



# The World's Development King

The Bangkok Post joins the Thai nation  
to celebrate the most auspicious occasion of  
the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of  
His Majesty the King's  
Accession to the Throne.



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# The World's Development King



**F**rom the moment His Majesty ascended the throne, and pronounced “We will reign with righteousness, for the benefit and happiness of the Siamese people”, he has done just that.

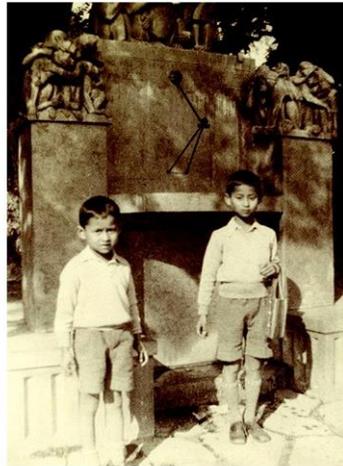
His deep-rooted sense of responsibility was undoubtedly planted by his royal father, Prince Mahidol, who devoted himself to the field of public health after completing his medical studies at Harvard University, then returning to practice at McCormick Hospital in Chiang Mai, where he was known as “Mor Chao Fah” (Prince Doctor).

After the death of Prince Mahidol, HRH the Princess Mother continued to instil in her children a sense of duty to others. As HRH Princess Galyani Vadhana once wrote, “It was almost an unspoken rule, a nature sense of priority to do what we could for the country. What mother taught us came from Father. He

was 8 years older than Mother, and taught her a lot. Mother was very receptive, she learned so much from Father. What she taught us I later found to be almost quoted verbatim from Father... It was like Father teaching us through Mother...”

In 2006, the United Nations Development Programme presented the first ever UNDP Lifetime Achievement Award to His Majesty the King on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of His Majesty’s accession to the throne.

The citation read, “...His Majesty the King of Thailand has tirelessly promoted rural development and helped improve the lives of poor people across Thailand. For His Majesty, the people come first, and he has relentlessly travelled across the entire country visiting communities even in the most remote areas, making him the most widely travelled king in



“For the United Nations the ceremony has special significance as it marks the first time that we recognise outstanding contributions to development through this Award.

“Human development, reduced to its essence, is a very simple concept: it is about empowering people, not the few, not even the many, but all people. It is about empowering them through education, through opportunity, through health care and nutrition. It is about empowering individuals with choices so they may live healthy, knowledgeable and creative lives.

“At his coronation in 1946, His Majesty uttered the famous Oath of accession: ‘We shall reign with righteousness, for the benefit and happiness of the Siamese people.’ Ever since, His Majesty has lived this Oath, selflessly devoting his time and efforts to the wellbeing and welfare of the people of Thailand regardless of their ethnicity, religion or legal status. As the world’s ‘Development King’, His Majesty reached out to the poorest and most vulnerable people of Thailand, listened to their problems, and empowered them to take their lives into their own hands. His Majesty’s rural development projects have benefitted millions of people across Thailand. They have prompted small-scale agriculture; appropriate farming techniques, sustainable use of water resources conservation and flood and drought mitigation.

“His Majesty’s development agenda and visionary thinking are an inspiration to His subjects and to people everywhere.”

– Excerpt of speech by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the presentation of the UN Development Programme’s inaugural Human Development Life-time Achievement Award to His Majesty the King on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of His Majesty’s accession to the throne.

Thai history. With emphasis on small-scale agriculture, appropriate farming technologies, sustainable use of water resources, conservation, and flood and drought mitigation, His Majesty the King’s projects have brought benefits to millions of people in rural areas across Thailand, regardless of their citizen status, ethnicity or religion.”

Now, ten years later, the UN has proclaimed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which was adopted by the 193 member states of the United Nations in September 2015. Called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), they comprise 17 items that the world hopes to achieve over the next 15 years, as a step forward to advance the Millennium Development Goals of 2000.

