

**National Broadcast
by General Prayut Chan-o-cha
Head of the National Council for Peace and Order
6 June 2014**

Good evening to all Thai people in all sectors – be they government officials, the police and military, the private sector and the general public – that have given support and cooperation in moving our country forward together with the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) since 22 May 2014.

Let me reiterate that there were many reasons why it was necessary for the NCPO to take control of national administration. The most important was because we respect the democratic process.

Our decision was based on the fact that the three main branches of national administration – executive, legislative, and judiciary – were being undermined. We therefore have had to safeguard democracy. We came in to make our country stronger, laying firmer foundations to prevent the structure from collapsing so that our country will be ready to move towards becoming a fully functioning democracy.

The undermining structure which I mentioned involves the conflicting and overlapping working relationship between the public sector (civil service and political appointees), the private and business sectors and the civil society. It was problematic and led to a situation where respect for the laws was scant. General laws were ineffective. Special laws such as the Internal Security Act, Emergency Decree, and Martial Law had to be invoked. Independent agencies were unable to fully perform their duties. The judicial system was not working effectively. People started to lose trust and faith in the whole system. Laws and law enforcement officers were not being respected, making it impossible to solve the issues. We were thus becoming an immoral society. I will not mention about the existing good things but will only mention things that are damaging.

Therefore a society without morality, without virtue, without good governance, could not move the country forward. The country must be ruled with good governance as His Majesty the King has clearly and continuously shown us.

State officials and other systems were being controlled and manipulated in every way by corrupt individuals, political parties and populist schemes. There were even problems with the passing or drafting of the laws due to interference in the interconnected administrative systems. There were some good things, but I shall refer only to the problems. As a result, there were widespread conflicts at many levels from the civil society to socio-economic. On international relations, we were losing trust and confidence and our dignity was not duly honoured by the international community.

We understand that we are living in a democratic world, but is Thailand ready in terms of people, form and method? We need to solve many issues; from administration to budget system, corruption, and even the starting point of democracy itself – the election. Parliamentary dictatorship has to be removed. All these have caused conflict and unhappiness among Thai people. Government officials could not work. So I had to ask myself “Can we let this continue?”. We tried everything to resolve the problem through peaceful dialogue and legal means.

This situation has been going on for more than 9 years, and the past 6 months have been the most intense period. There were many deaths, injuries, losses, and resulting legal cases, many of which are still unresolved. What we are doing today is to try and bring everything back to normal. We intend to return happiness to everyone living in Thailand, both Thais and foreigners; expand economic and social cooperation with our partners, and prepare ourselves for the ASEAN Community and AEC in the near future.

Today, we have received both praise and criticisms. It is normal that there are people who agree with us as well as people who do not. But in the interest of national administration, I will mainly consider the criticisms. These will be carefully considered and analyzed. If they come from good intention and are for the benefit of the nation, I will turn them into actions. It is normal to have people who disagree with you when you take on such an important task. But please be assured that we are doing the best we can in order to achieve our goal of a fully functioning democracy which is accepted by all sides.

In exercising state power at present time, general laws and martial law are still concomitantly necessary. In the past, people were not respecting the general laws. Although today we are using the highest security law, not all components are being exercised but only those that we deemed necessary. There may be some disruptions or inconveniences for some groups or foreigners, but we are asking for your understanding of our intentions. If we cannot keep the situation under control after we invoked the martial law, then no other laws in the world will work in Thailand. We will try to return to the use of normal laws as soon as possible, but people have to respect the law. I do not want the international community to view us as lawless people who use violence as a means to get what we want. We have to change this perception.

If these conflicts and violence or incitements continue, a successful and peaceful election is impossible. If the elections were to take place and a government was formed amidst conflict, violence, and protests, and was not accepted by the people, will the problem ever be resolved? There may be new protests and we will have to use force to suppress them. We have gone that way many times unsuccessfully.

As for the establishment of National Reconciliation Center, my primary objective is to give people an opportunity to talk to each other after breaking up into groups since nine years ago. The NCPO will act as an observer, a facilitator and an information provider. We will collect ideas from all sides as well as use information gathered by previous attempts in order to encourage national reconciliation and reforms. We welcome all sides; conflicting groups, political parties, and we will discuss all issues and openly share information. The military will not judge what is right or wrong. We are inviting all to participate with less involvement of the military in this effort so that we can move onto the second phase – the forming of a government, a reform council and a legislative council. All issues will be brought before the reform council. Issues which have reached agreement from all sides will be forwarded to the legislative council and go through legislative process. In the past, there were only talks and discussions on the principles, but no concrete actions were carried out.

