projects that effectively correspond to development targets and sets targets and indicators that cover a wider range and scope of issues other than those outlined in the previous National Economic and Social Development Plans. Target-setting brings many factors into consideration, including congruence with the targets of the long-term 20-year National Strategy, which provides the structure for setting minor targets and indicators which are to be exercised within the budgetary framework; and the monitoring and evaluation of the public sector in terms of its spending, performance and development which should be consistent with and reinforce one another.

The national human rights agenda

92. To mainstream human rights in all its policies, the Government designated human rights as a national agenda for the first time for the years 2018–2019, linking it with the innovation-driven ‘Thailand 4.0’ policy and its efforts to achieve sustainable development.

93. The agenda decodes the “4+3+2+1=Goal” policy framework, i.e., “four” policies to create a conducive environment, “three” to improve the existing human rights system in the country, “two” to drive institutions and plans to promote human rights work, “one” to reduce the problem of human rights infringements, and “Goal,” which is the key to a peaceful society.

94. The Government has set up the National Committee on Human Rights since December 2018. The Committee, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice and comprising government agencies and civil society representatives as Committee members, is tasked with pushing forward the National Agenda on Human Rights, the National Human Rights Plan and other related matters in a cross-cutting and integrated manner.

95. According to the said national agenda, Thailand views that human rights are key to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring that no one, especially the most

vulnerable, is left behind. Thailand emphasizes the complementarities and mutually reinforcing linkages between human rights and the SDGs in both directions.

96. The Ministry of Justice is currently working on the renewal of the national human rights agenda, tentatively for the years 2021–2022.

The National Human Rights Plan

97. As the 3rd National Human Rights Plan (2014–2018) came to completion, the Ministry of Justice, as the focal point, conducted an evaluation of the Plan's implementation and worked on the 4th National Human Rights Plan (2019–2023). The 4th Plan was put through a series of public consultations, revised and considered by relevant agencies and endorsed by the Cabinet on 30 June 2020.

98. The key elements of the 4th Plan address ongoing issues leading to a proposed action framework, which is divided into 22 sub-plans based on 10 thematic issues and 12 vulnerable groups:

- The 10 issue-based plans include plans on (1) public health, (2) education, (3) natural resources and environment, (4) housing, (5) transportation, (6) economic and business-related rights, (7) civil, political and security-related rights, (8) community rights, cultural rights and rights concerning religions, (9) data, information and information technology and (10) the judicial process;
- The 12 groups-based plans include plans on (1) children and youth, (2) the elderly, (3) women, (4) persons with disabilities, (5) farmers and workers, (6) patients, including people living with HIV/AIDS and narcotics addicts, (7) ethnic groups, stateless persons, and asylum seekers, (8) LGBTs, (9) human rights defenders, (10) inmates, including the accused, alleged offenders and prisoners, (11) former inmates and persons having served their terms and (12) injured persons and victims, including crime victims, human trafficking victims, victims of human rights violations, victims of domestic violence, etc. and witnesses.

Right to life

99. The arbitrary deprivation of life is criminalized under Thai law such as the Penal Code, Sections 288 (murder), 289 (aggravated murder), 290 (assault causing death) and 291 (negligent killing).

100. According to the Penal Code, Section 18, Paragraph 2 and the Criminal Procedure Code, Sections 247 and 248, the death penalty shall not be imposed on an offender who is not yet eighteen years of age at material time and a convicted person who is pregnant or mentally unstable, respectively.

101. Related Thai agencies have undertaken a step-by-step approach to reforming laws on capital punishment in compliance with human rights principles. Such commitment has been reflected in the successive National Human Rights Plans since 2009. With public sentiment strongly in favor of the death penalty, the Government is working to increase public awareness and understanding of the ongoing debate on capital punishment.

Right to be free from torture and ill-treatment

102. An act of torture or ill-treatment is absolutely prohibited by both the Constitution (Section 29) and several sections of the Penal Code such as Sections 157, 200, 295, 296, 297, 298, 288, 289, etc.

103. The draft Act on the Prevention and Suppression of Torture and Enforced Disappearance has been approved in principle by the Cabinet in May 2016 and deliberated by the National Legislative Assembly in March 2017. Since the NLA had yet to finish the deliberations before its dissolution, due to technical difficulties, the Ministry of Justice withdrew the draft Act and conducted public consultations anew according to Section 77 of the Constitution. The revised draft was subsequently resubmitted for the Cabinet's consideration in April 2020.

