

**Intervention by the Delegation of Thailand,
Mr. Krerkpan Roekchamnong,
Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative,**

Sixth Forum on Minority Issues

Agenda item II: Legal framework and key concepts

26 November 2013

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Madam Chairperson,

I would like to begin by thanking panelists for their insightful presentations on ways to apply international standards and principles providing for the right to freedom of religion or belief in the protection of the rights of religious minorities.

Thailand attaches importance to respecting, supporting and building and protecting rights, liberty and equality as well as nondiscrimination on the basis of religion for all religious groups both in law and in practice, as ensured in article 18 and 27 of the ICCPR.

As a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society for many centuries, as home to followers of Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Brahminism, Hinduism and Sikhism, the various challenges in ensuring a society which is based on respect and tolerance are not unfamiliar to Thailand.

The Constitution of Thailand consists of various articles that guarantee human dignity and equality without discrimination, in particular article 37 ensuring the right and freedom of religion of all people. Furthermore, in practice, a number of measures to support and protect the rights and freedom of religious minorities with a view to ensure the full enjoyment of their rights to non-discrimination and equality in all aspects, be they cultural, religious, social, economic and public.

For example, the Universal Health Coverage is introduced to all people to provide them with the basic access to health care services without discrimination. All children are guaranteed access to education. For Muslim children, predominantly in the South of Thailand, bearing in mind their different identity, culture, and way of life, are educated to meet the national standard with cultural diversity is being promoted.

Furthermore, the rights and security of religious minorities are protected in case of violation, and provided legal assistance, including legal counsel, in accordance with the 2001 Compensation and Expense to Injured Persons and the Accused in Criminal Cases Act and the 2010 Procedures of the Ministry of Justice on Justice Fund.

We note with interest the draft recommendations contained in the draft documents, many of which we have already implemented in accordance with the Constitution and relevant laws, particularly in protecting rights of religious minorities in socioeconomic and development aspects, including women and girls, and dialogue with relevant actors. We will also look closely at other recommendations deemed useful in fostering interfaith and interreligious dialogue in concurrence with our Constitution.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