In order to achieve reconciliation, some activities will have to be carried out including recreational and entertainment activities so the people are relaxed and ready to talk. We want to stop all conflicts. This is just the first phase. In the second phase, everything will be resolved through the laws and the reform council.

Many people are concerned that we may be rushing through the process. I can assure you that I am doing all I can to prevent any conflict from recurring in the second phase. If conflicts are still unresolved, the reform council in the second phase will not work. So, once again, I am asking for your understanding and support. The directions will be based on what have been proposed by the experts and scholars. The NCPO will only collect and provide information. In the past, people only choose to receive information from the media sources that appeal to them.

Some of the prolonged problems that I have mentioned did not start out only 9 years or 6 months ago but have been going on for decades without being resolved through the existing democratic process.

Today we are giving an opportunity to all government officials to work for the country, for the people, and for the King to resolve the people's suffering and foster happiness according to their oath of allegiance so that they can truly act as good civil servants under His Majesty the King.

If national administration is improved in all aspects including integration of all government operations by connecting plans, budget, and people, this will reflect a good beginning. From there, the central, local and regional sectors as well as the smaller units will benefit. If we do not start at the top, then it will not succeed. It will not solve the problems, such as issues concerning water and land. And the Thai people will suffer from the consequences of these issues.

As for the international community, we are asking for your patience to give us time as we build our country and a democracy in which the Thai people possess discipline and a true understanding of democracy with good governance in accordance with the philosophy of sufficiency economy of His Majesty the King. Everybody is equal, in a society with morals, compassion, and unity. We have to look ahead to the people and the problems that we need to overcome. We have to look beyond ourselves or our own benefits.

The NCPO has been working for only 2 weeks. We have given our priority to solving the economic problems concerning people with low income. We have continued with the operations of all 21 ministries in accordance with the NCPO's policies. We listened to all stakeholders, be it public or private sectors dealing with economic and social affairs as well as the general public – and consider all suggestions and use them as guidance. Existing procedures are reviewed, adjusted, and improved upon through brainstorming and discussions between government officials and the NCPO.

Projects that do not impose a burden or long term effects to the national budget system will be carried out. Corruptions will be dealt with. Individuals who are found guilty will be prosecuted according to law. All these will be transparent.

Matters regarding security, both internal and external, fall under the responsibilities of the Ministry of Defense, the Interior Ministry, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We need to prepare ourselves for the three main pillars of the upcoming ASEAN Community and particularly the ASEAN Economic Community. Today we have clear policies and designated responsible agencies, so they need to perform their duties. This is important in order for us to regain confidence from the international community.

I have instructed all agencies to operationalise their work in conformity with the framework of the Office of the National Economics and Social Development Board. The Budget Bureau should be consulted at the very beginning. There will be an evaluation process and projects that lack efficacy will be reconsidered, even if they are security matters.

The public or private sectors should jointly promote information on international cooperation through all channels. Cooperation between military and people along the border areas will be enhanced. This includes the ASEAN forests project which has been carried out by military units. The establishment of factories and the control of daily, seasonal and yearly labour along the border areas should be looked into. Some of these activities have been assigned to security agencies and are being expedited. Some are being restructured to ensure more effective results.

As for the establishment of factories at border areas and labour control, these are necessary in order to create job opportunities in rural areas. Otherwise people will travel to Bangkok and major cities to find work exacerbating problems such as drug trafficking, illegal immigration and crimes. These pose security problems in the short and long term.

Security issue is very important. It is not the responsibility of only the military and the police. It is the responsibility of all people. It is the duty of all citizens to be vigilant and to notify the authority of any wrongdoings. If you do not help the authority, the problem may lead to violence and the security personnel may have to use force. Everyone has to learn to look after themselves and the society, and to minimize conflicts between people and officials. Reduced conflicts would lessen the need for law enforcement and prevent officials from making demands for personal benefit. Like in developed countries where people respect the law and security officials are there to provide safety and look after the people.

