



# FICAC NEWS



December 2007

## East Asia Regional Conference A HUGE SUCCESS



H.E. General Sarayud Chulanont  
Prime Minister of Thailand

### Prime Minister Lauds FICAC

Prime Minister of Thailand, His Excellency General Surayud Chulanont declared the 1st FICAC East Asia Regional Conference officially open. In his address he said.:

Mr. Arnold Foote, President of the World Federation of Consuls, Dr. Sribhumi Sukhanetr, Dean of the Honorary Consular Corps in Thailand, Dr. Virachai Techavijit, President of the East Asia Regional Committee of the World Federation of Consuls, Honourable Consuls, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is both an honour and a pleasure for me to preside over the Opening Ceremony of the First East Asia Regional Conference of the World Federation of Consuls. On behalf of

the Royal Thai Government, I wish to extend to you a very warm welcome to Bangkok.

I have been informed that the World Federation of Consuls has convened regular meetings of the international Consular Corps in all corners of the globe since its establishment in 1982. With this in mind, I would like to express my appreciation to the Federation for organizing this important event in Bangkok this year. I am also pleased to learn that the World Consular Fair will be held here for the first time following

your Conference. This is a commendable initiative and I am sure that the Fair will do much to promote business contacts and networking between our peoples. And as this year is the Federation's 25th Anniversary, please accept my congratulations on this milestone. May you celebrate many more happy anniversaries.

As you know, here in Thailand we are celebrating an auspicious occasion of our own – the 80th Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. Throughout his reign, His Majesty

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Prime Minister General Surayud Chulanont receiving a gift from Hon. Arnold Foote, President World Federation of Consuls

has made countless contributions to improving the livelihood of the Thai people and the development of the country. Projects initiated by His Majesty have benefited and touched the Thai people in so many ways. With this in mind, I am very happy that you have been able to join us during our celebrations.

Honourable Consuls, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Amidst the many changes and transformations that Thailand has undergone over the years, one constant has been our openness to the world. We have always been forthcoming to our friends regarding issues facing our country. So, allow me to say a few words on the political situation in Thailand.

In view of the challenges facing the Thai people since September 2006, the past year has not been an easy one. With its limited timeframe, this Government has focused its agenda on political reform in order to strengthen Thailand's democratic governance and create confidence both at the national and international levels. I am happy to say that, thus far, we have achieved what we set out in our timeline to return the country to full parliamentary democracy.

We have made progress in strengthening democracy and promoting reconciliation. We have upheld the rule of law, good governance and civil rights and liberties. The new Constitution was endorsed in a national referendum held on 19 August 2007. By placing importance on moral and ethical values in government, the new Constitution ensures that transparency and the interests and welfare of the people will receive utmost attention by future political leaders.

Last month saw the entry into force of the Royal Decree setting 23 December 2007 as the date for the general elections. The Government and the Election Commission are now working hard to ensure that the people are informed and that the elections are free and fair. And as you can see and hear for yourselves, the

political parties' election campaigns are as visible and loud as ever. So, I am confident that our original timeline will also apply to the appointment of a new Prime Minister by February 2008.

And here, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Consular Corps for your hard work over the past months in promoting a better understanding of Thailand's political situation. Your help in explaining to your respective countries the efforts of the Thai Government to restore and strengthen democracy has been most valuable. Through your reports, you have helped to foster confidence in Thailand and enabled us to move forward.

Honourable Consuls, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Another priority of this Government has been to ensure continued development and healthy economic growth. The financial crisis of ten years ago deeply affected all levels of Thai society. But we have learnt from our past mistakes. Ten years on, Thailand has emerged with greater strength and renewed vigour. Amidst current concerns over oil prices and sub-prime problems in the US, we are now pursuing sustained and balanced economic development guided by His Majesty the King's "Sufficiency Economy" philosophy.

With moderation as the overriding principle, this philosophy helps us to deal with the challenges of a globalized world in which socio-economic, environmental and cultural changes take place at great intensity and speed. In response to these challenges, it recommends that we take a balanced approach combining patience, perseverance, diligence, wisdom and prudence. In short, we view

it as a Thai model of sustainability.

As such, the philosophy has prompted my Government to introduce development strategies based on sound macroeconomic discipline as well as stable growth and an equitable sharing of benefits. For I believe that economic progress should be measured not only in terms of numbers, but also in terms of the quality of life attained. Growth should embrace not only our capacity to be competitive, but also social justice and contentment. Thus the future dynamism of the Thai economy will rest on its strength to cope with economic crises that may arise, as well as its ability to ensure that the Thai people benefit from the opportunities of globalization.

May I say that the Consular Corps has been a key part of our efforts to spread the word on the "Sufficiency Economy" philosophy to your respective countries while, at the same time, reaffirming Thailand's full commitment to an open market economy, one that is a friendly base for foreign investment. We do appreciate your contributions in helping your governments and peoples better understand Thailand's role in the global economy and our strong economic fundamentals.

Indeed, Thailand not only intends to continue playing its part in the development of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and our region, but also to expand its cooperation with the international community, particularly through the United Nations. We hope to share our experience in people-centered development with our partners across the globe. For as the global community becomes increasingly inter-connected, we do believe that all nations, big and small, have a role and responsibility to forge partnerships to address the common challenges facing humankind.

Honourable Consuls, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Conference marks a gathering of key players from a wide range of sectors including the Consular and Diplomatic Corps, business and the media. We look to you as "Friends of Thailand." I am confident that your Conference and the international fair that follows will generate opportunities for business, tourism and cultural cooperation as well as establish lasting friendships. So, I wish you all every success in your efforts and in future endeavours.