104. While the draft Act on Prevention and Suppression of Torture and Enforced Disappearance is under consideration, the Prime Minister has issued Orders No. 131/2560 dated 23 May 2017, No. 198/2560 dated 18 August 2017 (additional members), and No. 338/2562 dated 15 November 2019 (renewed) to establish the National Committee for Managing Cases Relating to Torture and Enforced Disappearance, chaired by the Minister of Justice and comprising representatives from related agencies as the Committee's members, in order to address alleged cases of torture and enforced disappearance and to prevent future occurrences of such cases. The Committee is supported by four sub-committees on (1) follow-up and monitoring, (2) assistance and remedy, (3) prevention and training and (4) case screening. Any public officer who is found to have been involved in torture and/or enforced disappearance will be prosecuted in accordance with the law.

Right to freedom of expression

105. The right to freedom of expression is guaranteed under the Thai Constitution, in line with international laws in particular Article 19 of the ICCPR. Thailand recognizes these freedoms as enablers of all other human rights and the foundation of our democracy.

106. Section 35 of the 2017 Constitution lays down the guarantees on the freedom of the press and media, including the following:

1. Media professionals shall enjoy the liberty to present news or express opinions in accordance with professional ethics;
2. The closure of a newspaper or other mass media in deprivation of the liberty under paragraph one shall not be permitted. Censorship by a competent official of any news or statements made by a media professional prior to the publication in a newspaper or other media shall not be permitted, except during the time when the country is in a state of war;
3. No grant of money or other properties shall be made by the State as subsidies to private newspapers or other private mass media.

Right to be free from slavery

107. Slavery is contrary to Section 312 of the Penal Code and the Anti-Human Trafficking Act B.E. 2551 (2008). The latter piece of legislation has recently been amended in 2015 to further intensify the country's efforts to combat trafficking in persons by granting the power to authorities to temporarily close business establishments or factories, as well as protect persons who notify, in good faith, officials of the offences committed under this Act from both civil and criminal liability. The Act has also been further amended in 2017 and 2019 to deal with the issue more effectively by giving a clearer definition of "trafficking in persons" and, by focusing on the prevention and suppression of forced labour and protection and remedy for victims, respectively.

108. As a country of origin, transit and destination, Thailand attracts many migrants, particularly from neighbouring countries, some of whom are at risk of being subject to exploitation and trafficking. Tremendous efforts have been made to fight against trafficking in persons and assist those who fall prey, be they Thai nationals or migrants. All victims of trafficking in persons will be allowed to temporarily reside in Thailand during relevant legal procedures. They can choose to stay either in the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security's shelters or NGO-run shelters, and will be provided with an opportunity to earn income. Thailand continues to attach importance to collaboration with countries of origin and other international partners in providing protection for victims and promoting their reintegration to society. Thailand has been working very closely with respective embassies and international organizations to safely repatriate victims of human trafficking. Thailand also uses bilateral meetings on repatriation and reintegration of victims with our neighbouring countries to serve as a mechanism to effectively protect victims through exchanges of information and coordination on prosecution. Thailand has also collaborated with the private sector, international organizations and NGOs to enhance protection for victims of human trafficking.

Business and human rights

109. On 31 May 2017, the Declaration on Cooperation to Promote the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) was signed by the relevant ministries, business chambers, the National Human Rights Commission and the UN Global Compact Network Thailand.

110. Thailand adopted as the first country in Asia, a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP) on 29 October 2019. It has 4 priority areas: (1) labour, (2) land, environment and natural resources, (3) human rights defenders, and (4) cross-border investment and multi-national enterprises. A multi-stakeholder committee has been established to prescribe, prepare, monitor and analyze the implementation of the NAP.

111. In addition, the implementation of the NAP will be supported by, among others, Thailand and the OECD co-operation programme in promoting and enabling Responsible Business Conduct, with a two-year RBC cooperation work plan being developed.

Rights of specific groups

Children

112. The National Child and Youth Development Promotion Act B.E. 2550 (2007) promotes the best interest of the child and guarantees a child's basic rights without discrimination. The Act also promotes and instills in children, ethics and values, e.g., a familial bond, national pride and democratic values, freedom of expression and participation in public life. It also reaffirms the rights of children to the highest available standard of health care and the rights to play and to participate in cultural and social affairs.

113. The National Child and Youth Development Plan B.E. 2560–2564 (2017–2021) provides a framework for the development of programs and activities for children and youth consistent with the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan. The main goal of the plan is to ensure that children and youth lead safe and secure lives; are physically and mentally healthy; have good ethics and morals and a sense of civic duty; are able to express themselves creatively; and are fundamentally happy.