“The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals are our shared vision of humanity and a social contract between the world’s leaders and the people,” said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. “They are a to-do list for people and planet, and a blueprint for success.”

In short, the SDGs address the three dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental, as well as important aspects related to peace, justice and effective institutions.

His Majesty the King, therefore, can be considered a truly visionary figure in the field of development. Furthermore, the success of His Majesty’s royal projects to eliminate drug crops and replace them with commercial crops that have helped improve the livelihood and well-being of the ethnic farmers was the inspiration on AD – a process where Thailand played a leading role – which was then reviewed and adopted by governments around the world during a conference in Peru in 2012.

# His Majesty the King's Sustainable Economy Philosophy



**T**hroughout the 70 years of his reign, His Majesty the King has devoted himself to the welfare of his people. From the early days of his reign, he made it a mission to visit his people in the far corners of the country, in an attempt to understand their problems, and find ways to improve their well-being. More often than not, their problems would be related to water – seasonal or non-seasonal flooding or drought – which in turn led to a difficult existence and unsteady income.

Armed with a topographic map, a pencil and a camera, he would talk to village chiefs to get a true picture of the natural water sources in each community and compare them with his map. He would then consult members of his entourage, which always comprised representatives from relevant government units such as the ministries of interior, Agriculture, Health, the Department of Fisheries, Royal Forest Department and Royal Irrigation Department, in order to come up with a suitable solution to the problem. In that way, it was an integrated effort, based on first-hand knowledge gleaned from the communities.

Travelling to the northern border areas in the 1960s, His Majesty saw the opium crops grown by the ethnic hill tribes. These crops provided a meagre income, but unwittingly, led to further problems such as drug addiction and trafficking, the subsidising of insurgency in border areas, while their slash-and-burn cultivation led to forest degradation.

His Majesty first introduced peaches as an alternative crop to replace poppies. This was to be the start of what grew into over 4,000 royal initiative projects. His Majesty was also quick to realise that crop substitution was not going to be an overnight success. Change had to first come from within the community itself, known as “bursting from within”, leading to a level of self-reliance in terms of basic necessities before development can take place. His Majesty also estimated the process would take at least three decades.

In a royal address on 18 July 1974, he said, “It is especially important to first build a foundation in which people have an occupation and the ability to make a living, as those who have an occupation and a reliable living can then progress upwards to higher levels of prosperity. The promotion of progress must proceed in stages with care, economy, and foresight to prevent mistakes and disasters. If one focuses only on rapid economic expansion without making sure that such a plan is appropriate for our people and the condition of our country, it will inevitably result in various imbalances and eventually end up as failure or crisis, as found in other countries.”



Patience, however, is a virtue that is often lacking, especially in a country that experienced sudden economic growth in the 1980s, with an average of 7.6 per cent between 1977-1996. Significantly, it was when the bubble burst in 1997 that His Majesty the King began referring regularly to what is now known as the king's theory of Sufficiency Economy, a concept which had been developed since the early 1970s.

Sufficiency Economy essentially refers to ways of living and management that are careful, based on the Buddhist principle of the "middle path", aimed for the benefit of the public rather than personal interests, and focusing on long-term rather than short-term rewards.

In times of rapid change, it was necessary to live life with moderation and reasonableness and prudence in order to cope with the material, social, environmental and cultural impacts. Sufficiency economy encourages people to live a sufficient life, according to personal capacities and capabilities. At the same time, it also allows for profit-making within a sustainable framework. It advocates a balance in life to enable people to cope with the onslaught of globalisation and rapid changes in society and the economy.

It can be defined by four statements:

1. Sufficiency Economy is an approach to life and conduct which is applicable at every level from the individual through the family and community to the management and development of the nation.
2. It stresses a middle path, especially in developing the economy to keep up with the world in an era of globalisation.
3. Sufficiency has three components: moderation; reasonableness; and the need for built-in resilience against the risks which arise from internal or external change. In addition, the application of

theories in planning and implementation requires great care and good judgement at every step.