I thank you for your attention.

# PRESIDENT PRAISES HCC THAILAND FOR HISTORIC EVENT



Hon. Arnold Foote, President World Federation of Consuls making his presentation to the FICAC East Asia Regional Conference in Bangkok Thailand.

*In his address at the 1st FICAC East Asia Regional Conference in Bangkok, Thailand on 14th November 2007, Hon. Arnold Foote, President, World Federation of Consuls said: His Excellency General Surayud Chulanont, Prime Minister of Thailand, Ministers and other officials of the Government of Thailand, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Dean and members of the Honorary Consular Corps of Thailand; our superb host, Directors of FICAC, Fellow Consuls of the world, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I stand before you today proud and happy and so privileged to be part of this very first FICAC East Asia Regional Consular Conference and The World Consular Fair in Bangkok, Thailand.

I am humbled and deeply appreciative that the Prime Minister of Thailand, His

Excellency General Surayud Chulanont has discerned the importance of the occasion and taken the time to add his presence to address us and declare the 1st FICAC East Asia Consular Conference officially open. What a great honour. Thank you very much Mr. Prime Minister.

I cannot say enough about the graciousness and hospitality that we have each received, to say nothing of the logistics, the preparation, the setting, the atmosphere and the attendance.

My heart is full, as a dream that we had as Directors of FICAC has now come true.

A year ago in Jamaica, in this same month, at the General Assembly of the 8th World Congress of Consuls, where I

had the honour to be elected President of the World Federation of Consuls, I made a pledge for outreach and the expansion of membership.

At that time I met a Delegate from your country Hon. Dr. Virachai Techavijit who impressed me deeply.

My first target area was your part of the world and I embarked upon a long journey to start the process and he was my Link and has become the Rock. Ladies and gentlemen, please give Hon. Dr. Virachai and Hon. Dr. Sribhumi Sukhanetr, Dean of the Honorary Consular Corps of Thailand a big round of applause.

Today, thanks to the work of the Honorary Consular Corps of Thailand and in particular the Organizing Committee, the 1st FICAC East Asia Regional Conference and the 1st World Consular Fair has become a reality.

The Board of Directors of the World Federation of Consuls owe all of you a debt of gratitude and respect that can actually never be repaid. Thank you very much.

This year marks the 25th Anniversary of FICAC and we thought it would be a good idea for us to launch our 25th Anniversary Celebrations in Bangkok, Thailand, to coincide with this Consular Conference and the World Consular Fair. Later in the programme we will have the 1st FICAC 25th Anniversary Awards Ceremony and Special Presentations will be made to Consuls who have made an outstanding contribution to their Corps and to the World Federation of Consuls.

The recent history of the world claims Europe and the USA as central to everything, but the tectonic plates of history, commerce and influence have shifted and the countries of the East now again rise to take their rightful places in our world.

For so many centuries the learning and skills, the economic patterns, culture, spices, treasure of all sorts topped

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H.E. the Prime Minister of Thailand General Surayud Chulanont (above centre) with (from left) Hon. Lamartine Hollanda Jr.; Hon. K.L. Ganju; Hon. Dr. Virachai Techavijit; Hon. Arnold Foote, President World Federation of Consuls (FICAC); Hon. Dr. Sribhumi Sukhanetr; Hon. Sanan Angubolkul; Hon. Costas Lefkaritis; Hon. Amarkai Amatiefio, Vice President FICAC and Hon. Jacques Deschamps.

with talented hard working disciplined people have come from this region and, as is the way of the world, have been absorbed and taken for granted and the origins not acknowledged or lost in the mists of time.

This is not to downplay the contributions of Europe, Africa, the Americas and other regions, but to say that it had been the initial major policy thrust of my Administration, as President, to reach out to this region and to strengthen the Consular movements in this part of the world.

Those seeds duly planted are yielding an impressive harvest.

Our work in this modern world has taken on new and significant dimensions. Despite Emails, Web Cameras and Video Conferencing, there is no substitute for meeting someone face to face and making personal acquaintances, building on the networks and friendships that we already have, and making new friends and contacts.

That process can only increase our effectiveness in the roles that we are called upon to play. That is one of the opportunities that we have here over these days.

And so, I welcome you; I thank you for coming. I know you will find it is worth your while.

Thank you for making my dreams comes true.



World Federation of Consuls (FICAC) President, Hon. Arnold Foote and Mrs. Foote with the delegations from Pakistan (left) and the Philippines at the First FICAC East Asia Regional Conference.

# Sufficiency Economy Philosophy Impresses Consuls



Secretary General of His Majesty's Chaipattana Foundation, Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul, making his presentation on 'Sufficiency Economy' at the East Asia Regional Conference in Bangkok, Thailand.

*Secretary General of His Majesty's Chaipattana Foundation, Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul, explained His Majesty the King's philosophy of the development of a sustainable Sufficiency Economy. His address follows:*

**G**ood morning Ladies and Gentlemen. It is certainly a great honor to be here and speak before a forum of distinguished honorary consuls both in Thailand and from other countries throughout the world. The topic I would like to share with you today is 'Sufficiency Economy'. In Thailand, it was in the year 1998 that the Thai people first heard about the idea of Sufficiency Economy from His Majesty the King. I remember that it was after the big economic crisis we called 'tom yum kung'. Is anyone familiar with that? But when I come to think about it, Sufficiency Economy is really not a new issue at all. His Majesty the King himself said that he introduced this idea in the year 1969. And for those of you who have had a chance to read about

His Majesty's development works, I'm sure would agree that, Sufficiency Economy is the principle to which His Majesty adheres all along.

