***COUNTRY NAME:*** THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND  ***COMMITTEE NAME:*** UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN’S EMERGENCY FUND ***TOPIC :***  Providing Medical Supplies to Regions in Need

***“Like Education, Healthcare also needs to be given importance”***

Thailand has a long history of engaging with the international community and providing assistance in times of need. Southeast Asia is a region prone to natural disasters, from typhoons and floods to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. These events can cause widespread devastation and threaten lives. In the face of such challenges, cooperation and a helping hand from neighbors become crucial. Thailand, a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), has emerged as a key player in regional disaster relief efforts. Thailand has been a helpful neighbor to other ASEAN countries during natural disasters, through numerous ways. Thailand has become a storage center for important items needed after natural disasters in Southeast Asia. This means countries in the region can get things like water filters, tents, and medical supplies more quickly when they need them. This helps people who have been affected by disasters get the help they need faster. Thailand has been readied as a center of long-distance disaster relief aid for ASEAN member states, with relief items to be provided with 24-hour notice.  
Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Director General Chayaphol Thitisak, said today that the world’s climate change has caused critical situations to develop in many regions and has claimed lives and caused damage to property. The 28th ASEAN conference on natural disasters has resolved to pick Thailand as the ASEAN center for long-distance disaster relief aid, given its logistic systems for relief and emergency operations.   
Apart from this, Thailand provides excellent health to its people; strengthening its economy. With affordable healthcare, well-developed healthcare infrastructure, highly skilled medical professionals, and medical services meeting international standards, Thailand is a leading destination for medical tourism. As of August 2023, the Joint Commission International (JCI) accredited 59 Thai medical institutes which offers diverse medical treatments, ranging from organ transplants to dental and cosmetic surgery.  
  
Thailand’s low cost of medical care attracts increasing number of medical tourists. The average medical tourist can expect to save 25 percent to 75 percent on various procedures and treatment options. For example, a heart bypass surgery in Thailand costs $13,000, nearly nine times less than in the U.S. ($113,000). A facelift costs up to $15,000 in the U.S., but as low as $3,000 in Thailand. Hip replacement in Thailand costs about $7,800 compared to $50,000 in the U.S.   
  
In addition to low costs, Thailand has highly trained and experienced medical specialists and is well known for quality service. Thailand has also made impressive strides in the use of advanced technologies and treatment options. Furthermore, the country’s abundant tourist attractions are another major draw for medical tourists.   
According to the 2020-2021 Medical Tourism Index by the International Healthcare Research Center, Thailand ranked 5th out of 46 destinations for medical tourism. Siam Commercial Bank’s Economic Intelligence Center has forecasted that Thailand’s medical tourism market is valued at $829 million in 2023 and medical tourists from CLMV countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam), the Middle East, and China are major sources of foreign patients.  
  
In conclusion, Thailand's role in ASEAN disaster relief extends beyond simply stockpiling supplies. By serving as a regional hub and sharing its experience, Thailand strengthens ASEAN's overall preparedness for natural disasters. This collaborative approach helps ensure a swifter and more effective response when disaster strikes, potentially saving lives and minimizing suffering across Southeast Asia.

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