114. By a Cabinet Resolution of 2005, all children shall receive fifteen years of basic education without discrimination, regardless of nationality or the ability to present official documents confirming any other type of status, according to the 'Education for All' policy. The State shall subsidize per head expenditure to the educational institutions concerned in facilitating such action.

115. The Equitable Education Fund (EEF) was established under the 2018 Education Equality Fund Act, effective from 14 May 2018. The Fund is an important tool in reducing inequality and increasing educational opportunities. It responds to the needs of the disadvantaged to receive education together, as well as to enhance and improve teacher quality and efficiency. In addition, the EEF provides subsidies for activities to develop vocational skills and life skills.

116. According to Section 287/1 of the Penal Code, child pornography is a specific offence under Thai law punishing whoever has it in his or her possession.

117. On 21 January 2019, 7 Thai agencies concerned signed an MoU on the Determination of Measures and Approaches Alternative to the Detention of Children in Immigration Detention Centers (IDCs). The MoU aims to determine responsibilities and provide common guidelines to integrate procedures on the non-detention of migrant children under the age of 18. Instead of staying in an IDC, the children and their mothers or guardians will be placed either under the care of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, private organizations, or civil society organizations while awaiting long-term solutions.

Women

118. The Government has strengthened relevant legislation and policies to promote equal economic rights and opportunities, such as the Gender Equality Act (2015), the Social Security Act (1990) and the amendment to the Labor Protection Act (2008) to ensure equal

pay for equal work. In addition, Thailand has established the Thai Women's Empowerment Fund, as well as eight Women and Family Development Learning Centers across the country.

119. All the National Human Rights Plans have identified women and girls as a target group with strategies and obligations to promote and protect their rights. The National Women's Development Strategy (2017–2021) lays down a roadmap for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, integrating principles and standards from the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

LGBTs

120. The Gender Equality Act of 2015 is a milestone piece of legislation to address gender discrimination whether such person is male, female or expresses themselves differently from their inborn gender. The Act also establishes national mechanisms to streamline related policies, oversee petitions and provide remedies for persons who are discriminated against based on their gender.

121. The 4th National Human Rights Plan (2019–2023) ensures that all actors are committed to promoting human rights and gender equality, which is fundamental to achieving sustainable development.

122. Thailand is currently drafting the Civil Partnership Act to guarantee legal rights to LGBT persons who wish to join in a civil partnership, which covers issues such as the legal relationship, property rights and inheritance.

Persons with disabilities

123. The Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act B.E. 2550 (2007) and its amendment in 2013 ensures that persons with disabilities fully enjoy equal fundamental human rights and freedoms. It also protects persons with disabilities from all means of unfair discrimination. It also guarantees that persons with disabilities have the right to access and utilize public facilities and services including medical care, education, employment, disability allowance, sign language interpreters, personal assistants, home modification, information accessibility, and assistive technology.

124. The current 5th National Plan on the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (2017–2020) serves as a comprehensive framework for all relevant government agencies in promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. It highlights sustainable capacity building for persons with disabilities and their organization to fully and fairly have access to their rights, and accessible environment, technology and Development Disability Services Centers in rural and remote areas.

125. In the field of employment, the Cabinet Resolution on 27 October B.E. 2558 (2015) requires that government agencies with 100 or more employees hire persons with disabilities as per the ratio stipulated by the law.

Prisoners and persons in detention

126. The new Corrections Act of 2017, among others, ensures the protection of detainees' rights in line with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, or the "Mandela Rules," and related international standards. In July 2016, a pilot project to implement the Mandela Rules was launched at Thonburi Remand Prison and is being expanded to other prisons and correctional facilities throughout Thailand.

127. Thailand has played a major role in establishing the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders or the Bangkok Rules, which originated from the concept of Thailand's Enhancing Lives of Female Inmates or ELFI Project initiated by Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha Narendira Debyavati and endorsed at the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly on 21 December 2010. This serves as a guideline on the treatment of female inmates for prisons across nations, with regard to gender differences and the specific needs of women.

128. The Department of Corrections and the Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ) have been working together to implement the Bangkok Rules. Since 2015, there have been six model prisons across Thailand that have adopted the Bangkok Rules.

129. Recognizing the problem of overcrowding in places of detention under the supervision of the Department of Corrections, the Ministry of Justice is currently drafting a ministerial regulation under the 2017 Corrections Act to specify six alternative criminal sanctions to imprisonment, including (i) intermittent detention, (ii) detention during specified hours, (iii) detention within a specified place of detention, (iv) community service, (v) travel restrictions in accordance with Section 89/2 of the Criminal Procedure Code, and (vi) any other sanction specified by the Department of Corrections.

