

**General Assembly: The Commission on the Status of Women**

**Thailand: Position Paper**

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This year in the General Assembly: Commission on the Status of Women, there are three main issues to be discussed. The first topic is the relation between women and sustainability. In many developing countries, the inequality of women in economic, educational, and social aspects limit their ability to sustain a living, and protect the environment. The second topic encompasses gender-based violence within families, including marital violence, assault, and infanticide. The last topic discusses the barriers that women face in gaining education, as well as issues in employment such as the wage gap. Thailand continues to make efforts in all of the topics above.

**Topic 1: Women and Sustainability**

In the past two decades, Thailand has seen great progress in securing economic growth. However, the development of rural areas is disproportionate to the rapid development in urban zones.[[1]](#footnote-0) In terms of agriculture, 22% of cultivated land is owned by female farmers, while 39% is owned by male spouses[[2]](#footnote-1). The presence of women in the agricultural industry reaches over 60% of all farmers, signifying the vast inequality in land ownership given by the previous statistic.[[3]](#footnote-2) Female farmers are particularly affected by the outmigration of men to urban areas, as they leave women as the heads of the household, decreasing the amount of overall production and income. There have also been cases in which specifically female farmers were put at a disadvantage due to the lack of education and knowledge on economic policies. A survey done in 1991 showed that the Thailand farmers, specifically women, worked under contracts given by a multinational company.[[4]](#footnote-3) This promoted disadvantageous conditions, in which they were often not being paid for their extended hours of labour. Despite the fact that the contract was unfair, the women had no knowledge of alternatives, thus considering the pay to be sufficient. This meant that they had no will to lobby against these corporations, due to the lack of knowledge and education. Similar results were found a year later in the aquaculture industry of shrimp-farming. Although their income was higher, the unsustainable use of resources harmed them in the long term.[[5]](#footnote-4) The major causes of this were the lack of multinational corporation agreements with the UN at the time. One way to resolve this is to issue government subsidies to help women overcome these barriers within the agricultural sector.

In a political sense, women have little representation and power to initiate change within government. In 2011, only 15% of the MPs were females and 16% of senators. Some progress was made towards these issues in 2015, when the Gender Equality Act was instituted by King Bhumibol Adulyadej to protect the right to gender equality.[[6]](#footnote-5) Other past efforts in promoting equality include attending the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).[[7]](#footnote-6) In addition, some political progress was made in 2011 when Thailand’s first female prime minister, Yingluck Shinawatra, was elected.[[8]](#footnote-7) However, this female prime minister was deemed as a “puppet” to

In essence, it is in Thailand’s interest to pursue change in the agricultural and political aspects to gain equal opportunity and to protect the environment in which women inhabit. The impact of agricultural activities on Thailand’s environment is immense, and there is a lasting impact on women in the field.[[9]](#footnote-8)

**Topic 2: Elimination of Gender-Based Violence**

Gender-based violence is particularly prevalent in South Asia and in Africa, continuing as a pressing issue. Most recent gender-based violence in Thailand consists of human trafficking. In terms of sexual violence in families, marital assault laws do not criminalize sexual violence in a marital relationship.[[10]](#footnote-9) Domestic violence in Thai households is a continuous issue. A Mahidol University study demonstrated that 1 in 3 households experience domestic violence

Infanticide is outlawed in Thailand, and the laws around it are generally adhered to.[[11]](#footnote-10) Infanticide has not proven to be prevalent in Thailand in the past. Child marriage rates in Thailand include 4% of children were married before age 15, 22% were married before the age of 18.[[12]](#footnote-11) The key to reducing child marriage rates is to educate women and girls. In the past, actions have been taken by the Ministry of Education in Thailand to end violence against women and children as part of an initiative funded by the United Nations Trust fund to end violence against women.[[13]](#footnote-12) By 2007, penal codes and sex discriminatory policies laws had drastically evolved in Thailand. The Protection of Domestic Violence Victim Act instituted in 2007, provides direct support services and protection for victims of domestic violence.[[14]](#footnote-13) This reflects the progress that Thailand has made towards addressing domestic violence towards women. Despite all the efforts, the root of these issues still lie in the prejudices and attitudes within the population.

**Topic 3: Women in Education and Employment**

Education is a significant factor in developing and shaping a country. In order to combat gender discrimination and inequality, it is important to educate women on these issues. In Thailand, literacy rates of both male and female are at approximately 96.6%.[[15]](#footnote-14) This could be in part due to the advancements in social development, where a plan for free education for primary and lower secondary education.[[16]](#footnote-15) The current goal for the Thailand government is to further the quality of the education given. A past action to encourage universal education both domestically and abroad include the World Conference on Education for All, held in Thailand in 1990.[[17]](#footnote-16)

The wage gap between men and women is a consistent problem for both developing and developed countries. Thailand’s wage gap is widening, and it needs to take action to ensure the equality of women in the workplace.[[18]](#footnote-17) As a country that has developed beneficial policies for social development, it is in Thailand’s interest to share its experience and methods to extend education to benefit women in other developing nations.

To conclude, Thailand believes that investing in food security, and supporting women within the agricultural industry are crucial to gender equality. Thailand continues its efforts in creating an equitable and safe environment for women through enacting laws and social campaigns. In all of these issues, education is the key to further gain equality for women worldwide.

**Resources:**

<http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/thailand>

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/declar.htm>

<http://www.icrw.org/child-marriage-facts-and-figures>

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/x0171e/x0171e07.htm>

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/X0177E/x0177e04.htm>

<http://www.unescobkk.org/education/resources/resources/education-system-profiles/thailand/basic-education/>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/print_2103.html>

<http://www.ungei.org/infobycountry/thailand.html>

<http://hir.harvard.edu/privileged-lie-gender-equality-thailand/>

<http://www.unicef.org/education/index_44870.html>

<http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/thailand/#stats-references>

<http://www.un.org/popin/fao/women.html>

<http://www.unicef.org/eapro/Country_fact_sheet_Thailand-final_09Jul15.pdf>

<http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2013/11/ministry-of-education-in-thailand-pledges-to-empower-youth--to-end-vawg>

<http://www.voanews.com/a/efforts-to-turn-back-rising-rates-of-violence-against-women-in-thailand/1812771.html>

1. http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/thailand [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. http://www.fao.org/docrep/x0171e/x0171e07.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. http://www.un.org/popin/fao/women.html [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/X0177E/x0177e04.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/09/21/thailand-gender-equality-act [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/thailand [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13723451 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
9. https://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/analysis/improving-equality-pursuing-sustainable-development-addressing-challenges-inclusive-growth [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
10. http://www.unicef.org/eapro/Country\_fact\_sheet\_Thailand-final\_09Jul15.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
11. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
12. http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/thailand/#stats-references [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
13. http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2013/11/ministry-of-education-in-thailand-pledges-to-empower-youth--to-end-vawg [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
14. http://www.voanews.com/a/efforts-to-turn-back-rising-rates-of-violence-against-women-in-thailand/1812771.html [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
15. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/print\_2103.html [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
16. http://www.unescobkk.org/education/resources/resources/education-system-profiles/thailand/basic-education/ [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
17. http://www.unicef.org/education/index\_44870.html [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
18. http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/thailand [↑](#footnote-ref-17)