

**Goal 5 Target 5.2** - There has been progress made by the government to address this. The Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development has recently started to develop the National Plan to End Violence against Women which include all forms of violence. Protection mechanisms and measures have been introduced to assist aggrieved women and girls. However, women from Hmong, Lisu and Pakeryor ethnic groups have brought up that indigenous communities are still excluded from these services and do not get access to legal assistance and protection. Women do not report violent crimes to the police because of the lack of knowledge on their rights as well as fear of retaliation from the perpetrator. A leader of Tai Yai women concurred that affected women in indigenous communities will not go to government shelters due to the limited security provided by the shelters.

According to the Network of Hmong Women, many women in their communities still suffered from domestic violence. In the past 5 months after the opening of their hotline service, there were 10 cases of Hmong women who committed suicide by drinking pesticide. Only seven of the women survived. There are no special measures in place to provide support and appropriate services to women affected by gender based violence.

Since the past decade, there has been higher proportion of women inmates charged on drug related offences. A member of the Women's Development Network from Chiangrai province shared that almost 90 percent out of 919 female inmates were facing drug related charges. One fourth of them are indigenous women. In Terng district, out of 103 female inmates facing drug related charges, 60 of them are indigenous women.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the data and information presented are primarily on indigenous women, women in remote areas throughout Thailand are also facing similar situation and being left out from development agenda. Thailand's commitment under the wide range of SDGs and targets presents an opportunity for women's organisations to work with other mainstream CSOs on SDGs to integrate women's urgent needs into CSOs' proposals to the Government and monitor the progress of implementation. Through such integration, other CSOs working in other sectors will also have increase capacity on gender and development justice. The following recommendations to the government are crucial to ensure changes:

- Organise consultation workshops with different stakeholders working in indigenous communities to develop indicators for targets of Goal 1, 2, 5 and related goals; including a specific forum on SDG #5: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in order to provide opportunities for more women CSOs to be fully involved in the process
- Support women's organisations and their networks to conduct workshop with mainstream CSOs and networks to provide information on SDGs and engage them in the review and monitoring process
- Improve database and intensively carry out the compilation and presentation of data classified by sex, age, ethnicity and administrative area in a systematic manner and should be utilized to formulate policies and measure progress of SDGs implementation;
- Formulate specific policy and plan on poverty to target indigenous communities;
- Introduce special measures to allow the indigenous people to live, do subsistence farming while at the same time constructively preserving national forest, including ecological tourism, and cease legal action on land dispute against farmers including indigenous people;
- Support indigenous communities, especially women within them, to preserve plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture security;
- Introduce special measures to provide assistance to indigenous women and girls aggrieved by violence in their family and communities.



Foundation for Women (FFW) is a Bangkok-based women's organisation, established in 1984 to provide services to the most disadvantaged women through the application of human rights principles. Focusing on rural women, young women, women workers, women and children vulnerable to forced prostitution and international trafficking, victims of domestic and sexual violence, FFW aims to advance the participation of women and community, especially indigenous women in solving their issues and shaping development plans and policies that affect their lives. This research was carried out by FFW as part of an eight country project on Monitoring and Review of the SDGs with the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law & Development (APWLD).



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## Monitoring and Review of the Sustainable Development Goals & Development Justice

Reviewed by  
**FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN**

### COUNTRY CONTEXT

Over the past five decades, Thailand has made remarkable progress in economic development, elevating Thailand from a low-income country to a middle-income country. However, this progress came at the expense of the country's natural resources and environment. There has been a change in the country's nature of production structure from agriculture to export-led growth industry. Foreign direct investment (FDI) in basic industries such as automobile, electronics component and electricity appliances has been one of the major sources of national income. Per capita income has been increasing due to higher employment rate while number of the poor and population under poverty line has been decreasing within the past seven years. Nonetheless, income disparity still exists.

The country's production from service and agricultural sectors has been gradually decreasing. Thailand has been steadily at risk of losing its competitiveness in labour costs in the industrial sector despite the increased number of domestic investors using complex technology. This is perpetuated by several factors; in particular, research and development, quality of infrastructure, and rules and regulations that are rather weak and have become obstacles to economic restructuring. To date, inequality in education between urban and rural areas still exists. The quality of education, child intelligence, risky eating behaviors, hazardous environment, and low labor productivity have remained major concerns. Though various types of social protection and social welfare have been extended to a great number of people, many marginalized groups still lack access to social services. Income inequality and lack of access to resources are continuing challenges. Drug use is prevalent, particularly among young and adolescent groups. Gender discrimination persists in both the private and public domains.

