



Press Release : Thailand's Views on International Labour Organization's "Ship to Shore" Project

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With reference to the launch of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) "Ship to Shore Rights" project's baseline research on 28 February 2018,

on the particular interests and the cacophony of reporting on the issue, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand would like to state the following facts and express the following views;

1. "Ship to Shore Rights" project is a trilateral cooperation between the Ministry of Labour of Thailand, ILO, and the European Union. The project's main objective is to prevent and reduce unacceptable forms of labour in the fishery and seafood manufacturing industry. Key activities include; strengthen legal, policy and regulatory framework, more effective labour inspection and enforcement, improve core labour standards compliance (Good Labour Practices), and strengthen worker activities and access to support services.

2. The duration of the project is 3 years (2017 - 2019). The production of the baseline research based on information gathered from 434 labourers in 11 provinces during March to April 2017 marks the beginning of the "Ship to Shore Rights" project and does not reflect the situation in the Thai fishery and seafood manufacturing sector. The information and statistics that form the baseline research will be the benchmark that measures Thailand's development, which will be articulated in the endline research to be conducted before the conclusion of the "Ship to Shore Rights" project in 2019.

3. The baseline research indicated that the overall labour situation in Thailand has greatly improved, for example the marked reduction in physical harm and the fact that there was only 1% of the sample labourers who were classified as child labour. These improvements were resulted from legislative reforms and closer scrutiny in the implementation of laws and regulations by concerned Thai agencies. In this connection, the Thai side is also aware of the rights violations stated in the research as well as has received relevant information on this issue and cooperated with ILO to continuously address these issues. Moreover, to ensure that this project is a success, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour is also a Chairman of the "Ship to Shore Rights Project Steering Committee."

4. The research clearly pointed out that labourers interviewed were fishermen who worked on fishing boats that can only fish at sea for only short duration and did not cover fishing boats that can fish at sea for long duration and / or operate outside of Thai waters. To prevent confusion and misunderstanding, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would like to additionally point out that the Department of Fishery had issued a Notification on 25 December 2015, requesting all owners of fishing vessels, weighing 30 gross tons and above and operating outside Thai waters to bring the vessels back to port within 30 days of the issuance of the Notification. Furthermore, since 2017 no permit had been provided to any fishing vessels to sail and fish outside Thai waters, therefore there has been no Thai fishing vessels fishing outside Thai waters during March - April 2017, the time which the baseline research was conducted.

5. The Thai government is resolved and committed to improving the government's administration and management of Thai and foreign labourers, especially those in the fishing industry. The government has enacted the Royal Ordinance concerning the Management of Employment of Migrant Workers B.E. 2560 (2017) with the aim of systematically and effectively managing migrant workers and thus preventing and eradicating human trafficking and forced labour. Additionally, through cooperation with the ILO, Thailand is currently in the process of drafting Prevention and Elimination of Forced Labour Act to be in compliance with the Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention (P29), and the work in fishing law in line with the Work in Fishing Convention (C188). In addition, regarding the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention 98 (C98), an amendment to the domestic legislation is underway.

The Working Group on Labour Relations Promotion in Sea Fishing Operation comprising representatives from Thai and International organisations and NGOs has also been established with the aim of promoting employees' collective bargaining and organisations.

6. As mentioned earlier, Thailand has holistically made notable progress in improving its labour situation, in particular its fishery sector. To further advance this cause, Thailand has cooperated with the European Union to set up a labour cooperation mechanism "Labour Dialogue", and also has concrete cooperation with ILO and various NGOs. In this connection, the baseline research has amply demonstrated the resolve of concerned Thai line agencies to advance its work and cooperation in order to align domestic conditions with international standards and hence improve the livelihood of all labourers, especially those in the fishery sector. The Thai government has placed great importance on this issue and will continuously support the cooperation to achieve these goals.

Source: <http://www.mfa.go.th/main/en/news3/6886/87456-Thailand's-Views-on-International-Labour-Organizat.html>