130. On 1 March 2018, the Court of Justice and the Department of Probation introduced the Electronic Monitoring (EM) system as an alternative to detention for prisoners who have been granted temporary release instead of posting bail money. The Electronic Monitoring Center launched in September 2017 has made it possible to release the accused or defendants who cannot afford monetary bail. This will reduce the number of inmates and, more importantly, social disparity and the overrepresentation of the poor in pre-trial detention. To ensure that the liberty of defendants in criminal cases are affected only as much as necessary and as little as possible, it is now the court's practice that it must finish with criminal cases in which defendants are being detained, within 6 months from the starting date of detention.

131. On 22 January 2019, the Ministry of Health, the Department of Corrections and the National Health Security Office concluded an MoU to improve the health service system for prisoners. This is in accordance with the Cabinet resolution of 17 November 2015 which requested relevant authorities to assign health personnel from local hospitals to provide services in prisons, establish a special ward for prisoners requiring treatment outside of prison facilities and improve the overall health services system for prisoners.

Stateless persons

132. The Civil Registration Act (No.2) B.E. 2551 (2008) provides registration for all stateless persons born in Thailand. The amendment of the Nationality Act, through Nationality Act (No.4) B.E. 2551 (2008), enables stateless persons born in Thailand to apply for Thai nationality under the conditions designated by the Cabinet. Moreover, to prevent children of foreign or stateless parents from becoming persons without legal status or illegal migrants, the Cabinet approved two resolutions on 7 December 2016 to (1) grant foreign children born in Thailand the right to legally stay in Thailand and prevent them from being criminalized as illegal migrants and (2) provide a legal pathway for foreign children born in Thailand to apply for Thai nationality.

133. Thailand has been addressing the issue of statelessness in the country for more than three decades by implementing a step-by-step approach. The first step is to register all stateless persons born in Thailand with the aim of granting them legal status and rights while residing in the country and undergoing an application process for Thai nationality. As the next step, the amendment of the Nationality Act in B.E. 2551 (2008) facilitates the nationalization pathway for specific groups of non-Thai citizens, such as immigrants who have fled to Thailand and have been residing in the country for a long time and who cannot return to their countries of origin, stateless and rootless persons. The Government also issues identification cards to the above-mentioned groups which would allow them to work and access public services such as healthcare and education, enabling them to lead a normal life in Thai society and take part in the development of the country.

Human rights defenders

134. Thailand recognizes the role of human rights defenders and respects their rights in accordance with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. The 4th National Human Rights Plan (2019–2023) includes human rights defenders as a target group with specific measures to protect and promote their rights.

135. The Ministry of Justice has implemented a series of measures regarding human rights defenders, including jointly developing a human rights defenders' manual with the Office of

the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Regional Office for South-East Asia.

136. In an effort to establish an overarching tool to protect the right to freedom of expression against the invocation of Strategic Litigation against Public Participation (SLAPP), the Court of Justice has added two new sections to the Criminal Procedure Code. Section 161/1 provides the court with the power to dismiss any criminal case at the filing stage of the lawsuit if it appears to the Court that the cause of the legal action arises from ill intention to harass or take advantage of another person. Section 165/2 allows the Court to play a more active role by having the power to summon witnesses and evidence proposed by the accused as the Court's witness.

Human rights instruments directly invoked/enforced by the courts/administrative authorities

137. As a dualist country, Thailand implements its international human rights obligations through the development of appropriate legislation and administrative measures since international instruments do not apply directly to Thai domestic law.

138. The rights enshrined in the core international human rights treaties to which Thailand has been a party are protected either by the Constitution or statutes. The details as to which piece of legislation guarantees which rights have been highlighted in relevant treaty-specific periodic reports.

139. There have been examples of cases in which human rights instruments are directly invoked or enforced by the courts and administrative authorities. In deciding whether the Office of the Prime Minister needs to pay compensation to the victim of torture committed by an official, the Supreme Administrative Court in 1350/2559 ruled that, "as Thailand has been a party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment by accession since 2 October 2007..., Thailand shall be obliged to conform itself to the Convention [...]."

140. Another example can be found in a case in 2019 where the Court of Appeals (18776/2561) decided that even if the civil partnership registered in the UK between the deceased and the plaintiff (who asked to be appointed by the Court as the deceased's estate executor) was not yet recognized under Thai law, the agreement per se was not in contrary to the maintenance of public order or good morals in Thailand. This was partly because Thailand respected the principle of equality under the law and non-discrimination based on gender according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

C. Framework within which human rights are promoted at the national level

National and regional parliaments and assemblies

141. The Parliament is the key organ in the Thai legislative process (see paragraph 37–40). The process has entitled bills that promote and protect human rights in Thailand. The cabinet, members of the Houses and eligible voters are empowered to lodge a bill to the Parliament for consideration.

