

Economic development strategies must put people first: Thai leader

UNITED NATIONS, Sept. 27 (Xinhua) -- Thailand said here Thursday that economic development must go hand in hand with political advancement, and any strategy to promote growth must put people first.

The statement came as Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra was addressing the annual general debate of the UN General Assembly, which entered its third day here Thursday.

"During this period of economic uncertainties, we must not consider economic growth alone. It is important to put people at the front and centre of the development agenda," she said.

"This is what every government should do: putting people at the heart of the country's economic development strategy," she said. "Because we believe that the greatest asset of any country is its people, and how much a country can excel depends on how much its people can fully realize their potential."

The Thai prime minister said that an inclusive regional development is the way forward and would strengthen the fabric of regional peace and security, adding that Thailand and its neighbors in the region have a shared destiny.

"We have a shared interest in fostering common peace and prosperity. We should, therefore, strive to prosper together because only by working together can we create much-needed synergy that would support our common development," she said. "And by prospering together, chances of conflict can be limited."

This spirit is driving the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to establish an ASEAN Community by the year 2015, he said.

"As ASEAN moves towards greater integration, great efforts are being made to close development gaps and expand connectivity across South-east Asia and beyond to the wider East Asia and South Asia," she said. "This would help spread the fruits of development and growth wider across the continent."

Meanwhile, she also highlighted the need for an inclusive process at the global level as the international community considers the development agenda beyond 2015, the target date for achieving the anti-poverty targets known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).