



# PRESS RELEASE

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### **Thailand will not recruit prisoners to work on fishing vessels**

In response to reports by the media regarding official plans to recruit prisoners to work on fishing vessels, the Thai Government has confirmed that the idea, which was initially mooted as part of a policy directive to help former convicts find employment and integrate into society after serving their sentences, has not been and will not be implemented.

On 16 January 2015, Mr. Sek Wannamethee, Director-General of the Department of Information, as a member of the Sub-committee on public relations and laws under the National Policy Committee to address the problems of human trafficking and illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing (IUU), gave a press conference regarding reports by the media on official plans to recruit prisoners to work on fishing vessels as follows:

1. The subcommittee has been informed by the responsible government agency that, after having sought comments from the private sector in the fishery industry, the mooted idea to let prisoners work on fishing vessels has not been and will not be implemented.

2. The exploratory idea was in response to a broader social policy directive to “Return Good Men to the Society”, which aims to provide career training for prisoners. The policy directive aims to help former convicts reintegrate into society with honour and dignity through skill development and jobs in various industries.

3. Thailand is taking great strides forward in multi-faceted reforms, including combatting human trafficking, a form of modern-day slavery. Thailand fully affirms her commitment to uphold national and international obligations to promote and protect human rights. Regarding the policy directive of career training for prisoners, the following considerations are taken into account:

- Participation is strictly on a voluntary basis.
- Employment through the scheme fully complies with all related labour laws.

Contracts are mandatory for participants so as to benefit fully from available labour rights and protection.

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