142. As mentioned in paragraph 84, Section 77 of the 2017 Constitution establishes a new mechanism for public consultation with stakeholders in the law-making process. Such consultations must take place before the enactment of every law as well as after the law comes into force as an evaluation of the suitability of the law amidst the changing social contexts.

National human rights institutions

143. The duties and powers of the National Human Rights Commission to promote and protect human rights are in accordance with the 2017 Constitution, Section 247, Paragraph 1, and the Organic Act, Sections 26–27 and 34–46 (see also paragraph 55).

144. The Commission's promotional functions are implemented by raising awareness on human rights norms and issues, as well as through programs for teaching and research and by addressing public opinion.

Dissemination of human rights instruments

145. All international human rights instruments to which Thailand is party have been translated, published and disseminated to the general public.

Raising human rights awareness among public officials and other professionals

146. Various agencies and institutions have worked to raise human rights awareness among public officials including law enforcement officers, public prosecutors, judges, corrections officials, and child protection personnel, as well as other professionals in Thailand. Meetings, workshops, training, seminars, lectures and publications have been organized to disseminate information on and promote international human rights standards and norms and facilitate the sharing of experiences among Thai agencies, the private sector, CSOs including academics and the media, relevant international organizations and the general public. The international community (e.g. UN Women, UNICEF, UNDP and ICRC) also assisted in shaping the programs in accordance with international standards.

147. Examples of awareness-raising programs are as follows:

- Between 2015–2019, the Rights and Liberties Protection Department of the Ministry of Justice organized training on human rights principles related to law enforcement which were organized for concerned government officials to promote their understanding of human rights, including Thailand's obligations under international human rights treaties, in order to minimize the risk of human rights violations while discharging their official duties and to enhance the effectiveness of implementation and the application of laws and regulations;
- Since 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the OHCHR, has organized an annual capacity-building workshop on human rights treaty body reporting for government officials in charge of preparing national reports under the country's core international human rights instruments. The objectives of the workshops include enhancing personnel capacities, particularly through raising awareness and understanding and developing skills necessary for drafting and presenting a national report;
- The Office of the Civil Service Commission offers a two-month self-taught basic human rights course through an e-learning platform for civil servants and staff members. Each year, about 600 participants attend this training course.

148. With regard to legal professionals, the human rights module is a compulsory subject for those who attend the Bar exam. The subject is also available in most law schools across the country.

Promotion of human rights awareness through educational programs and Government-sponsored public information

149. Public education on human rights has been organized through formal and non-formal learning, training and seminars. Teaching and learning curricula have been developed to sensitize teachers and educational personnel, officials from local administrative organizations and human rights volunteers.

150. The Ministry of Education plays a key role in promoting and cultivating social values such as care, respect, responsibility, peace, harmony and peaceful co-existence in schools. Its education policies emphasize the importance of disseminating knowledge on human rights and related information and education. Such policies are reflected in the schools' academic curriculum, particularly in social studies. To guard against the development of harmful prejudices and stereotypes, students are taught to respect and celebrate multiculturalism, including through learning platforms such as games, student projects, school camps and field trips to museums and heritage sites.

151. In addition, the Ministry of Education has implemented specific strategies, plans and projects to address the specific needs of ethnic children and people in Thailand in a holistic manner, such as the ‘Educational Development Plan in Border Area (2017–2021)’, which aims to improve education and the quality of life of students, university students and people living in the border areas connected to Myanmar, Lao PDR and Cambodia.

152. The Government has initiated the ‘Public-Private Partnership School Project’ using a comprehensive and integrated approach for children, especially low-income, disadvantaged or vulnerable children, as well as orphans.

153. The Ministry of Justice has continuously organized workshops to promote human rights principles among the youth. The workshops have focused on principles of equality, non-discrimination, cultural diversity and multiculturalism, including through learning strategies such as facilitated discussions, interactive dialogues, arts, music and games. In addition, the Ministry of Justice in partnership with government and non-government agencies has initiated the ‘Justice Supported School Project’, which is an extra-curricular program for the youth to promote their participation in drafting the rules affecting their daily lives at schools, including the rules to tackle issues of bullying and drug abuse. The students learn to respect the rights of others and abide by the rules they have created. Currently, over 850 pilot primary and secondary schools across the country have participated in this project.