As for the strengthening of the military, I will oversee the development process which includes personnel, structure, and equipment development. This will be in accordance with the existing development plan and conducted with transparency. It is a national security matter which need to be made understood at domestic and internal levels.

We are also concerned with the problems of the farmers. At present, we cannot rush the effort to sell the rice in stock because this will cause a price drop and lead to more corruption. This will have to be carried out with careful consideration, evaluation, and inspection. The NCPO will support any efforts to inspect the rice stock if requested. Those who committed illegal actions will be prosecuted. From what I have learnt today, the price of rice per ton has increased slightly. I think it is better that we control the quantity of rice in the market and maintain the market price than if we were to flood the market with the rice in stock and make the price drop. We have to be very careful. Everything has to be fair and transparent.

Concerning the Board of Investment, this is the responsibility of the economic working group. The board has to be established as soon as possible. The budget of 700 billion baht cannot be approved all at one time. The approval process for projects will have to be more thorough. Emphasis will be placed upon projects concerning alternative energy sources, projects that are energy efficient, projects that will create more job opportunities to the people, projects that will bring benefits to our country and projects that will strengthen our country.

I want Thailand to have an industry with small, medium, and large size factories. At the beginning we will have to start from small and medium size factories that can produce value added high technological components, particularly machinery. If we still depend on other countries for the production of machinery, we will not develop technology of our own. We need to be self-reliant. It is important that we learn from foreign investors and encourage them to use local raw materials.

The budget for fiscal year 2014 which has previously been considered and approved will go ahead to ensure progress, reduces the suffering of the people, and reassures investors. However, there must be clear rules and regulations to make sure that national interest is not compromised. The budget for fiscal year 2015 is also being considered simultaneously. It is in the process of being evaluated by the Budget Bureau and the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board. They will be responsible for controlling national budget spending from the start. Similar projects should be integrated to ensure fairness and transparency. For example, government agencies that deal with water management or utilities have to come together to discuss and formulate a policy that clearly defines responsibilities of each other. Top priority is to identify host agency for water and utilities. Projects that will create jobs and stimulate the economy are also to be expedited.

We are in the process of integrating new initiatives or projects. We have established a committee to oversee the financial aspect of all ministries. Some members will be military personnel in order to ensure progress. This committee will have the responsibility to inspect those financial operations which are unclear or problematic. Any problem will be reported to the head of NCPO to prevent any mistakes. We are very careful with the national budget in order to make sure that all are in accordance with the law, fair, and transparent. There must be no corruption like in the past. Please do not believe it when you hear that I have been ordered, or coerced, by some influential figure to approve some projects. I do not negotiate with anybody. We want to change the society, so we have to set an example. Please ask me or the NCPO if you have any enquiries. I only receive suggestions from various sectors through my working group.

Suggestions can be made through official and unofficial channels. We welcome all suggestions and we will consider which suggestions are beneficial and feasible or which can wait for later in the second and third stages. I value all suggestions. We also look at suggestions from the press and social media. There are probably more than 10,000 suggestions that we are trying to process and this will take some time. We might not be able to do everything at once, so we will prioritize them.

Please be confident of our work commitment. We put people's need first. Problems such as rice, agricultural products, tax, and energy price will be thoroughly checked, or delayed, in order to find the best approach. All solutions must be based on principle and rationale. People do not consider facts and tend to believe what we like, what we want to believe, but sometimes we must listen to the other side, or look at

the whole picture. This is why I need to receive explanations and clarifications from all agencies that are facing obstacles in order for me to see the whole picture.

Today we do not yet have the facts on many issues which require legal and procedural considerations. For example, the issues of energy and state enterprises are complex and need to be considered carefully. They are also connected to other issues such as tax reduction and oil prices, which will be affected. Therefore we have to start by looking at the whole structure. This issue may be delayed for a while, but will continue as planned once the root problems have been located and tackled. If we reduce prices as requested without having resolved the fundamental problems, other problems concerning transportation and utilities will surely follow. We will have to carefully look at all aspects, including details of investors, their profit expectations, and most importantly the real benefits they bring to the Thai people.

I can assure you that the NCPO does not gain anything from this. We are here to resolve the problems, not to create more. I urge you all to be vigilant and help us stop all corruption through the use of law, and to avoid further conflict and confrontations. The NCPO will look into the problems brought to its attention and try to solve our shared problem.

