

Dear Thai citizens,

The referendum of August 7th has concluded and the Cabinet has been officially informed of its results by the Election Commission - that the draft constitution, along with the supplementary question, has been approved by the majority in this referendum.

The NCPO and the Cabinet would like to thank all agencies involved (CDC, EC, election officials, security officials), the media for helping to disseminate information about the referendum, and most importantly, the Thai people who came out to exercise their voting rights, totaling almost 60% of the population. I would also like to thank all of you, whether you came out to vote or not, and regardless of the vote you cast, for maintaining a peaceful atmosphere throughout the country during the referendum process. It was pleasing to see people of all ages and backgrounds come out to vote, and I, therefore, ask for your continued cooperation in maintaining this peaceful atmosphere, especially for the upcoming general elections which will take place about a year from now. As with every election, there will be those who find the results favourable, and those who do not, which is normal for the constitution drafting process in any country. Nevertheless, I ask that all of us accept the results. The referendum is done, but our work continues. So let us set aside our differences for now and move forward together to confront the complex challenges that lie ahead of us, in making progress, reforming our country, doing away with our conflicts, and reconciling with each other under a new set of rules and regulations.

At this stage, things that may have previously been perceived as uncertain are now clear. Everything has progressed according to the Roadmap, from Phase 1 when the NCPO took administrative control of the nation under an interim constitution, to Phase 2 when the government was formed over 2 years ago, with about 1 year more to go before the elections next year. From then, Phase 3 of the Roadmap will begin when elections take place and a new government is formed under the new constitution.

Therefore, to have your understanding and confidence, and to clarify the current situation, I wish to inform you about the course of action that will be taken from now on.

1. The Constitution Drafting Commission (CDC) will need to make amendments to the draft charter in accordance with the results of the referendum pertaining to the supplementary question, before submitting it to the Constitutional Court to ensure correctness. Following this, the Constitution will be officially inscribed before being submitted to His Majesty the King for royal assent. All this will take no more than 3 months.

2. Once the royal assent is granted and thereby the promulgation of the new constitution, the interim constitution of 2014 will be deemed void, and the new constitution shall come into effect. The CDC will

then have to draft 10 organic laws, in particular the first 4, which will be necessary in order to hold general elections. At the same time, the government will need to issue many other relevant laws and make the necessary preparations, as stipulated by the new constitution. When that is done, they will be submitted to the National Legislative Assembly for further consideration. Throughout this time, the NCPO, the government, the NLA, and the NRSA will continue to undertake specific functions until new corresponding institutions are established to take over such responsibilities, as per the new constitution.

3. The drafting of the 4 organic laws that are necessary for elections is an intricate process and will involve a number of steps, including submitting them to the Constitutional Court and other relevant agencies for approval. This should be completed by mid-2017. Following this, and if the situation is stable and peaceful as it is, then the EC will organise the general elections within 150 days or 5 months, which should be by the end of 2017 as according to the Roadmap.

Dear Citizens,

The overall situation in the country is now peaceful, as citizens carry on normally with their daily lives, tourists and investors continue to pour in, family members and friends no longer need to be anxious over who belong to which faction or colour-code, and rights and freedoms are enjoyed by the people. Even though there are those who distort the truth by saying that some rights have been curtailed, it is evident that unless you are breaking the laws or trying to create unruliness, you are free to express yourselves and criticize the government, as has been occurring on a regular basis. Moreover, foreign countries have also expressed more confidence in Thailand now, with the country improving in many rankings acknowledged by the international community. Our foreign relations are proceeding normally, and all foreign governments have expressed their support and commendation for Thailand. The government, the NLA, the courts, our independent agencies, as well as other state agencies, have all been able to carry out their duties, unlike what has happened in the past, particularly during the period before May 2014. If you compare the situation now to what was happening then, you can see how things have improved.

In spite of this, I would like to inform all Thai citizens that we are not free from all our problems. Although all sectors (the government, the people, and the private sector) have cooperated under the Pracharat approach to create a sense of peacefulness, do away with our conflicts, solve our problems, and bring offenders into proper judicial processes, there are those who remain dissatisfied with this state of peacefulness, who persist on damaging the country and even our highest institution, all for their own personal gain, through the use of online media and information sent from abroad. Rest assured that the government shall continue to perform its duties to safeguard our national security and our peacefulness from being affected by these actions, and that our actions will be legal and based on the rule of law. At least the authority of the NCPO remains, as does the availability of Article 44, for the time being. So I call on those who

still wish us harm, to respect the laws and the will of the people, as expressed through the August 7th referendum.

The promulgation of the new constitution is a promise that the general elections will be held within about a year from now. In the meantime, the government and the Thai people have the responsibility to work together to maintain peacefulness and carry on with national development. Another crucial task for our country is to undergo reforms. It used to be asked whether there should be reforms before elections, or to hold elections and then reforms. The fact of the matter is that genuine reform does take time, so it would not have worked if we had chosen to do one thing before the other. This is because reform is about changing what we are accustomed to, changing how we think, and changing the things we were used to doing for many years. It cannot all be completed in a short time, and should be done accordingly with other developments, including creating awareness and understanding among the people with a view to easing conflict

This government has been conducting this reform process over the past 2 years, with over 190 new laws enacted. Most of these have involved laws on trade and investment, taxation, enhancing public services, increasing our competitiveness, ensuring peace and order in our society, and living up to our international obligations. These laws were long overdue, and were not able to be established during a time of conflict or when the Parliament was not functioning. The government has also taken efforts to revive the economy, restructure the country's manufacturing system, improve our transportation infrastructure, lay the foundations for a digital economy, revamp our education system, improve the government bureaucracy to better serve the people, reduce social disparities, increase opportunities for the less privileged, establish a justice fund, eradicate corruption through various measures such as harsher punishments and the establishment of a corruption court to oversee corruption cases, process major impending legal cases especially those related to corruption, reclaim encroached forest lands, expedite economic and social development, and establish a national strategy for sustainable development that will be handed over to the next elected government to carry on, as stipulated in the new constitution.

Dear Citizens,

Major problems and complex challenges still lie ahead of us. I am deeply appreciative for your trust and confidence in the NCPO and the government. The power of the Thai people, at this juncture, has great significance for our future. It has shown the world what Thai people desire and think about their country. The power of the Thai people cannot be undervalued. Therefore, the NCPO, the government, especially I will try even harder to solve the country's problems in the remaining time that we have, for the benefit of all Thai people, and with the utmost integrity, good governance, and carefulness in the exercise of our powers. All the rights and freedoms guaranteed in the

constitution, such as the rights to education, free public health services, and the freedom of religion, will be protected. Our nation must have a just, peaceful and orderly society, with clear development goals. It may seem that the government has been the key proponent of these conditions, but in fact, every citizen has an important role to play, for our common stability, prosperity, and sustainability, and so that there will be no one left behind, even those with differing viewpoints.

Should there be anything that the NCPO and the government require for your cooperation or if there is anything that you need to be informed of, I shall elaborate at the next available opportunity.

Thank you very much.