THAILAND’S PATH TOWARD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Thailand’s Sufficiency Economy Philosophy is a powerful tool to end poverty and help others achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

NO POVERTY. The first goal of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations sounds simple, but has proven enormously difficult to achieve. Despite progress made by many nations in recent decades, more than 3 billion people, half of the world’s population, still live on less than $2.50 a day. Even more heartbreaking, a billion of the world’s children in extreme poverty. Investment and exports helped generate economic growth and development, but Thai leaders have also adopted a set of policies to spread benefits to more people nationwide. No poverty, the First Sustainable Development Goal, may not be that simple to achieve and may take a long time to accomplish. But Thailand is among the believers that it can be achieved. And so it will continue to share its experience with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy.

The philosophy’s approach blends knowledge and virtue: reasonableness, moderation and prudent decision-making are at its core. As Thailand’s economy took off with a strong component of agricultural exports, many farmers engaged in mono-cropping to pursue as much profit as possible. But when market forces beyond their control sent prices crashing, they found themselves in debt and without enough to eat. That convinced many farmers to try the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. They began growing vegetables, raising chickens and fish, and reducing their dependency on a single crop. The farmers who diversified were able to withstand subsequent economic shocks and uplift their families.

It shouldn’t be surprising that a practical approach to sustainable development would be found in a relatively small country that isn’t ranked among the global economic powerhouses. Because it is often in small developing nations where the negative impacts of globalization can hit hardest and present the most difficult challenges to overcome.

In the spirit of fellowship with all nations and the global poor, Thailand has been offering its knowledge and experience with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy to all those in need. And the world has been welcoming Thailand’s contribution. There is a “need to embrace the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy for the Sustainable Development Goals in all the key sectors,” said Amina Mohamed of Kenya’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. To date, representatives from 105 countries have participated in Sufficiency Economy Philosophy seminars and trainings.

No poverty, the First Sustainable Development Goal, may not be that simple to achieve and may take a long time to accomplish. But Thailand is among the believers that it can be achieved. And so it will continue to share its Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. Because those living in hardship and want simply cannot be left behind.

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