I understand it is very dangerous to use absolute power to resolve national economic and financial problems, especially in the long run. But the most important problems we are facing today concern energy, taxation, prices of goods, and unchecked creditor networks. All these must be dealt with as soon as possible, but with careful consideration. If we rush into things and create more problems later, we will be held accountable and criticized.

We will expedite the approval of various projects to stimulate the market. Next week we will have a meeting to discuss projects which need executive approval at the ministerial level. Foreign investments, especially those with high budgets and long-term contracts will also be reviewed. All agreements must be legal, honourable, and accepted by the Thai people.

My intention is to create unity among Thai people. People should feel that they and their properties are safe and secure; that they live in a social order that is just and moral - a society that does not tolerate corruption.

As for the justice system, I think all agencies involved already know their duties and the scope of their powers. However, they have to be able to perform their duties without outside pressure and influence. In the past, this was not the case and people started to lose respect for the laws and the system. The NCPO has removed these external influences for you so it is time to regain people's trust and confidence.

I have touched on many issues involving many people. The curfew has been shortened, or lifted, in certain tourist areas. We will continue to reduce the restrictions imposed by martial law as the situation improves.

Some media such as television and radio satellite stations have been known to cause and promote conflict. These are being investigated and will be closed if found to be the cause of the problems. Contracts and agreements will have to be reconsidered. I am asking for the cooperation from all media to stop inciting conflict and support us in our efforts to resolve national problems.

We have seized a large number of war-grade weapons during the past weeks. We are investigating the sources and networks of these weapons. These people were given the chance to turn themselves and their weapons in to the authorities. They have not, so now we are doing our duty. War weapons have been smuggled into Thailand through our borders. Military and police personnel can only observe certain border areas while the smugglers keep changing their routes. I take full responsibility for this matter. We need to find new measures to support and enhance these military operations, such as procuring modern technology equipment which is used in other countries. But we have budget constraints. Therefore we need to enlist the help of the local people to keep a watchful eye over the border areas.

On the issue of social psychology, we should give focus to instilling conscience, education, public service, and reducing large scale permanent structures that have no use. We need to build quality human resources before building large scale and unnecessary luxurious undertakings which does not meet the needs of the people. We need to be moderate.

People have to spend time and incur expenditures in travelling to receive public service. I have already given instructions that the public should have unhindered access to public services through either the existing mechanisms or new systems.

On cultural issues. We should help to reinforce the values of "Being Thai", national pride, and upholding the institution of the monarchy. These values should be included in the school curriculum by the Ministry of Education.

On tourism, we should ensure that tourists feel safe and secure. However foreign tourists should not have a perception that they could come to Thailand to commit illegal activities as often portrayed in the movies. I am ashamed. Do you not feel the same when this is portrayed in foreign films? Everyone should join hands. Entrepreneurs should act within the confines of Thai culture and love the country.

On religion, every religion can co-exist in Thailand and are all under the patronage His Majesty the King. Every religion teaches people to be good but there are some who are anti-religion or have ill intentions. The responsible agencies must look into the matter.

On the development of teachers and education system, we should resume courses on history, civil duties, and morals into the current curriculum. The purpose is to instill discipline, strengthen the physical and mental state, and reinforce conscience and social responsibility. We need to encourage our citizens, children, government officials and all sectors to build a systemic way of thinking by not thinking only in the short term basis. One should complete what has been started. Think for the long term with focused and rational thinking. Do not believe in what others say but it must be proven. National interest must come first. The people in society should have a sense of generosity, sharing, not become a society of abusing and defaming each other. We have to compete with many countries. Tourism is the most important because it generates tremendous income for the country so we need to push forward.

On the disbursement of state budget, I am concerned as it is political work and deals with populist policies which are not inclusive. Everyone must cooperate with each other to build immunity. I think the international community will understand. We need time to see the results of the performances and work things out. We have wasted a lot of time in quarrelling among each other. It should not happen again. NCPO will not argue with those holding different views, either from internal or external sources. Everyone had their own reasons. We need to talk and resolved the problems sustainably.

Regarding the legal procedures and other administrative issues, everyone has been rushing me to accelerate them. In all, the issues have come up to NCPO for consideration, be they matters regarding establishment, appointment, and abrogation. I fully understand your grievances and problems as well as your distrust. Please give me time to work things out. Do not rush me. If we do things wrong now, the problem will arise in the future.

