

**Statement by
H.E. Dr. Virachai Virameteekul
Minister of Science and Technology
at the Ministerial Meeting
on Group on Earth Observations
5 November 2010, Beijing, China**

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,**

1. Introduction

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Chairman and the organizing committee for hosting the 7th Group on Earth Observations and the Ministerial Summit in Beijing, a very famous ancient city of the world.

On behalf of the Thai delegation, I am pleased to share with you a few words on space technology and related applications in Thailand.

2. Earth Observation Mission in Thailand :

With the launch of LANDSAT programme in 1971, Thailand has since been involved in satellite earth observation. Our first Ground Receiving Station for remote sensing satellite was established in Bangkok later in 1981. Now, while the station can receive image data from LANDSAT, ALOS, RADARSAT, TERRA MODIS, and THEOS satellites; it is also able to distribute images to a wide range of national as well as international users. **Thailand took a major step in 2008, when we successfully launched our first Earth Observation Satellite into orbit : “THEOS”, controlled by the Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency - or GISTDA - at Sriracha Control Station.**

3. International Cooperation :

At the international level, Thailand has been active in various organizations, including COPUOS, GEO, CEOS, APSCO, APRSAF; and we seek collaboration with many

partners from China to Japan, from Russia to France, and from USA to Peru.

It is with pleasure to inform you that Thailand and the United Nations Office of Outer Space Affairs will jointly organize the United Nations/Thailand Workshop on Space Law during 16-19 November in Bangkok under the support from ESA and APSCO. It will be another manifesto of our strong commitment to work together for peace and security through international cooperation.

4. Application of satellites data:

In Thailand, data obtained from earth observation satellites have been applied with a view to enhancing our sustainability in every dimension: economics, social, and environmental. They have been beneficial for people in various fields including Agriculture, Forestry, Environment Monitoring, and **Disaster Management**.

The latter is particularly relevant considering the **current state of severe flood** occurring in many Southeast Asian countries as you may know; and Thailand is no exception.

We are now facing a devastating flood of extreme proportion (at three decades return period). Its extent covers around one-third of the country (30 provinces) ; coming from lower northern and north eastern regions since early October, and still moving downward to the central plain of Thailand. Vast farmer's agricultural areas and their properties have been damaged as well as infrastructures, and, most importantly, human lives.

As an immediate response, the Royal Thai Government has put the THEOS satellite into priori application not only to **monitor, assess, and map out flood-stricken areas**, but also to **predict and prevent flood-prone areas** as well. Relying on these first hand satellite images enables us to

- **plan flood relief** : by detecting damage areas, and provide emergency water and food supply, medicine and other essentials,
- **estimate compensation** for flood victims in agricultural damaged areas, and
- **develop rehabilitation plans.**

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is true that Thailand is fortunate to have THEOS satellite at our disposal. But this is still not enough. **More help is needed. I am, therefore, asking for cooperation in the GEO community to provide the state of the art technology and constellation of satellites to help the flood victims.**

We have been using RADARSAT, MODIS, and MTSAT, together with THEOS with full endeavour to assess flood maps in geo-spatial and time. And we have already made further requests to a number of other satellite cooperative bodies.

In fact, I am not speaking only for Thailand. A string of help to those without their own satellite is needed as well. We, who are gathering at the GEO summit to talk about observation technology data sharing, **MUST** reach out to help them.

Thailand with our THEOS stands ready for any assistance that may be needed.

5. Conclusion :

Thailand is integrating various technological domain for development and intensifying cooperation within our network in order to enhance quality of life for all mankind. To this end, we would like to seek cooperation in the field of **disaster monitoring and assessment, especially on flood, drought and coastal erosion via cooperative projects with various countries.**

It is time to show our cooperation at work - to make sure that what we are doing here does make sense, and that it does make a difference.