4. At the same time, all members of the nation – especially public officials, academics, and business people – need to develop their commitment to the importance of knowledge, integrity, and honesty, and to conduct their lives with perseverance, tolerance, wisdom, and insight, so that the country has the strength and balance to respond to the rapid and widespread changes in economy, society, environment, and culture in the world.

His Majesty the King explained the concept of sufficiency during a royal birthday speech given on 4 December 1998. "If one is moderate in one's desires, one will have less craving. If one has less craving, one will take less advantage of others. ...Sufficiency means to have enough to live on. Sufficiency means to lead a reasonably comfortable life, without excess, or overindulgence in luxury, but enough...."

From the success of the over 4,000 royal projects around the country, six study centres have been established to conduct research and produce knowledge applicable to local conditions that can be shared with other communities, and also with the rest of the world. They also serve to prove that the various items in the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2016 have already been tackled by His Majesty the King through his royal initiative projects, making him a true world leader in sustainable development.

In May 2006, His Majesty the King was presented with the United Nations Development Programme's first Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award by the former secretary-general of the UN, Kofi Annan. "Your Majesty has made an extraordinary



contribution to human development," said Mr Kofi Annan to His Majesty the King. "As the world's 'Development King,' Your Majesty has reached out to the poorest and the most vulnerable people of Thailand – regardless of their status, ethnicity or religion – listened to their problems, and empowered them to take their lives in their own hands.

"Your Majesty's countless rural development projects have been at the forefront of innovation and benefitted millions of people across Thailand. They promote small-scale agriculture, appropriate farming technologies, sustainable use of water resources, conservation, and flood and drought mitigation.

"As a visionary thinker, Your Majesty has played an invaluable role in shaping the global development dialogue. Your Majesty's 'Sufficiency Economy' philosophy – emphasising moderation, responsible consumption, and resilience to external shocks – is of great relevance worldwide during these times of rapid globalisation.

"It reinforces the United Nation's efforts to promote a people-centred and sustainable path of development. With this Award, we hope to further promote the invaluable experiences and lessons learnt from Your Majesty's development endeavours, and help draw attention to Your Majesty's visionary thinking beyond the borders of the Kingdom of Thailand."

# Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of His Majesty the King's Accession to the Throne



# No poverty: End poverty in all its forms everywhere



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## Royal Quotes

*"One of the reasons underlying the creation of the project was humanitarianism; the desire that these people living in remote areas should become self-supporting and more prosperous. Another reason, and which has received support from all sides, was to solve the problem of heroin. (...) A further reason which is very important is that, as is well known, the hill tribes are people who use agricultural methods which, if left unchecked, could bring the country to ruin. In other words they cut down trees and practice 'slash and burn' methods which are totally wrong. If we help them it is tantamount to the country in general having a better standard of living and security."*

- 10 January 1969, Faculty of Agriculture, Chiang Mai University

*"In the past, there was enough to live on, but today impoverishment is creeping in. We must, therefore, implement a policy of sufficiency economy so that everyone will have enough to live on. Sufficiency means to lead a reasonably comfortable life, without excess or overindulgence in luxury, but enough."*

- Birthday Speech, 4 December 1998

*"The King still works hard these days, since the people remain in poverty. As long as they are impoverished, liberty and freedom cannot be enjoyed. With no freedom, how can there be democracy?"*

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**E**nding poverty through self-reliance is the basis of all of His Majesty the King's royal projects. If the people are presented with opportunities to earn a decent and sustainable livelihood, they would not resort to destructive measures like slash-and-burn cultivation, and opium poppies. However, harsh environments and lack of knowledge and skills were contributing factors that needed to be overcome, and throughout His Majesty's 70 year reign, he has devoted his time and efforts to approach these problems, so the people should make the best of the resources within their environment.

The most important theme for His Majesty the King's development work was water management. Access to water for farming and household purposes was the most important step towards improving their opportunities.

