Opening Remarks by Her Excellency Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand at the Water Management Exhibition

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Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I begin by extending a warm welcome to all honoured guests to this Water Management Exhibition here in Bangkok. The main objective of this exhibition is to provide the public with an opportunity to gain a better understanding about the new water management and flood prevention system this year that the Government has put in place. We have provided you with friendly staff who will be happy to answer any questions that you may have. I hope that the information from this exhibition will help all of us to be well prepared for any future natural disasters.

A year ago, as a result of global warming and climate change, Thailand experienced one of the worst floods in our recent history. But the close cooperation between government and private sector, civil society and the international community, allowed us to overcome this disaster.

To prepare for the upcoming rainy season, the Government has implemented a new water management and flood prevention system. We will focus on four areas, namely, protection, preparation, response and recovery.

Please allow me to share some of the key issues of the new water management plan.

First of all, we aim to allow for more storage of water in the central and northern parts of Thailand by lowering the water level in the dams and also by identifying water retention areas.

Second, we are building new flood barriers to better protect the important economic areas.

Third, to enhance water flows, we have installed new pumps, fixed water gates and removed obstacles in major rivers and canals. This will ensure that water is drained out as quickly as possible.

Furthermore, we have put in place a Single Command to coordinate preparation and response to flood crisis. This will ensure that the public can receive correct and up to date information at all times. There is also a much improved simulation and forecasting system which will be key to decision making in times of crisis.

For the long-term solution, we are planning to invest some 11 billion US dollars for a comprehensive water management system. Domestic and foreign companies are invited to submit conceptual plans and design. There will be an international bidding process that is transparent, fair and based on our laws and regulations.

To sum up, through concrete measures and massive investments, we are determined to protect our people and communities, our industries and economy, from the threat of floods.

I hope that all of you will take advantage of this exhibition to learn more about how Thailand intends to better manage water resources and help prevent future floods, as well as how your country could become more involved with us in this process.

Thank you for your interest.