154. Further human rights programs have been offered by government agencies to the public in order to increase awareness of human rights issues in Thai society. These programs include, but are not limited to: (i) the Human Rights Executive Programme by King Prajadhipok’s Institute and the National Human Rights Commission; (ii) the Human Rights Certificate by several universities; and (iii) human rights training by the Rights and Liberties Department.

155. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has held a series of ‘train the trainers’ programs on human rights education and related issues for instructors and educational personnel at the university level. It has concluded memoranda of understanding with more than 50 institutions of higher education in the country since 2016. With these programs, the NHRC aims – through instructors and educational personnel who have attended them – to disseminate knowledge and build up awareness on human rights among children and youth in order for them to drive forward the promotion and protection of human rights in the society.

156. Institutions of higher education, including universities, in Bangkok and other provinces increasingly offer courses on human rights for students at various levels, as well as the general public. For example, Mahidol University offers human rights courses at the Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctoral degrees. Chulalongkorn University runs a three-week training course on human rights, justice in society and the rule of law. Thammasat University has a seven-week training program on human rights and civil rights laws. Other universities such as Sukhothai Thammathirat University, Ubon Ratchathani University, Maha Sarakham University, Chiang Mai University, Mae Fa Luang University, Payap University, as well as several Rajabhat Universities also offer human rights-related courses or house a department of human rights.

157. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated the Ministry’s ‘Human Rights Education Series’ in 2017. Two children books ‘Little Chick and Little Duck. We are different, we are friends.’ and ‘Konmek’s Dream’, aiming to raise awareness of human rights principles among children and youth and to promote the respect for and acceptance of differences, non-discrimination, human dignity, equal opportunity, the inclusion of those vulnerable as well as peaceful co-existence in the pluralistic society, have been launched as part of the series.

Promotion of human rights awareness through the mass media

158. The dissemination of human rights information through the media has involved various forms, namely: (i) publications, such as books, pamphlets and journals; (ii) human rights research, such as on prisoners and children in the justice system, children’s rights, violence and children, etc.; (iii) monitoring and evaluation of human rights curriculum in educational institutes lower than tertiary level; (iv) research and development on teaching and learning and training curriculum; (v) public education campaigns through audio-visual

media, such as radio, television info-graphic media, and video presentation; and (vi) electronic media, such as the internet, e-learning, social media, and e-mails.

159. On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 'Thailand's Human Rights Month' was co-organized by concerned government agencies, international organizations, foreign embassies in Thailand and CSOs in December 2018. As part of the activities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Regional Office for South-East Asia, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) co-organized an event entitled 'The 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1st Anniversary of Thailand's Human Rights National Agenda: Towards a Caring and Sharing Society' at the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre, Bangkok, Thailand. Over 200 representatives from government agencies, diplomatic corps, international organizations, the private sector, civil society organizations, as well as the general public, including the youth attended the event. The event was publicized through various media channels aimed at strengthening awareness and understanding of human rights in the Thai society, supporting the ongoing efforts to enhance the human rights work at the national and international levels, and reaffirming the Government's commitments to promoting and protecting human rights in Thailand and beyond.

Roles of civil society

160. Civil society has played active roles in the promotion and protection of human rights in Thailand. In general, their roles are recognized among others in mobilizing human development and social intervention and reform, monitoring the human rights situation, assuming a 'checks and balances' function, partaking in the preparation of national reports, as well as the drafting of several laws and related documents such as the National Human Rights Plans, as mentioned in paragraphs 97–98.

161. The Government sets out a coordinated whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach and attaches importance to strengthening partnership with civil society. Regular dialogues and consultations with CSOs have been individually or jointly organized by concerned agencies. For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has held regular consultations and meetings with CSOs in the field of human rights since 2017.

162. As specified in Thailand's country reports, civil society has been engaged in the process of preparing the country's respective reports under core international human rights treaties that Thailand is a party to and the UPR. The participation of all sectors including the public sector, the private sector, civil society, ethnic groups, as well as all persons concerned across the country has been proved constructive and fruitful.

163. On the ground, the Government has also worked with civil society organizations in a wide range of areas. For example, the Association of Women for Peace has worked on assisting and empowering women and children affected by the situation in the South of Thailand and raised their needs to decision makers. The Association of Children and Youth for Peace in the Southern Border Provinces of Thailand (Luuk Rieng Group) also worked with Save the Children on a disaster risk reduction project in the local schools.

164. Many government agencies, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and the Office of the Judiciary, in collaboration with relevant civil society and international organizations, continue to provide human rights training programs to concerned officials, including police officers, military personnel, corrections officers and judicial personnel.