Sufficiency Economy can be regarded as both a philosophy and a principle of dharma. Therefore it can be a useful guide for everyone, whether you are a businessman, a farmer, or any other profession, to lead a proper life.

However, to help better understand and get to the heart of the philosophy of Sufficiency Economy, it is necessary for everyone to first understand the ways of the world. Some of us lead our lives day by day and are often ignorant of what's happening around the globe and of the changes that followed, which undoubtedly have impacts on our lives. How our lives turn out to be strongly depends on what the world will become. Therefore we need to be alert of the changes.

We human beings consume everything on earth, by the hours, by the minutes, and by the seconds. We breathe air from earth in order to have oxygen.

We drink water, eat food, and wear clothes, which we get from earth in order to sustain our lives. We are using every kind of natural resource that this earth has to offer. And after we eat or make use of things on this earth, we create waste, be it in the form of gas, liquid, or solid.

Today the world population numbers over 6,000 million people with the human consumption ratio of three to one. Man consumes at the rate of three units while the earth can reproduce such loss at the rate of only one unit. We are over consuming our capital by the rate of two units, and are in deficit. If we continue to over consume and create supply shortages, survival of mankind will surely become a deadly issue. We would begin an endless battle for resources, be it energy, water, or anything which is vital to life. Another chapter of the battle among mankind for the survival of the fittest would be unavoidable. When that day comes what then will become of us?

I want to raise energy as an example. At present the rate of energy consumption is rocketing. Look around us. Every commodity of life relies on an energy supply to operate.

What makes it worse is that every country in this world wants to achieve growth and prosperity; every move is targeted to wealth. The scary thing is that nothing gained on this earth is for free. There's always a trade off. In most cases, a cruel trade off at the expense of nature.

Statistics show that there is a relationship between levels of desired growth and prosperity, and its effect in terms of global warming which has become a hot daily issue. Suppose we are modest and target economic growth at the point of zero or no growth, the global temperature rises slowly. But as we attempt to achieve just a two or four percent increase in growth, the global temperature will increase at a faster rate. The dangers of global warming I'm sure do not

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Hon. Arnold Foote, President, World Federation of Consuls (FICAC) (2nd left) makes a presentation to Secretary General of His Majesty's Chaipattana Foundation, Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul, (2nd right) after his well-received presentation. Also in picture from left: Hon. Dr. Virachai Techavijit, Chairman of East Asia Region of the World Federation of Consuls, Hon. Dr. Sribhumi Sukhanetr, Dean of HCC Thailand and Hon. Sanan Angubolkul, of the HCC Thailand.

need much explanation. The global weather would be extremely heated. Trees and plants on this planet cannot give good yields. The water dries up but simultaneously the icebergs at the North Pole melt. Some parts of this globe will be underwater whereas some parts become barren. What would become of our world! You, me, everyone on this planet will be exposed to the most dangerous and high risk situation ever faced by mankind. Take a look at our daily life and how we make use of energy. If we are honest to ourselves, I think most of us would admit that most of the time we still use energy unwisely and excessively. Take driving our car to work as an example. Once you start your car, already 60% of the fuel has been used to get the engine started. If you live in a tropical country zone like Thailand, the next immediate thing you do is turn on the air conditioner to cool down the hot weather – there another 20% of fuel is burned. And when you are driving your car, there is a tire friction which burns another unnecessary 15% of energy. All of these are a needless waste of energy, because to get you and your car moving on the road it really only

requires 5%. The same waste of energy occurs when you want to turn on a light. As you switch on the light, the underlying process before giving you the desired brightness, already consumed 100% use of electricity. But the fact is, in order to create brightness; it really takes only 10-15% of electrical energy. In Thailand, there are altogether 16 million households. If every household leaves one – 40w light bulb on all day, we then create an unnecessary loss of energy which is comparable to wasting 9,600 tons of coal per day. With these tremendous wastes of energy through our daily activities, can't we do anything to change it or minimize it? OF COURSE, WE CAN CERTAINLY DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT! And there are many places in this world which recognize the dire need to conserve energy. The ING Bank in the Netherlands invested US\$700,000 on installing an energy saving technology in their new office building which has an area of 50,000 square meters and 2,400 employees working. Within three months they got back a return on this investment because the Bank can reduce energy consumption by 92%.

In Denmark, the country was able to reduce energy use by 74%, because she implemented a nationwide effort to create uses of electrical appliances in a more appropriate and efficient manner. Denmark motivated the people to switch from traditional uses of electrical appliances to more energy-saving appliances, such as, from 350 kilowatt – refrigerators to 30 kilowatt – refrigerators, from 400 kilowatt – washing machines to 115 kilowatt – washing machines, and from 700 kilowatt – stoves to only 280 kilowatt – stoves.

Another case is in the city of Chicago, U.S.A. A 12- storey office building found that by using double glazed window glass to shield against heat penetration can help save energy consumption by the air conditioners. Traditionally they used 750 ton - air conditioners for the whole office. But after installing the double glazed window glass, the office building was able to switch from the use of old 750 ton - air conditioners to only 200 ton – air conditioners, in turn lowering electricity by 72% and at peak demand up to 76%.

