

**Intervention by the Delegation of Thailand,
Mr. Natapanu Nopakun,
Counsellor,
Item 3 & 5 Clustered ID with
the Special Rapporteur on indigenous peoples and
Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP)
24th Session of the Human Rights Council
18 September 2013**

Mr. President,

My delegation would like to thank the Special Rapporteur on indigenous peoples for his presentation. We have studied thoroughly the report of the Special Rapporteur, which focuses on the situation of indigenous peoples in Asia. We took note with much interest the Special Rapporteur's observations and recommendations, which deserve careful consideration in moving forward. Indeed, the rights of the indigenous people should be addressed in a holistic manner, taking into account all sets of rights equally.

I wish also take this opportunity to provide clarification regarding Thailand's position on the issue.

Firstly, the Royal Thai Government attaches importance to the promotion and protection of human rights of all groups in the country, including ethnic groups, on a non-discriminatory basis. Under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, every Thai citizen is entitled to equal enjoyment of basic rights and fundamental freedom, without distinction and regardless of his or her background.

Secondly, as we give our utmost efforts to ensure that all peoples can enjoy their rights on an equal basis, we believe that this starts with birth registration and citizenship documentation which we have focused on. We view that these fundamental yet important processes provide all Thai people with access to education, social security, and health care services. In addition, we have worked to ensure access to justice and reparation for all persons in the case of violation of rights.

Lastly, my delegation wishes to state for the record that the term used in the report of the Special Rapporteur, referring to certain groups in Thailand as "indigenous peoples" is, however, not officially recognized under the Thai Constitution and relevant legislation. We grant equal rights to all ethnic groups, including the Karen, Hmong, Lahu, and Mien. At the same time, we actively promote their cultural identities and livelihood. Thailand understands that the articles dealing with the right to self-determination and related rights in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) shall be interpreted in accordance with the principles of territorial integrity or political unity as stated in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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