Technology and know-how had to be suitable to the villagers, simple yet effective. His Majesty drew from local wisdom that the villagers themselves were accustomed to, and improved upon them through his knowledge of science and engineering. His Majesty even taught the people that the environment could be manipulated to a certain extent to suit their needs without affecting the eco-system.

The main thrust of each of His Majesty's royal development projects was to empower the communities and create a sense of unity and self-reliance so they could stand on their own feet.

### HUB KAPONG ROYAL PROJECT LEARNING CENTRE

His Majesty's first royal initiative projects was established as early as 1966 as a result of his visits to surrounding areas near Klai Kangwon Palace in Hua Hin. The villagers of Hub Kapong in Cha-am district, Phetchaburi province, were suffering from extreme poverty as a result of severe drought. Lack of water resources for farming, lack of land ownership, as well as lack of simple technology and know-how were deemed to be the reasons for this poverty. His Majesty initiated a land acquisition project, and gradually set up an agricultural cooperative. He once explained that, like parts of the anatomy, all farmers had to work together to achieve joint success. This process would also bring unity and harmony to the community as they jointly managed the projects and shared know-how. They were also taught to reduce household expenses by growing their own rice and vegetables, keeping pigs and chicken, and keeping basic accounting records. Today the community has a

dairy farm, asparagus farms and a thriving sisal product cottage industry.

### ROYAL PROJECT

One of His Majesty the King's earliest development projects in the north, the Royal Project, was established in 1969 after His Majesty's visit to the hill-tribe village of Doi Pui, Chiang Mai province, where opium crops proliferated. The root cause of this problem was poverty, and opium brought in a quick income that inadvertently led to a myriad other problems. His Majesty discovered that a variety of peach tree was able to bring in a decent income, and proposed the peach as an alternative to opium poppies. This is possible the world's first alternative development project to replace illicit drug crops with legal cash crops in an attempt to solve problems of poverty as well as deforestation and drug production and trafficking.

Today, the Royal Project Foundation in Chiang Mai runs four research stations and thirty-five Development Centres. Its business unit, under the brand Doi Kham Royal Project, sells temperate climate vegetables such as leeks, carrots, lettuce and broccoli, fruit and flowers such as kiwi fruit, protean, pussy-willow, avocado, carnation, herbs like mint, lemon thyme, rosemary and basil, as well as canned and frozen juices and vegetables.



## Zero hunger: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

### Royal Quotes

*"We were not fighting against anyone,  
but against hunger."*

- In an interview with the BBC on fighting insurgencies

*"Farmers know well that spiritual propriety is very  
important in farm work. It augments peoples' morale.  
And if they join in spirit, they as a group will create  
a really powerful force,"*

- 1981





**F**rom His Majesty the King's early visits to the rural areas of Thailand, he realised that a vast majority of the people in the country's remote areas had little access to proper food and nutrition due to alternate drought and flooding, bad crops and denuded forests.

His Majesty took it upon himself to experiment with various crops and livestock in an effort to provide basic sources of food and income to the people. The knowledge gain from these experiments would then be passed on to the villagers. By 1961, His Majesty had turned his royal residence at Chitralada Villa, Dusit Palace, into a vast experimental farm, unlike any other palace in the world. The rationale behind the Royal Chitralada Projects was to test various farming techniques and process agricultural produce in a scientific manner, with data collection and analysis, so as to help the people improve their yield and income in a sustainable manner. The ultimate goal is to use these projects as a model for the people to study and replicate

Among the projects are also wind energy, plant tissue culture nurseries, solar power production, reforestation plots, canned fruit juice, honey, and saa mulberry paper, a mushroom farm, a herbarium.

## THE ROYAL CHITRALADA PROJECTS

### Experimental Paddy Fields

His Majesty personally drove a tractor to plough the rice paddies and sowed rice to test different strains of rice, including lowland and highland varieties provided by the Rice Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. He also observed and recorded the progress of the rice crops in order to find solutions to problems faced by farmers.