At a national level, if we can create a switch from the uses of regular light bulbs to energy-saving light bulbs, of which about 230 million bulbs are currently being used, we can help our country reduce power by 300 megawatts, a capacity comparable to one whole power plant.

Overall it can be seen that there is definitely an inseparable connection between economy, society, politics, natural resources, and environment. The world economy today is dominated by materialistic consumption, which is very dangerous. Everyone is heading in the wrong direction and only concerned about achieving unlimited economic growth and wealth, without any consideration for the environment. The trend of excessive consumption is creating global pollution and environmental deterioration, which for developing countries would be very difficult to resolve. Many global economic crises have occurred because we are focusing too much on



Hon. Soy Martua Pardede Honorary Consul of Jamaica in Indonesia congratulates Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul after his presentation. Looking on are Hon. Arnold Foote, President of FICAC, Mrs. Patricia Foote and other delegates.

superficial economic growth without considering whether such growth would be sustainable or not.

For Thailand, I remember that period prior to the last economic crisis which we called the 'tom yum Kung' crisis; we enjoyed unbelievably high economic growth for three consecutive years, at 11.6-12.3-11.3% during the years 1994-1996. Everybody was excited and enjoyed high salary increases, which led to heavy spending in the market. The real estate sector was very vigorous, buying and selling occurred every three days. But who would have thought that this brightness would be the last glowing light before a big blackout? The bubbles burst into flames in 1997, and the economy of many countries within this region crumbled.

After countless economic lessons, isn't it time that we reshape our ways of thinking, reconsider the philosophy followed to guide our lives, and most importantly, reform development approaches to help man live a sustainable, balanced, and quality life?

The old approach was to solely establish boundless quantitative growth which proved to be a failure. We now have to reconsider our approach and take into

account the linkage among the three cycles influencing man's life which are the cycle of economy – natural resources – society. Westernized countries work with the three cycles focusing on establishing economic growth in order to create prosperity and wealth. For these, GDP level is used as an indicator to measure success. Perhaps it is time to reconsider the idea that a simple pure decent quality of life and happiness may be a more viable indicator to measure sustainable success in life.

Reflecting that thought, His Majesty the King of Thailand thus kindly bestowed upon us the philosophy called Sufficiency Economy to serve as a guide to developing the nation and as an approach for everyone to practice in daily lives. It is an alternative way to conduct our lives which would lead towards true, secured, balanced, and sustainable happiness, not only for individuals but would ultimately work for the whole world.

This philosophy adheres to the three principle basics of dharma – moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity or risk management. The first rule is moderation which I think is not too difficult to understand. Moderation, middle path, balance, and

equilibrium; all these four words have the same meaning. Lord Buddha has taught us how to walk on the middle path life for 2550 years, but for some reason, today, we still don't get it. This is because we are lured by the fads of overly materialistic consumptions and lead every aspect of our lives in excess. Moderation is really simple and has no hidden agenda. Take for example, if we eat too much food, more than the body needs, what happens to us? We feel sick and uncomfortable. Vice versa, if we eat too little and less than what the body needs, we become very hungry and under nourished. Middle path can be applied to other aspects of life apart from our daily eating and living. The rule of moderation can be applied to all aspects in life – to the way we speak, the way we act, or the way we invest. If we follow it, we can lead a sustainable life.

The second rule of reasonableness or rational living is also easy to understand and practice. IT'S SIMPLE COMMON SENSE. Let's go back to my over and under eating example. Through that example, my message is to stress QUANTITATIVE CONSUMPTION of food. I said if we eat too much or too little, it's bad for us. So if we attach the idea of reasonableness to the example, we are now talking about QUALITY of our intakes. Most of us eat without knowing what we are putting into our mouths. We eat expensive food because we think it is good for us. In truth that 'good because is expensive food' may not be valuable to our health at all. Expensive steaks may not be as nutritious as low price - high nutrition fish dishes. The exposure to the risk of over consumption may be reduced if we use rational thinking and conscience instead of using impulse and emotions in all our decision making.

I want to elaborate a little more about moderation and the middle path because the level of needs for one person may not be the same for others. This depends on the how much savings each person has and also depends on the background of that person. So it is necessary to do a self assessment first in order to know where and how to position ourselves.

The same goes for organizations and companies; even the state has to perform national assessment to position the country for further development. Once we have determined our position and know our capacity and grounds, then we can set our middle path or moderation point and stay far from excessive conduct which can put our lives or organizations at risk.

When I talk about risks, a phrase comes to my mind. It is that 'uncertainty is the most certain thing in life'. Changes can occur at any time and at an unexpected rate. Therefore we need to create a shield to immune ourselves or our organizations from such unavoidable and sudden changes. If we cannot create self-immunity for our own life or our organizations, then we are exposed to grave risks and ensuing disasters. By creating immunity we are in a way performing risk management.

At an individual level, it is highly necessary to be cautious and save for the future needs and spending. You have to create insurance and also have alternative plans in life. Just in case something goes wrong, you will not be personally affected. Every company, retail store, organization, all have a team known as the risk management committee to monitor for sudden negative changes in order to respond accordingly and promptly.

Apart from the three dharma principles of moderation, reasonableness, and

self-immunity, His Majesty the King also suggested two more important points. The first point is that we need to have well-rounded knowledge and be careful as well as cautious for every step we take at all times. As I said, the world changes rapidly and constantly. Society is filled with competition and has become a knowledgeable society. You have to be alert as well as open-minded to catch up with the changes happening around the world. You cannot live isolated from the rest of the world, so you have to keep informed all the time and be careful of every move you make. The world today is filled with traps so every step forward must be made carefully.