On the three-phase Roadmap, do not be concerned and try to understand. I find that there have been some misinterpretations. I believe my message is already clear. But the more I say the more you will try to find faults. This makes it difficult for me to explain. We need to dedicate and sacrifice to resolve the prolonged problems which have existed for more than nine years.

International confidence in Thailand's economy is improving. Well known credit rating institutions have shown confidence. The stock market has continuously risen with high volume of trade. These achievements cannot happen without the cooperation of everyone.

We must devote and dedicate ourselves more for the Thai people. I refer to the civil servants and NCPO who need to make more sacrifices to make up for the time that was lost while you had to work under pressure and domination from divergent groups. The people have suffered for a long time. We will deliver as promised which is to bring back happiness to the Thai people.

The problem of the rice pledging scheme has eased. Do not worry about the unloading of the rice stockpile. We now need to tackle other issues. The budget will proceed as planned. We will ease the necessary measures that were enforced and may have had affected tourism or human rights.

We have sent out teams to engage with those groups with different views. The academics who are currently not in the country have said that they will cooperate with us. I do not want to impose restrictions on movements of those who are considered to symbols of the political landscape and democracy. But you should understand the current situation. After the situation has been resolved, you may continue to engage in your activities and posit political views but should refrain from creating conflict. Forgive us if we had offended anyone in our actions.

On creating general understanding of the situation, it does not rest only on the state sector, military, police or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but depends on all sectors of society. I have asked all sectors especially the business sector to help in explaining the situation. We have send them documents both in Thai and English clarifying the cause of the problem, what we are doing and the progress made. It is important that all of us help to convey the message for the national interest.

Of high priority is in dealing with the issue of malicious influences and illegal gambling, especially betting on football. The responsible agencies must tackle these issues to prevent family problems. Debts must be repaid. NCPO never said to default on debts, including informal debts. But it must be fair. We can facilitate compromises in debt payment. I do not encourage people to resort to taking out more informal loans but should repay formal loans. A just process in repayments could be better controlled. By continuing to take out informal loans, people will be exposed to elements that take advantage of the situation.

There are many other issues I would like to talk about but I shall find time to do so at a later date. I appeal to the university students and human rights groups and activists to refrain from instigating abrasive protest movements. If these movements persist, we may pursue legal proceedings. To our younger generation, you should understand that the nation needs time to improve and heal. When it comes to a point when we cannot move forward, we have to pause and fix our problems and push forward with hard work.

These are the main areas I wanted to convey to you today.

Delays in taxation and other fiscal rates, SME reform, and other commercial undertakings are in the process of being improved. All the issues that have been proposed to me, I am aware of the obstacles thanks to consultations with civil servants and information received from the general public and the media. We have been able to organize our priorities accordingly and will start to improve pending issues such as national revenue, and national spending, in particular large-scale investments in infrastructure. What is most important is who benefits from these

projects. It must be the general public and not just big industry. We will need to see how industry can help improve our handling of social issues such as public utilities, air pollution and waste disposal, especially building refuse management facilities and recycling centres. I have already given instructions so that these measures will lead to sustainable solutions and a stronger Thailand. Therefore let us come together to reform our country. I appeal to you all to join together and rebuild our nation. I urge all sectors to support me, the NCPO and the civil servants in a spirit of nonpartisan cooperation.

There have been gestures of holding 3 fingers in protest – that is fine. I have no conflict with you. But perhaps it would more appropriate if you can do this within your homes rather than in public. But how about if we all raise 5 fingers instead – 2 for the country, and the other 3 to signify religion, monarchy and the people. Raising 3 fingers is copying foreign films, but we should be proud of own identity. We can all live together regardless of our differences. All major reforms take time, but we can all work together to make this process quicker.

Thank you all for sparing your precious time to listen to me. I am doing my best to ease tensions. I do not wish for anyone to fear the use of full administrative power. Those who have not committed any wrongdoings have nothing to fear, because our aim is to bring back righteousness and fairness to all people. The judicial process will determine that in the end.

Once again, thank you very much and I ask for your cooperation and continued support. I believe that all Thai people understand my intentions.

Thank you very much.