165. As an example in the field of human rights research, the Faculty of Communication Arts of Chulalongkorn University with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked on a research project 'Media and the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights of Those in Vulnerable Situations'. The target groups under research were ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, older persons and LGBTs. The research outcomes were published in 2019 (in Thai, accessible at <http://humanrights.mfa.go.th/en/humanrightsmedia.pdf>).

Development cooperation and assistance

166. Thailand posits that technical cooperation and capacity-building are crucial to support other States in translating their human rights obligations into tangible results on the ground and that technical cooperation efforts are demand-driven based on a genuine dialogue with requesting States.

167. The Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has actively promoted international cooperation with interested countries and relevant international organizations and NGOs. It takes on different forms of bilateral and South-South, North-South-South and South-South-South triangular cooperation. Currently, several international cooperation projects are related to the promotion of human rights, particularly the rights of people in vulnerable situations, economic and social rights including the right to health (maternal health and children's health) and the right to education, linking them with the achievement of sustainable development while leaving no one behind. Such cooperation is aimed at enhancing national capacities to build synergies between human rights and SDG implementation.

168. On the right to education, TICA has implemented teacher training projects, short-term scholarships for studies and training, as well as projects to establish and/or develop educational institutions and schools. On children's rights, the 'Children and Youth Development Project' in Cambodia and the 'Children's Quality of Life Development Project' in the Philippines and Bhutan have been initiated. On physical and mental health, Thailand has provided a public health assistance program in Cambodia and projects to develop hospitals and medical faculties (including an emergency department in Dawei Hospital, Myanmar), as well as awareness-raising activities on newly emerging diseases. In addition, TICA worked with UNFPA on a trilateral cooperation project on reducing maternal mortality. On the protection of those in vulnerable situations, a project to establish the first center for human trafficking victims and risk groups was executed.

169. To disseminate knowledge regarding national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up in the region and beyond, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Regional Office for South-East Asia co-hosted the Regional Dialogue on the National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up in Bangkok on 29–30 August 2019. The Dialogue was attended by approximately 50 participants from relevant agencies responsible for reporting and following up on the implementation of human rights from 12 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, namely Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Vietnam, as well as representatives from relevant Thai agencies. The Dialogue was a platform to exchange good practices and lessons learned in utilizing NMRFs, building capacities of line agencies, and forming inputs to relevant forums such as the Human Rights Council. In addition, such dialogue has strengthened the network of government agencies in implementing, reporting and following up on a country's human rights obligations and recommendations.

170. The Rights and Liberties Protection Department (RLPD) of the Ministry of Justice has assigned officials as speakers to share experiences in implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), including preparing a national action plan on business and human rights (NAP), in different countries such as Malaysia, Vietnam and Pakistan. The RLPD has also collaborated with relevant UN agencies including UNDP and UNESCAP in this field.

171. Pursuant to paragraphs 127–128, the Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ) has organized annual courses on the treatment of women prisoners in accordance with the Bangkok Rules for senior correctional officers in ASEAN since 2017. In addition, capacity-building and training activities have been upon request organized in various countries such as Kenya, Indonesia and Malaysia. They took place on a bilateral basis, as well as in a trilateral framework with the ICRC and the UNODC.

D. Reporting process to the United Nations at the national level

172. The preparation of obligatory reports on the implementation of human rights instruments to which Thailand is a party has been achieved with the active participation of all stakeholders. A national committee or working group has been established as a core mechanism for each report preparation, comprising relevant agencies from the public, private and academic sectors and stakeholders or target groups for which the instruments aim to provide protection.

173. The main facilitators in the report preparation are, depending on the relevant conventions, the Ministry of Justice (ICCPR, ICESCR, CERD, CAT) and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (CEDAW, CRC, CRPD). The Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are responsible for the preparation of UPR reports. The full lists of organizations and persons involved in preparing each report have been and will be highlighted in the respective reports.

174. The format, substance and guidelines for report preparation follow the requirements and guidelines of the UN Committees responsible for such instruments.

175. In most cases, a report is first drafted in Thai, with contributions from various working groups, comprising representatives from both the public and private sectors, responsible for specific topics. The draft report is then put to public hearings, both at the regional and national levels, to gather feedback and recommendations. The amended report is then submitted to responsible agencies for approval and then translated into English.

176. The final report is submitted to the Cabinet for approval, and subsequently to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for formal submission to the UN.