The other criterion is highly significant. Even though you conduct yourself accordingly to the aforementioned principles, if you or the organization you work for does have any ethics and morale, you or the organization cannot survive. You cannot live alone in this world or work by yourself in your organization. Good governance or corporate governance is a must for everyone and every organization. We have often heard news about public figures or multinational companies who conduct themselves or manage their companies without good governance. The consequences that follow are the depressing downfalls of the company's CEOs and the company itself. Today the global trend favors extreme consumption which is everyone's

increasing production capacity. We should have learned by now that high growth does not last. It's like gravity, the higher the growth, the greater the damage done when it falls.

Therefore isn't it time that we give the philosophy of Sufficiency Economy a serious thought, for the concept encourages us to lead our lives in moderation, with a balance, and in a sustainable manner. Conducting our lives in such a manner will make us happy and physically as well as mentally strong. We will live in a world with clean environment, under peaceful surroundings, and with less conflict of interests. The path of Sufficiency Economy should lead us to a wise society.

Ladies and gentlemen, you have the right to choose your path of life. You can choose to follow the trend of extreme consumption and impulsive happiness under globalization which shadows the world today or you can choose to give it a shot to adapt your life and dare to make a courageous turn onto a path filled with moderation, balance, and sensibility. You can choose to use conscience and wisdom to guide you in a quest for a serene and purified life, not solely for your personal gain, but for the benefits of future generations to come. You can help to make a difference!

THANK YOU!

FICAC Directors (l-r)  
Hon. Lamartine Hollanda Jr.,  
Hon. Jacques Deschamps and  
Hon. K.L. Ganju listen attentively  
to the presentation of Secretary  
General of His Majesty's  
Chaipattana Foundation,  
Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul at the  
East Asia Regional Conference.



# PRINCESS SOMSAWALI OPENS WORLD CONSULAR FAIR



The World Consular Fair 2007 took place at the Bangkok Convention Centre Central Lad Prao from Thursday 15th to Sunday 18th November and was graciously opened by Her Royal Highness Princess Somsawali. Her Royal Highness later took a tour of the World Consular Fair where she spoke with many of the representatives at their booths.



Her Royal Highness Princess Somsawali cut ribbon to officially open the World Consular Fair 2007. Looking on are Hon. Arnold Foote, President of FICAC and Hon. Dr. Sribhumi Sukhanetr, Dean HCCT.



Her Royal Highness Princess Somsawali with the FICAC Board of Directors and their wives at the opening of the World Consular Fair 2007.



Her Royal Highness Princess Somsawali admires the display at the Ghana booth at the World Consular Fair 2007.



Representatives from the Panama booth posed for the camera at the World Consular Fair 2007.



Hon. Arnold Foote, President of FICAC (2nd left) and Mrs. Foote at the Jamaica booth with (!) Hon. Dr. Jingjai Hanchanlash Honorary Consul of Jamaica in Thailand and Hon. Soy Martua Pardede Honourary Consul of Jamaica in Indonesia.

# FICAC INTEGRAL TO GLOBAL DIPLOMACY – Thailand Foreign Minister



Thailand Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Nitya Pibulsonggram, delivering the main address at the World Federation of Consuls (FICAC) Gala Dinner.

*Thailand Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Nitya Pibulsonggram, delivered the main address at the World Federation of Consuls (FICAC) Gala Dinner on November 14. He said:*

**M**r. Arnold Foote, President of the World Federation of Consuls, Dr. Sribhumi Sukhanetr Dean of the Honorary Consular Corps of Thailand, Dr. Virachai Techavijit, President of the East Asia Regional Committee of the World Federation of Consuls Mr. Sanan Ang-u-bolkul, Chairman of the Organizing Committee, Excellencies, Honorable Consuls, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen; Thank you for the kind introduction. On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the World Federation

of Consuls and the Honorary Consular Corps in Thailand for hosting this First HCCT International Charity Gala tonight in Bangkok, during the first World Consular Fair to be organized in Thailand. I understand that the proceeds from this Charity Gala Dinner will go to a wonderful organization, namely, UNICEF. Your presence here in Thailand, during a time of great joy in the celebrations on the Auspicious Occasion of the 80th Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty the King, is most appreciated.

May I therefore extend to all of you a very warm welcome. Member of the international Consular Corps -- wherever you may be, whomever you may represent -- you are

an integral part of the network of ties that bind our nations in friendship, in promoting better understanding amongst peoples.

You are an important component of the business dynamism that drives commerce between countries, through your networks of ties in the business community and beyond.

But most importantly, you are the key link to people -- people of countries you represent, people of countries where you work -- dealing with all issues that span the world of consular affairs. It is this human dimension of your work that makes you special.

That is why the Foreign Ministry and Thailand attach great importance to our honorary consuls.

Because they help promote greater understanding of Thailand and the Thai people in all corners of the world. They help advance our shared interests, commercial or otherwise,

with host countries. Indeed, many of you have helped reinforce a better understanding of Thailand's recent political path after last year's troubles. And because they protect the interests of countless Thai nationals overseas as well as promote ties of affinity between local citizens of Thai descent with their motherland. The importance of Thai honorary consuls to Thailand's diplomacy is reflected in the number of honorary consuls that we have. Right now, we are proud to have 120 honorary consuls represented in 64 countries, supplementing our over 90 embassies, consulates, permanent missions and other offices worldwide. We are also proud to be host to some 84 honorary consuls in Thailand, representing 75 countries.

