

Thailand Taking Action against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU)

Overview

- Thai Government is taking systematic and comprehensive action to stop and prevent IUU, and end human trafficking in the fishery sector.
- A combination of immediate actions and longer-term approach has been taken to ensure sustainable fishing: legal and regulatory reforms, enhanced management, technical solutions, and strengthened enforcement.
- Multi-stakeholder partnership has been mobilized involving seven government agencies, private sector, civil society, international organizations.

Policy/Regulatory Actions

- Thai Prime Minister said the Thai Government is firmly committed to fighting IUU fishing and human trafficking in the fisheries sector.
- Thai Cabinet approved a new Fisheries Legislation and Plans to combat IUU fishing and human trafficking in the fisheries sector.
 - Royal Ordinance on Fisheries
 - Marine Fisheries Management Plan
 - National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU fishing.
- Taken together, they constitute a fundamental reform of the Thai fisheries sector in line with the international standards. They would improve government management and oversight, and provide for proportionate and deterrent punishments to address IUU fishing and human trafficking in the fisheries sector.
- Established Command Center for Combating Illegal Fishing (CCCIF) to drive reforms.
- Pushed ahead measures to ensure sustainable fisheries: introduced limits to the number of days that fishing is allowed with industrial-level fishing gears; banned fishing gears that could pose serious threat to juvenile fish; froze new registrations of fishing vessels.

Data and Information

- Completed nation-wide survey of all fishing vessels to be used for formulating fisheries management policy. Illegal vessels are no longer allowed to fish.
- Developed “Fishing Info” database on vessels registration, fishing licenses, histories, ownership, crews and workers.

Strong Enforcement and Enhanced Monitoring, Control and Surveillance

- Expediting installation of VMS (vessel monitoring system). All fishing vessels above 30 gross tons are required by law to install VMS by the end of October 2015. About 1,600 vessels over 60 gross tons have already installed VMS (about 60% of all vessels in this category.)
- Set up 28 Port In – Port Out (PIPO) Controlling Centers in coastal provinces nationwide since May 2015.

- Fishing vessels are required to submit documents and report whenever they dock or set sail.
- Dispatched mobile units to all coastal provinces to provide training and issue licenses for vessels and workers.

Traceability

- Working to improve seafood traceability system. The revised Fisheries Act requires actors at every stage of the supply chain to ensure full and documented traceability.
- Improving effectiveness and reliability of the catch certification system.
- Organized “Fishing for the Future: Towards Responsible and Sustainable Fisheries in Thailand” in July 2015 featuring experts from partner countries, international organizations, public sector and civil society.
- Exploring ways to further strengthen multi-stakeholder partnership, including with partner countries like the U.S.

Ending human trafficking in fishery sector

- Ending human trafficking as a national agenda.
- Implementing Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons in the Fishery Sector.
 - **Policy:** In consultation with the ILO, amended regulations on labor protection in fisheries to be in line with the ILO conventions.
 - **Prosecutions:** Over 200 traffickers were arrested in recent months, including senior military and police officers, local politicians, money launderers, criminal gangs.
 - **Protection:** Training inspectors to be able to better identify victims; providing social and legal services, compensation for victims.
 - **Prevention:** Raising awareness on rights and labor practices; training inspectors and law enforcement officials; set up a database and complaint mechanisms; registered over 2 million migrant workers.
 - **Partnership:** Working with ILO to build capacity of inspectors; forged partnership with industry associations, businesses, labor groups and civil society.