

## Pointers on current political situation in Thailand

### I. Overview: 1-month progress

- From the start, the NCPO's main priorities have been to **maintain peace and order while initiating comprehensive reforms** to move the country towards a fully functioning and sustainable democracy.
- The NCPO has been working closely with civil servants, various stakeholders, and technocrats to **invigorate national efforts** and attention to solving the most urgent problems in Thailand in an integrated and coherent manner, such as jumpstarting the economy, addressing threats to the society and social well-being especially corruption, illegal gambling, illegal armed possession, and criminal syndicates and activities.

#### Timeline of the 3-stage roadmap

- The drafting of the **provisional constitution has been completed** and is being vetted by legal experts. It will be sent back to the NCPO for re-examination, and will then be forwarded for Royal Endorsement and should enter into force **by this coming July**.
- After the invocation of the provisional constitution in July, it will take approximately 1 month to establish the **National Legislative Assembly and the Cabinet** which could carry out their duties **from September 2014**.
- As for the establishment of the **National Reform Council**, whose members will be selected from all social and professional sectors from all over the country, it will take approximately 2 months from the date which the provisional constitution enters into force. It is expected that National Reform Council will start performing their duties **from early October 2014**.
- The National Reform Council will draw up recommendations for the **constitution drafting committee**, who will take around 10 months to complete their task. In other words, a new constitution can be expected within 12 months from the date which the provisional constitution is announced, i.e. **by July 2015**.
- With a new Constitution in place, and a **general election** expected **towards October 2015**, Thailand will have a fully democratic regime with His Majesty the King as Head of State.

#### Progress on strengthening national security

- Military and police officers have been successful in **seizing large quantities of military-grade weapons** throughout the country. Thus far, 1,996 illegal firearms, 31,840 rounds of ammunition, and 265 grenades and other explosive devices have been seized. They are also monitoring and

apprehending various armed networks to eliminate risks of violence and organized crime.

- Effective cooperation between security agencies and civil society has led to successful **suppression of rampant criminal activities** including narcotics networks, illegal gambling dens, and exploiters of protected natural resources. This intensified operation has made citizens feel safer and more secure in many areas.
- Efforts have also been focused on **the management of foreign migrant workers and the elimination of human trafficking**. The NCPO has set up a committee to integrate inter-ministerial work to solve this important problem in a systematic, practical, and sustainable manner. Concrete measures have recently been put in place (*details on page 4-5*), so that migrant workers are treated with dignity and in accordance with international human rights and labour standards.

#### Progress on normalizing national administration

- Since 22<sup>nd</sup> May, bureaucrats have been able to resume normal duties and pressed on with urgent tasks, such as expediting planned fiscal expenditure for fiscal year 2014 and prioritizing important projects for 2015.
- The management and oversight of **state enterprises**, a very important sector of the Thai economy, have also been improved to achieve efficiency, transparency, and accountability. Management positions and Board members will be drawn from truly qualified people with suitable expertise and long-time experience in the relevant areas. The next step will be **regulatory reforms** to ensure efficient use of funds, consumer interests and sustainability of the enterprises.

#### Progress on improving economic fundamentals

- Through close coordination among all relevant ministries, as well as consultations with the Thai Chamber of Commerce (TCC) and the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce in Thailand (JFCCT), the NCPO has been able to both review and expedite important economic measures.
- Important policy decisions have been made on three crucial economic sectors, namely infrastructure development, agricultural production, and small- and medium-sized enterprises.
- **\*Fiscal expenditures (2015-2022) worth approximately 2.4 trillion baht (800 billion USD)\*** have been committed to the improvement of road, rail, and water transportation networks, including **dual-track railways** along Thailand's north-south and east-west economic corridors, in order to strengthen Thailand's natural potential as the connectivity hub of ASEAN.

\*Approved by Air Chief Marshal Prajin Juntong, Head of the Economic Cluster.  
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- **Short-term credit schemes** and guarantee against natural disasters will also be provided for SMEs and farmers respectively, in order to inject much-needed liquidity into the system for the next 12 months of production and farming schedule. (*details on page 5-6*)

#### Progress on reconciliation and reforms

- For reconciliation, the **NCPO has acted as a facilitator** to create a conducive atmosphere for exchanging and sharing opinions between all sides. Interestingly, a common theme – the elimination of corruption and the needs to reform the country’s political and judicial institutions – have emerged from all different groups.
- The NCPO’s **Reform Working Group** has also gathered views and recommendations from leading academics all over the country, reviewing more than 200 documents and research papers. The Working Group has also invited inputs from the public and all sectors for reforms in 11 areas.
- **The 11 major areas** for reform includes: (1) Corruption (2) Legislative Power (3) Administrative Power (4) Judicial Process (5) Energy System (6) Basic Infrastructure Development (7) Mass Communication (8) Education and Learning (9) Moral and Virtues (10) Economic and Social Inequalities and (11) Allocation of Land, Water and Natural Resources.
- These inputs and recommendations will be used as the database for the second phase of reform, where the **Reform Council** will take the lead.

#### Conclusion

- Overall, the situation in Thailand is more peaceful and secure, as reflected in the satisfaction of both ordinary citizens and the business community. **Consumer confidence index has increased** from 57.7 to 60.0, the first time in 14 months. Thai **Industries Sentiment Index has risen** to 85.1, a first increase in seven months. The tourism sector is also recovering, with a continued rise in number of tourist arrivals.
- Most importantly, the NCPO has laid down the **specific details and timeline of its 3-stage Roadmap** to return Thailand to a democratic path. The new constitution will be an outcome of inclusive reconciliation and reforms. A free and fair election will be held under this constitutional framework and lay a strong foundation for a fully functioning democracy.
- A reform process takes time, but **by the latter half of 2015 Thailand should have an elected government in place**. Thailand continues to strongly urge our friends to look at the context and view the current situation as Thailand’s opportunity to strengthen our democratic institutions through reconciliation and reform.