All of you in the Consular Corps are an important complement of global diplomacy, of peaceful intercourse among nations, of building stronger people-to-people ties that transcend culture and religion.

I therefore commend all the good work that you have done and encourage all of you to continue your efforts that help promote friendly ties between Thailand and the rest of the world. Distinguished Guests, I have been asked by the organizers to say a few words on the future of Thailand -- Thailand after the elections.

If there is one thing that I have learnt in more than five decades of civil and public service is that the future has a way of confounding predictions. So until time travel is made possible and one can actually see the future, the most one can do is to make best guesses on possible trends.

With these limitations in mind, let us see if there are some general trends on the future of Thailand that we can surmise based on what has happened over the past 12 months.

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Hon. Arnold Foote, President, World Federation of Consuls (FICAC) greets Thailand Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Nitya Pibulsonggram.

Well, first, let me repeat what my Prime Minister stated earlier today at the First East Asia Regional Conference of the World Federation of Consuls, that we will have general elections under the new constitution on 23rd December 2550 Buddhist Era.

And from these elections, we will have a new government, perhaps by February.

Holding these elections is the firm commitment of this Government. With the passing of key organic and electoral laws, political parties have been formed or are being activated. Political campaigns are, as you well know, being waged. Voters' rights and responsibilities are being conveyed to the people.

These are all healthy developments for democracy and this Government will actively facilitate them.

Our most important priority is to return Thailand to a full-fledged parliamentary democracy -- to building and nurturing a stronger and more genuine democracy with better safeguards.

For it was to this end that we drafted a new constitution, one endorsed by almost sixty percent of the voters in a historic referendum -- one that will make it more difficult for anyone to monopolize power and abuse the

public trust.

For it was for this purpose that we instituted new and higher standards for those holding public office, promoted good governance and transparency.

With these foundations, the next government will be operating in an environment that will make greater demands for even greater transparency, accountability, honesty.

This is good for Thailand.

This is good for all those engaged in business with Thailand. Now I cannot and should not try to answer questions as to what policies the new government will follow since this will prejudice the choices to be made by this country's most important stakeholder, namely, its people.

However, I am fairly certain that which ever government comes from the elections next month, it will continue to face many of the same issues that we have faced. Continuing the political reform process. Strengthening national unity through reconciliation.

Getting our economy further back on track and moving it further forward.

Other issues may be identified. New and innovative means to deal with these issues may be devised. This is the legitimate prerogative of any

incoming government which receives its mandate from the people.

So, election on the 23rd December is something to look forward to.

For it will enable this Government to depart from the scene, as we had promised, secure in the belief that a stronger foundation for democracy has been built.

And it will prove once again that however often Thailand may have veered from the path of full-fledged democracy over the past seventy-five years, we have always returned to it with, one hopes, lessons learnt and commitments renewed.

As the current Foreign Minister and as a full-fledged citizen to be, I look forward, with hope, to this new phase in Thai democracy. Distinguished Guests, What of our economy? Well, the future of our economy -- an open, market economy that is integrated into the global economy -- will continue to be influenced by regional and global economic conditions and trends.

And here there are opposing trends.

On the plus side, predictions from international financial institutions are that economic growth will be strong in the Asia-Pacific region. About six to seven percent growth rate -- fueled by a growing China, a rising India, and a resurgent Japan.

Indeed, according to The Economist, this year, China would contribute more to global GDP growth than the United States, for the first time.

ASEAN, with a new Charter and an economic blueprint for closer integration expected to be signed next week, with a combined GDP of over one trillion US dollars now, are taking serious steps to becoming a Community. Indeed, Thailand will have the privilege of chairing ASEAN in the middle of next year.

Now on to the minus side, there are signs of a possible slowdown in the world's largest economy. One is witnessing a credit crunch in the US economy, a slowdown in the construction sector, sparking the lowering of interest rates by the Federal Reserve in September. You may all recall this.

There are other factors too. The weakening of the US dollar; continued fluctuations in oil prices but with an upward trend; uncertainties in the future of the Doha Development Round. All of these can help contribute to a global economic slowdown.

Which trends will prevail and to what extent will they reinforce or cancel out one another? Well, this will have to be analyzed thoroughly since they will have great influence on the future performance of the Thai economy.

To Thailand's credit, the performance of the Thai economy this year has confounded even the hard core pessimists.

This has as much to do with Thailand's strong economic fundamentals as with faith in the overall management of the economy, despite some hiccups.

Exports continue to drive the economy forward, with figures for exports of goods rising by 26 percent to almost 40 billion US dollars in the third quarter of 2007, as compared to the same period last year. And this despite the appreciation of the Thai baht vis-à-vis the US dollar.

Thailand's foreign currency reserves last month was 82 billion US dollars, compared to 67 billion at the beginning of the year. The World Bank, in its latest publication Doing Business 2008 East Asia, places Thailand third among fourteen in East Asia as the country with the greatest ease of doing business. Investments in the Thai stock market have risen, fuelled by a general liquidity benefiting the Asia-Pacific region. Indeed, the Thai stock market index has already increased by over 26 percent since the beginning of this year. Investment in general, however, has lagged behind, with the latest projections of only 1.5 percent growth for this year. People continue to visit Thailand -- our friends from all over the world. The magazine Travel and Leisure recently ranked Bangkok as the third best city in the world for travelers, in its World Best Awards 2007.