After the "democratic revolution" in 1932 which transitioned Thailand from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy, coups occurred sporadically. Since the most recent coup d'état of 22 May 2014, Thailand has been under the rule of a military organisation which has taken control of the national administration. A Road Map was collectively developed by the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) and the government to deal with national reconciliation, interim constitution and general election. To date, Thailand has just passed its 20<sup>th</sup> constitution. The long-term National Development Strategies, 2017-2036, required by the constitution was formulated as the guiding framework to cope with rapid socio-economic change, globalization, regional and international economic cooperation and national political conflict with a vision towards national security, prosperity and sustainability.

# THAILAND



**Palma Ratio (Income Inequality)**

1.8

**UNDP Gender Inequality Rank**

76

**THAILAND'S HEALTH BUDGET USD 28 BILLION VS  
MILITARY BUDGET USD 6.8 BILLION**

**THAILAND'S MINIMUM WAGE IS USD 2,219  
(PER ANNUM) VS RICHEST INDIVIDUAL NET  
WORTH USD 15.8 BILLION**

### OVERVIEW OF SYSTEMIC & STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TOWARDS ACHIEVING DEVELOPMENT JUSTICE

The national social and economic developments in the past thirty years have failed to achieve development justice. Key systemic and structural barriers towards achieving development justice lie in the fact of patriarchal ideology, globalization and militarism.

As elsewhere, the social system in Thailand is historically and presently characterized by unequal power relations between women and men whereby women are systematically discriminated. This usually

starts from the socialization of gender roles within the family and is strengthened through different levels of education, discriminatory laws and policies, and media reinforced gender stereotypes and patriarchal culture. Patriarchy exists in almost every sphere of life from social, legal, political, religious and economy. Violence against women is also a key feature of the patriarchy in Thailand. In indigenous communities where patriarchal culture is also present, women's visibility depends on their male counterpart. Women in minority groups face multiple oppressions in Thai society, as race, class and sexuality intersect with patriarchy.

Neo-liberal economic globalization has seen the proliferation of free trade agreements, with Thailand negotiating and signing 22 trade agreements so far. The resulting reduction of import tariffs to 0 percent for vegetables, fruits, grains and the on-going reduction of tariffs on dairy products, estimated to reach 0% by 2025, have dramatically affected Thai farmers, including the millions of indigenous people who grow fruits in the north. The land available for agriculture use has decreased by one-third as the local farmers are unable to compete with cheaper imported agricultural goods. This has created food dependency from outside the country thereby is threatening the national food security. The on-going trade negotiations, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), will only further affect various sectors including health and medicine.

Following repeated coups, the civilian governments' administration is usually influenced by the military. This results from inadequate democratic ideology, capacity and corrupt behavior of most of politicians, and low level of political scrutiny from general public that brings in military to solve economic and political instability. However, militarism has failed to provide the people with opportunities to fully participate in the democratic and governance process. The military expenditure has been increasing from USD 3,517 million in 1988 to approximately USD 6,100 million in 2015, which is almost the same amount as the budget allocated for human resources development nationwide for 2017 alone (8 percent of the total budget), according to the national strategy for SDG implementation to ensure better quality of lives of individuals and societies in various aspects.

## ARCHITECTURE FOR SDGs IMPLEMENTATION

In 2015, the National Committee on Sustainable Development was established and chaired by the Prime Minister to oversee the integrated strategic priority setting and three sub-committees responsible for the implementation, monitoring and database development of the SDGs. The Office of the National Economics and Social Development Board (NESDB) under the Office of the Prime Minister is the secretariat of the National Committee and is responsible for ensuring implementation, quality reporting, and effective mechanism and measures of improvement. Each sub-committee is chaired by concerned key ministry and is comprise of relevant government agencies as members. The total budget approved for 2017 is approximately USD 78 billion.

The 12th five-year National Economic and Social Development Plan, 2017-2021 was mapped out in line with the long-term national strategy specifically referred to the SDGs. Three SDGs forums were organised among representatives of government agencies while only one forum each for CSOs and private sector to discuss their roles and opportunities for collaboration with the government. Thirty SDGs targets were prioritized with respective road map identified. Ministerial focal points were established. Six-month progress reports are expected from key and relevant responsible government agencies. In July 2017, Thailand will participate in the Voluntary National Review to be held in New York.

