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**High-level segment on “Harnessing science, technology, and innovation to
accelerate progress on the SDGs and addressing COVID-19”**

Statement submitted by

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Since our adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Thailand has put a serious effort on achieving the SDGs. It is evident that the old paradigm of economic development that focuses mainly on GDP growth is unsustainable. The new global development agenda was launched at the right time when the world needed a new path of development toward sustainability that allows the present and future generations to thrive in balance and live in harmony with nature, technologies, and other people on our planet.

However, achieving the SDGs is not going to be easy. We believe that a shift toward a new paradigm is important. As in the case of Thailand, this paradigm shift is guided by the **Sufficiency Economy Philosophy**, which emphasizes on balanced development in all dimensions. **Economic wealth must be balanced with social well-being, environmental wellness, and human wisdom.** The Sufficiency Economy Philosophy lays down fundamental principles for sustainable development that is in conformity with SDGs.

According to the Sustainable Development Report 2019, **Thailand ranks 40th out of 162 countries [1st in ASEAN], moving up 19 places from last year.** To accelerate the progress on SDGs, the Thai government has initiated a **new growth model called “BCG”** which stands for Bio, Circular and Green Economy. In line with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, the BCG model **builds upon bio and cultural diversity and employs science, technology and innovation** to transform the country to a value-based and innovation-driven economy with concerns for fairness, inclusiveness and sustainability. At present, it covers **4 main sectors**, comprising food and agriculture, medical and wellness, bio-energy and materials, and tourism, coupling with **area-**

based development programs that are tailor-made to fit the needs and challenges of each region. For example, the north-eastern region is focusing on resolving major health issues such as liver fluke and developing cultural tourism along the Mekong riverbank while the northern region aims to promote agro-industry and solve the long-lasting PM2.5 air quality problem that widely affects everyone in the region. The BCG model also provides **a platform for collaborative R&D, talent and entrepreneurship development, technology demonstration and localization as well as joint investment.**

The **COVID-19 pandemic** is a global catastrophic event that exposes social and economic vulnerability and worsens inequality. As governments are developing recovery measures and fine-tuning their country's development strategy to keep abreast of changing social and economic trends caused by the pandemic and the global economic slowdown, we must realize that the **long-term resilience goals cannot be detached from the SDGs.**

The year 2020 marks a decade of ambitious actions for all of us to deliver the 2030 development agenda. CSTD could play a pivotal role as science, technology and innovation or STI are cross-cutting tools to deliver all 17 sustainable development goals. In this regard, Thailand **supports CSTD and UNCTAD to call for action to ensure STI budgets are not compromised** during the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath, through the four proposed policy measures, namely,

- 1) During the crisis, **support R&D and innovation activities as well as skills development** as part of emergency measures and recovery packages.
- 2) After the crisis, **strengthen the budgetary commitments** to support R&D, innovation, and human resource development activities and ensure that they are in line with the SDGs.
- 3) Support a **systems approach** to policy making that includes natural sciences, engineering, social sciences and humanities as well as **promoting cross-ministries collaboration and public-private partnership.**
- 4) Ensure **international cooperation** and coordinated policy responses. In particular, support for research and development of **vaccines and medicines** and ensure inclusive access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all as well as **building resilience system** to cope with national and global health risks and crises in the future.

Thank you.