What have been the sentiments of foreign companies, you might ask?

Well no foreign company has packed up their bags and left the country despite

reports that some firms are considering downsizing their businesses due to what happens externally.

According to the Thai Board of Investment, foreign investors' confidence improved in the second half of 2007. This is because of higher sales in the domestic and export markets. And also because of projections of higher profits in the second half of 2007, despite higher production and manpower costs.

These positive business sentiments seem to find resonance with credit rating agencies. JP Morgan, for one, upgraded Thailand's rating earlier this year in March.

However, there is still some hesitation amongst foreign investors as they would like to wait for clarity and certainty in important legislation such as the Foreign Business Act.

But now how will things look next year?

Already, the Asian Development Bank has predicted that economic growth will increase, from a projected four percent GDP growth in 2007 to five percent in 2008.

Exports will play a smaller role in GDP growth due to the appreciation for the Thai baht and expectations of a softer global economy. Domestic demand and public investment are expected to pick up the slack.

But these projections are premised on the new government being able to adopt a credible economic programme. Furthermore, important pieces of legislation need to be finalized. Key among them, as identified by the World Bank, include those in the energy and financial sector.

So credibility and certainty in the policies of the next government are key. Key also is maintaining Thailand's long-run competitiveness while ensuring sustainability of growth.

In this connection, some of the issues that will continue to challenge the Thai economy after the elections include the following.

A strong Thai baht and an increasingly less competitive labour force in terms of wages vis-à-vis other countries in the region can have a dampening effect on exports. Enhancing the

skill of Thailand's labour force is one way of increasing Thailand's competitive edge. This is one of the recommendations made by the Thai Board of Investment.

Due in part to the general congestion of roads -- perhaps you have noticed -- railways and port facilities, transportation can be relatively less cost effective than some countries in the region. Improving the infrastructure of the Thai economy -- from transportation to logistics -- will thus be an important challenge. Indeed, projections of a higher GDP in 2008 in Thailand are premised on rising public investment in infrastructure projects.

The current estimate of Thai energy demands is that they are expected to double every ten years assuming five percent GDP growth annually, according to the World Bank. The growing energy needs of the Thai economy will have to be addressed but in a manner that helps protect the environment. Continuing to meet an increasing share of energy needs through renewable energy would be an important step forward in this regard. Distinguished Guests, I have given some food for thought on the future of this country, having taken part in a government that is trying to lay a strong and secure foundation for it. Change will occur. That is in the nature of things. But if change leads to renewal and progress, then let it proceed.

After all, is not democracy about allowing for people to opt for change? I wish all of you a successful World Consular Fair.

Thank you for your attention.



Dancers perform at the Gala Charity Dinner.

# FICAC, HCCT SUPPORT UNICEF



Dean of the Honorary Consular Corps in Thailand, Hon. Dr. Sribhumi Sukhanetr (2nd left) presents a cheque from the HCCT to Unicef representative, Mr Tomoho Hosumi. They are joined by Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Nitya Pibulsonggram (left) and Hon. Sanan Angubolkul of the HCC Thailand.

The UNICEF worldwide project “Unite for Children; Unite against Aids.” was the beneficiary of proceeds from the Charity International Cultural Dinner attended by over 200 guests. There was a moving presentation by Mr. Andrew Moore, Deputy Representative for UNICEF’s Thailand Office and a performance by 24 children from the North of Thailand

whose lives have been dramatically affected by the presence of HIV in their lives. Unicef representative Mr Tomoho Hosumi received a generous donation to UNICEF funds from the Board of both the World Federation of Consuls and the HCCT. President of the World Congress of Consuls, Hon. Mr. Arnold Foote said

the FICAC/UNICEF HIV/AIDS Project “Consuls: turning care into action” is an unprecedented step to embark on a project that has the potential to make an outstanding and long-lasting effect on childhood development worldwide, with “Unite for Children; Unite against Aids.” as noble a goal as they could ever devise.

# CONSULS HONOURED AT FICAC 25th ANNIVERSARY AWARDS

To mark the 25th anniversary of the World Congress of Consuls (FICAC) member countries of FICAC were asked to nominate two Consuls for their Corps that have done outstanding work for those countries that they have the honour to serve. Several nominees were submitted to the Secretariat and the following presentations were made at the Gala Banquet held in Bangkok, Thailand on November 14, 2007.

## FICAC MEDALS OF HONOUR

### CYPRUS:

1. Hon. Demosthenis Severis, Hon. Consul General of Finland, President of the Honorary Consular Corps of Cyprus
2. Hon. George Vryonides, Hon. Consul General of Sweden

### TURKEY:

1. Hon. Turgut Koyuncuoglu, Hon. Consul General of India, President of the Consular Corps of Turkey
2. Hon. Aykut Eken, Hon. Consul of Jamaica

### GREECE:

1. Hon. Professor John C. Mourmouris, Hon. Consul of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Piraeus, President of the consular Corps of Greece
2. Hon. Luis Prombo, Consul General of Uruguay in Athens, Hon. Vice-President, consular Corps of Greece

### ISRAEL:

1. Hon. Peter Gad Naschitz, Hon. Consul General of Iceland
2. Hon. Eddy Strod, Hon. Consul General of Thailand

### INDIA:

1. Hon. K. S. Bhalla, Hon. Consul General of Mauru
2. Hon. K. L. Ganju, Hon. Consul General of Comoros

### BRAZIL:

1. Hon. Lamartine Hollanda Jr., Hon. Consul General of Albania, Dean of the Consular Corps of Brazil
2. Hon. Thomas Amaral Neves, Hon. Consul of Albania in Sao Paulo

