1. **The impact and the human rights implications of the lack of affordable, timely, equitable and universal access and distribution of COVID-19 vaccine**

The COVID-19 outbreak in Thailand has wide range of impact. Hence, the COVID-19 vaccine is very vital to restrain spreading and reduce the severity of the disease. Thailand has administered COVID-19 vaccination since February 2021. With its prevention and control mission, the Department of Disease Control (DDC) has given the priority and speed up the implementation of vaccination in a high risk group and people living in spreading areas, particularly in Samut Sakhon. The COVID-19 vaccination has been rolled out 730,803/953,167 cases (76.7%). The Department of Disease Control has also implemented the COVID-19 immunization in all group of population without any expenses, especially in a group of people living with 7 underlying diseases, pregnant women, vulnerable group and foreigners. This implementation is under the principles of respect of human dignity, rights, freedom and equality that people must be protected according to the Section 4 of the current Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand (B.E. 2560)

In Thailand, there are still some gaps in implementing the vaccine coverage across the country and people in some provinces have still faced some difficulty in access to vaccine. This is because of Thailand’s policy that prioritizes the group of people to receive the vaccine. In other words, the people residing in risk areas of COVID -19 will be the priority group to get vaccinated. The problem of access to vaccine inevitably affects the security of people, family and society as follows:

1. Impact on the economic system and employment: people who did not fully receive 2 doses of vaccine will not be allowed to work in some business places such as restaurant and construction sites. Not accessing to the vaccine can affect their daily income.

2. Social impact: people who did not fully receive 2 doses of vaccine may be prevented from receiving the public and private services. For example, they may not be able to travel by the airplane or they may be prohibited to stay at the hotel while they are on the trip.

The Department of Disease Control has realized the importance of the access to the vaccine among all people residing in Thailand and has policies to equally provide the vaccine to all people no matter where they live in Thailand.

1. **Experience sharing from other countries on challenges caused by unequal access to the vaccine**

Lessons from COVID-19 management, prevention and control in Thailand so far revealed that some certain groups are unable to get vaccinated against COVID-19, especially migrants both with and without a Thai work permit. Thus herd immunity could not be reached. This is due to the need for collaboration from multi-sector networks in filing requests for vaccinations, collecting numbers and lists of people who wish to receive vaccines. Moreover, Thailand also faces challenges among migrant workers without work permit, no registration or difficulty of those with willingness to accept vaccination against COVID-19 having concern on law enforcement which may cause illegal workers arrested and prosecuted.

Thailand's key policy allows illegal migrant workers who have no work permits to submit their application to register as legal workers with the Ministry of Labor during the COVID-19 pandemic until March 2021. The migrant worker will receive a substitute document before obtaining a real work permit which can be used until 13 February 2021. Such migrant group will be entitled to protection and care, support as required by law. The aforementioned activities will result in more effective disease control and prevention, contributes to helping migrant workers receive more vaccines to control COVID-19 effectively, equitably and thoroughly, at no cost as same as the Thai people.

1. **Best practices, initiative and examples of international cooperation**

The Office of International Cooperation, Department of Disease Control (DDC), has begun allocating the COVID-19 vaccines for injecting foreigners living in Thailand through the operations of the Liaison Mission Group under the EOC Center. Thailandintervac project was established by DDC to provide information, coordinate the vaccination sites and to provide vaccination services for foreigners, those who need to travel abroad, students, diplomatic and international organization staff since June 2021 until now. Current data shown that Thailand has provided COVID-19 vaccines to 1,294,666 foreigners and the top 3 of them are Burmese, Khmer and Laos respectively. There are 697,950 people who received their first doses and 80,080 people for their second doses. This campaign had been highly welcomed by the international organizations and related agencies

International cooperation in vaccine support to prevent and control COVID-19 for Thailand to fight the spread of COVID-19 consists of

1. Japan donated 1.05 million doses of AstraZeneca vaccine

2. USA donated 2.5 million doses of Pfizer

3. UK donated 415,000 doses of AstraZeneca

4. China donated 1 million doses of Sinovac

Total of 5,415,000 doses

To fight against COVID-19, DDC, UN, WHO and non-profit organizations have jointly established Migrant Hotline or a counseling service on COVID-19 issue provided by a group of volunteer migrant workers in 3 languages, namely Burmese, Cambodia and Laos from May 2020 to present. They also jointly support vaccination services for migrant workers, vulnerable group, Migrant Workers Volunteers (both from public health and educational sectors) throughout Thailand.

Information by The Office of International Cooperation, Department of Disease Control (DDC)