177. Thailand's reports that have been submitted to the UN are as follows:

<i>Conventions</i>	<i>Documents</i>	<i>Date</i>
CAT	1st report	27 February 2013
ICCPR	1st report	2 June 2004
	2nd report	23 June 2015
CEDAW	1st report	1 June 1987
	2nd and 3rd report (combined)	3 March 1997
	4th and 5th report (combined)	24 June 2004
	6th and 7th report (combined)	18 June 2015
CERD	1st, 2nd, and 3rd report (combined)	27 June 2011
	4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th (combined)	24 April 2019
ICESCR	1st and 2nd report (combined)	21 August 2012
CRC	1st report	23 August 1996
	2nd report	7 June 2004
	3rd and 4th report (combined)	11 July 2011
CRC-OP-AC	1st report	30 October 2009

<i>Conventions</i>	<i>Documents</i>	<i>Date</i>
CRC-OP-SC	1st report	30 October 2009
CRPD	1st report	3 December 2012

III. Implementation of substantive human rights provisions

A. Non-discrimination and equality

178. The foremost safeguard against discrimination and inequality on all grounds is the Constitution. The principle of non-discrimination and equality is explicitly enshrined in the 2017 Constitution in four sections which are:

i. Section 27

“All persons are equal before the law and shall have rights and liberties and be protected equally under the law.

“Men and women shall enjoy equal rights.

“Unjust discrimination against a person on the grounds of differences in origin, race, language, sex, age, disability, physical or health condition, personal status, economic and social standing, religious belief, education or political view which is not contrary to the provisions of the Constitution, or on any other grounds shall not be permitted.

“Measures determined by the State in order to eliminate an obstacle to or to promote persons’ ability to exercise their rights or liberties on the same basis as other person or to protect or facilitate children, women, the elderly, persons with disabilities or underprivileged persons shall not be deemed as unjust discrimination under paragraph three.

“Members of the armed forces, police force, government officials, other officials of the State, officers or employees of State organizations shall enjoy the same rights and liberties as those enjoyed by other persons, except those restricted by law specifically in relation to politics, capacities, disciplines or ethics.”

ii. Section 40, Paragraph 3

“Enactment of the law to regulate the engagement of occupation... shall not be in a manner of discrimination...”

iii. Section 68, Paragraph 1

“The State should organise a management system for the justice process in every aspect to ensure efficiency, fairness and non-discrimination and shall ensure that the people have access to justice process in a convenient and swift manner without delay and do not have to bear excessive expenses.”

iv. Section 76

“The State should develop a system of administration of State affairs of central, regional and local administrations, as well as other State affairs in accordance with the principles of good public governance, provided that State agencies shall cooperate with and assist each other in performing duties, with a view to maximising, for the benefit of the people, the efficiency of the administration of State affairs, provision of public services and expenditure of budget. The State should also develop State officials to have integrity and to have an attitude of serving the public in an expedient, expeditious and non-discriminatory manner as well as performing duties efficiently.”

179. Thailand has made continued efforts to enable all, including those in vulnerable situations, such as children, women, persons with disabilities, older persons, ethnic minorities, to access and exercise their rights on equal terms with others. For example, the Protection of Vulnerable Persons Act of 2014 provides better protection, including provisions of social welfare, shelters, health care, education and job opportunities, to persons who are

homeless, living in poverty or in difficult conditions. In addition, the Government has introduced the Welfare Card Scheme, which has benefitted over 11 million registered low-income earners. Further relevant laws, policies, and programs indicating Thailand's efforts to eliminate discrimination and inequality are described in paragraphs 57, 62–74, 82–136, and 141–165.

B. Effective remedies

180. Information on Thailand's effective remedies that are available can be found in paragraphs 69–71.

C. Procedural guarantees

181. Thailand has placed efforts in ensuring that everyone, particularly those in vulnerable situations, has equal access to justice (see paragraphs 62–68). It guarantees free lawyers and legal consultations to all people, regardless of their financial status or nationality. In addition, the newly enacted Justice Fund Act of 2015 aims to reduce social disparity, as described in paragraph 64.

182. Regarding the criminal justice system, if a case is prosecuted, the court will hear the case fairly and without discrimination, regardless of the status of the defendant and plaintiff and whether they are stateless or have unclear legal status. There are a number of Thai NGOs and international organizations ready to provide assistance during the trial by working closely and independently with the victims, free from any intervention and obstruction from the State.

D. Participation in public life

183. Information on the Nationality Act, as well as related conditions in applying for Thai nationality is mentioned in paragraphs 132–133.

184. Information on the electoral system in Thailand appears in paragraphs 57–59.

185. Thailand has a very active civil society (see paragraphs 160–164). The Government has closely collaborated with and recognized the work of civil society organizations including media, as part of the public and political life of the country.