### GHANA:

1. Hon. H. R. Roth, Hon. Consul General of Finland, Founder and former Dean of Honorary Consular Corps of Ghana
2. Hon. Dimitri Avraam, Hon. Consul of Belgium, Deputy Dean of Honorary Consular Corps of Ghana

### JAMAICA:

1. Hon. Deryck Gibson, Past Dean of Consular Corps of Jamaica and Hon. Consul of Finland
2. Hon. Lois Sherwood, Hon. Consul of Lithuania

### THAILAND:

1. Hon. Sribhumi Sukanetr, Hon. Consul General of Monaco, Dean HCCT
2. Hon. Sanan Angubolkul, Hon. Consul of the Republic of the Maldives

### PAKISTAN:

1. Hon. Mian Tajammal Hussain, Hon. Consul of Turkey
2. Hon. Iftikar Firoz, Hon. Consul of Portugal

### INDIA:

1. Hon. V. C. Burman, Dean Hon. Consular Corps Diplomatique India

### HAITI :

1. Hon. Jacques Deschamps, Director of FICAC

### CYPRUS :

1. Hon. Costas Lefkaritis, Director of FICAC

### GHANA:

1. Hon. Amarkai Amarteifio, Vice President of FICAC

### THAILAND:

1. Hon. Virachai Techavijit

### SURINAME:

1. Hon. Marcel Meyer, Dean, Honorary Consular Corps of Suriname

### USA:

1. Hon. Paulina Biggs Sparkuhl, Hon. Consul of Chile

## FICAC SPECIAL AWARDS

1. Hon. Aykut Eken; for contributing office space and personnel for the Secretariat of FICAC since 2003;

2. Hon. Amarkai Amarteifio; for excellent service as Chairman of Legal Affairs

3. Hon. Deryck Gibson, for excellent service to the Consular Corps of Jamaica and his role as Chairman of the International Trade Expo, which has become an annual event for the past 7 years and a fine example of how Consuls can promote trade

4. Hon. Kartar Bhalla, for the formation of the FICAC South Asia Regional Committee and the excellent work done by him in its development

5. Hon. Lamartine Hollanda Jr., for the formation of the FICAC Latin American Regional Committee and the excellent work done by him in its development

6. Hon. Virachai Techavijit, for the formation of the FICAC East Asia Regional Committee and the excellent work done by him in its development

7. Hon. Dr. Srubhumi Sukanetr, for the excellent work done by him and his Consular Corps for the first FICAC East Asia Regional Consular conference and the World Consular Fair.

## SPECIAL PLAQUES

1. Hon. Mian Tajammal Hussain, Convener, Lahore Consular Corps
2. Hon. Gajandra Bahadur Shresth, Dean Honorary Consular Corps of Nepal
3. Hon. Vicente J. Carlos, Country Coordinator, Philippines
4. Hon. Dr. Jonathan Choi, Dean, Hong Kong
5. Hon. Dr. Henry Chan, Country Coordinator, Hong Kong

Photos of all the awardees and many others can be viewed at [www.ficacworld.org](http://www.ficacworld.org).

# FICAC NEWS IN PICTURES



World Federation of Consuls Director, Hon. Jacques Deschamps speaks with a delegate at the East Asia Conference in Bangkok, Thailand.



The wives of delegates attending the East Asia Regional Conference make a lovely picture at the Gala Charity Dinner with (2nd left) Mrs. Pibulsonggram, wife of Minister of Foreign Affairs.



From left: Dean of the Honorary Consular Corps Diplomatique India, Hon. V.C. Burman (left), Mrs. Monica Burman, Mrs. Ganju and Hon. K. L. Ganju, Hon. Consul General of Comoros at the Gala Charity Dinner.



Mrs. Patricia Foote greets Prime Minister H.E. General Surayud Chulanont at the East Asia Regional Conference.



Hon. Karta Bhalla Secretary General of the Honorary Consular Corps Diplomatique India and Mrs. Bhalla arriving at the Gala Charity Dinner.



Hon. Dr. Virachai Techavijit of HCCT and wife with delegates arriving at the Gala Charity Dinner.



# FICAC NEWS IN PICTURES



His Excellency General Surayud Chulanont, Prime Minister of Thailand, turning on the lights to launch the official 25th Anniversary celebrations of the World Federation of Consuls (FICAC) in Bangkok, Thailand. Also in picture from left to right are; Hon. Dr. Virachai Techavijit, Chairman of East Asia Region of the World Federation of Consuls, Hon. Arnold Foote, President, Hon. Dr. Sribhumi Sukhanetr (partially hidden) Dean of HCC Thailand and Hon. Sanan



Hon. Amarkai Amarteifio, Vice President of FICAC with a delegate at the first East Asia Regional Conference.



Hon. Lois Sherwood, Hon. Consul of Lithuania and Hon. Deryck Gibson, Past Dean of the Consular Corps of Jamaica at the first East Asia Regional Conference in Bangkok, Thailand.



The Regent's School dancers gave an excellent performance at the Gala Dinner. President of FICAC, Hon. Arnold Foote, thanks the Regent's School for its wonderful contribution.



A section of the large crowd that attended the opening ceremony for the East Asia Regional Conference.