- This is a challenging period for us. It is also a healing process. But we are confident that we will get back on a democratic path. Now is the time for friends to support Thailand and continue to engage with us. We are the second largest economy in ASEAN and have every intention to continue to play an active role in foreign policy.

## **II. Specific Issues**

### **So-called “detention” and human rights issues**

- The NCPO has pledged that individual rights and freedoms are to be upheld, and that it would ensure full respect of the rule of law, which would be applied to all without exception. Any limitations that have been put in place are only those necessary to prevent further disruption, untoward incidents, or any efforts to instigate violence and hatred.
- National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Thailand remains active and operational under the National Human Rights Commission Act B.E. 2542, which is still fully in force. The NCPO has been in contact with the NHRC and are kept abreast with the NHRC’s concerns with regard to possible human rights violations or temporary limitations of certain rights.
- Since 25<sup>th</sup> June 2014, every single individuals who have reported themselves according to the NCPO’s Orders (387 persons) have been released within 7 days; 35% of them were able to return home within 1 or 2 days.
- These people include not only leaders of political groups involved in past conflicts, but also those involved in narcotics, local racketeers, illegal business owners, and owners of illegal firearms. They have been brought in to eliminate risks of violence and organized crime.
- Immediate family members have been given access to them, as well as doctors, medical personnel and legal counselors if required. All of them have been well treated in guest quarters. There has been no report of torture or ill-treatment of any kind.
- The NCPO has provided access for the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Thailand to visit three locations where these individuals were accommodated. The NHRC have been able to interview some of these individuals themselves after they have been released. The Commission will draft a report of their view on this issue, which will be released in due course.

### **Migrant workers**

- Thailand values the contribution of migrant workers to our economic growth. Without proper management, these workers may fall prey to exploitation, people smuggling and human trafficking.

- The issues of migrant workers and human trafficking are addressed through a systematic and integrated policy implementation. The details of the plans are as follows:
  - **Thai-Cambodian coordination centers in 4 areas along the border** will be set up for the registration of Cambodian workers who seek to return to work in Thailand. The Ministry of Interior is the host agency along with Ministry of Labor and the Immigration Bureau in **issuing temporary work permits** to employers, so that they can register Cambodian workers within 60 days. The coordination centers have started their operation since 26 June 2014.
  - **One-Stop-Service registration centers** will also be set up to facilitate the processes of nationality verification and application for work permits for the remaining unregistered migrant workers to legalize themselves. Samut Sakhon will be the first province to apply a test run of this scheme, starting on Monday, 30 June 2014. One-Stop-Service centers in other provinces are scheduled to start operating on 15 July 2014, using Samut Sakhon as a model.
  - Another form of One-Stop-Service registration centers for migrant workers will also be set up to prevent smuggling of illegal workers particularly for the **fishery industries in 22 coastal provinces**. The centers will be ready for services from 7 July 2014 onwards.

#### **Economic policies**

- **The first set** of urgent policies is to review, improve, and expedite important **infrastructure development projects**. These will not only strengthen Thailand's natural potential as a connectivity hub of ASEAN in the long term, but they will also be an engine of growth for the Thai economy in the short term.
- The NCPO has set up the Monitoring and Auditing Committee on Fiscal Expenditures to oversee the planning and implementation of these projects.
- Based on the Committee's recommendations, the NCPO's economic cluster has approved an infrastructure plan covering a set of projects committing **\*fiscal expenditures (2015-2022) worth approximately 2.4 trillion baht (800 billion USD)\*** – including the construction of dual-track railways along the country's north-south and east-west economic corridor, as well as nation-wide upgrade of motorway networks and immigration control stations. Emphasis has been placed on sustainable and prudent fiscal commitment, as well as efficient management of projects.
- As for the package of water-management infrastructure projects worth 350 billion baht (115 billion USD), the NCPO has tasked the Committee to

\*Approved by Air Chief Marshal Prajin Juntong, Head of the Economic Cluster.  
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carefully review them in order to ensure necessity, efficiency and transparency, in line with the 11<sup>th</sup> 5-year national development plan.

- Meanwhile, to prevent possible flood problems, the NCPO has instructed relevant agencies to dredge canals and waterways in preparation for the coming rainy season. It also instructed the Army and the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation to monitor the flood situations so as to be able to provide immediate assistance when required.
- **The second set** of urgent economic policies concern **agricultural production of key crops**, such as rice, sugar cane and rubber tree. The NCPO has ordered a revision of the rice-field insurance measures against natural disasters to ensure that they truly benefit the farmers without distorting market mechanisms. Meanwhile, 1-year credit lines not exceeding 50,000 baht per person will also be provided to farmers for the new paddy season. Agricultural institutes will also provide credit facilities for agricultural cooperatives and groups of rice farmers in distributing and developing rice products as well as increasing production, selecting the most appropriate technology to improve farming methods, and locating adequate water supplies for rice growing.
- The NCPO has also tasked the Economic Cluster to formulate strategies that will systematically solve issues relating to fluctuations in prices and supplies of agricultural crops in the long run. These strategies and measures will then be submitted to the NCPO for further consideration.
- **The third set** of important economic measures concern the livelihood of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The NCPO has approved a budget ceiling of 1.6 billion baht (500 million USD) from the 2015 budget for the portfolio guarantee scheme (PGS) to provide access to capital for SMEs and inject liquidity into this important sector of the Thai economy.

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