### The Role of CSOs within the Implementation

In the only forum for CSOs organised in 2016 to discuss the role of CSOs to collaboratively work with the government and road map for Thailand's implementation, only a very small number of CSOs were invited and participated. A lot of active CSOs were not involved in the process, and there are currently no clear efforts from the Office of NESDB to ensure inclusion of the CSOs representing the vulnerable groups. Of the CSOs working to promote women's rights, only the Foundation for Women (FFW) was invited and participated. In a consultation organised by the government related to SDGs on natural resources and environment, representatives of the Indigenous Women's Network of Thailand (IWNT) were able to share their ideas on global warming issues. However, most of the forums were organised in Bangkok where majority male representatives participated. As such, FFW and other CSOs are proposing a specific forum on Goal 5 order to provide opportunities for more women CSOs to be involved in the process and to form a coalition to effectively monitor government implementation.

### Barriers to Accessing Relevant Information

Most government agencies provide online information on the SDGs relevant to their respective agencies including the priority targets, indicators, road map for different stages, but with no clear information on how expertise of CSOs would be utilized in such implementation and what budget would be allocated. In addition, administrative data and information from government agencies, which are crucial for SDGs implementation, are not collected and classified by sex, age group, ethnicity or administrative areas.

## INITIAL FINDINGS ON SELECTED SDGs GOALS & TARGETS

World Economic Forum Gender Gap Ranking	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
	71	60	61	65	65	60	57	59

**Goal 1 Target 1.4** - Since 2016, the government has initiated a policy to allocate land to poor villagers. The government recently reported that 2,589 pieces of land, about 57 percent of the targeted land, were allocated to 1,873 households along the border for dwelling and farming. Some pieces of public land already occupied by people were also managed for poverty eradication and community development activity. However, the government policy introduced in 2014 to restore national forest from 10 percent to 40 percent has also negatively impacted the livelihood of over 450,000 population living in the national forest areas who are mostly indigenous people as documented below.

IWNT disclosed that many head of households have been arrested by the authorities and have had charges pressed against them, despite living in these lands for over 80 years. Entire families were not allowed to live or to do any farming on the lands, and some households' crops were destroyed by the authorities. No land means no food, no income and no future. More and more women are migrating within and outside of Thailand to look for jobs. And though some of them do not have identity card and have no means of earning, they inevitably migrate to the cities for the future of their families. Indigenous women and young girls are targeted by recruiters to prostitution and forced labour in Malaysia, Singapore and Japan. Unfortunately, there are no statistics on the situation of indigenous women and girls who are trafficked for sexual exploitation. A Lisu leader told the story of a 16-year old girl was trafficked to forced labour in Malaysia last year and was arrested by the Malaysian authorities as an illegal migrant. The girl was able to seek help from a Thai woman returning to Thailand, who contacted her aunt. She was finally able to return herself to Thailand after receiving assistance from an NGO in Malaysia.

The table below shows that the northern provinces with high concentration of indigenous communities are becoming the low to least ranking of average monthly income, reflecting the vulnerability indigenous people:

### Ranking of Average monthly income per household by selected years and provinces

Province	2004	Least Ranking	2013	Least Ranking	2015	Least Ranking
Chiang Rai	8,920	8	14393	5	13,497	1
Chiang Mai	12,586	41	13510	2	14,950	2
Mae Hong Son	8,676	5	8821	1	15,119	3
Payao	9643	16	15491	8	17673	9
Nan	10751	23	17598	19	17886	10
Phitsanulok	12751	42	27490	59	19235	16

Source: National Statistical Office, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology

**Goal 2 Target 2.3 & 2.5** - The government has an existing policy to decrease the use of chemical in agriculture and promote organic agriculture instead. The primary target is to strengthen the group that has already practiced organic agriculture and support them towards standard production of organic produce. Indigenous communities are not included as targets of such policy. Many of them have to rely on contract farming and have to comply with certain conditions which require the use of factory seeds, insecticide and chemical, which pose a threat to the preservation of genetic diversity of seeds. Although men are the ones who primarily use insecticide with some kinds of protection, women are also at risk of health hazards as they also work in the farm and are the one who collect the crops without any protection.

Concern were also raised over further loss of indigenous people's sovereignty over local seeds and plants through trade agreements, global warming and changes in ecological system and a recent MOU between the Department of Agricultural Extension, Bank for Agricultural and Co-operatives and leading national and multi-national companies selling animal food and seeds. The MOU would allow companies to make huge profit from seeds they are selling at the expense of national loss of food security and is planning to convert two million paddy farms into corn farm for animal raising industry. They are now starting to play active role in collecting and maintaining seeds for their farming.