



## Press Release: Royal Thai Embassy, Washington, D.C.

### **Thailand further strengthens regulations to improve labor condition in fisheries sector Private sector signs MOU to eliminate forced labor from supply chain**

Thailand has taken further steps to improve labor condition in the fisheries sector with regulations to eliminate child labor in the seafood processing factories and ensure the well-being of seamen, while a coalition of seafood associations and companies signed an agreement with the government to eliminate forced labor and human trafficking from the supply chain.

These steps, among a wide range of measures relating to various aspects of fisheries, followed the entry into force of the new fisheries law of Thailand in November 2015 which aims to ensure that the country's fisheries sector meets the international standards.

#### **Eliminating Child Labor in Seafood Processing**

On January 14, 2016 the Ministry of Labor Regulation prohibiting persons under 18 years old to work in the seafood processing factories or establishments came into force. The Thai Government has instructed all governors nationwide to inform employers, employees and all agencies concerned to strictly abide by the new regulation.

#### **Ensuring Safety and Well-Being of Seamen**

On December 29, 2015, the Cabinet of Thailand approved the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives Regulation on the Safety, Hygiene, and Well-being of Seaman. The regulation requires the licensee who was granted a license to operate commercial fisheries to provide the followings to seamen:

- clean and hygienic food and drinking water suitable for the work and period of time spent on board the fishing vessel;
- at least one toilet not smaller than one square meter;
- space for resting, dining, and recreation;
- medical supplies and equipment for primary care;
- have on board at least one seaman who has undergone first-aid course at an institution accredited by a public agency;
- the person in charge of the fishing vessel shall ensure that seamen receive medical treatment on land in time when they are seriously injured or gravely ill.

#### **Strong Commitment from Private Sector to Clean Supply Chain**

A coalition of Thai private sector has come together to pledge their full support to work with the government to fight against IUU fishing, human trafficking and to improve labor conditions in the fisheries sector.

This coalition consists of Thai Chamber of Commerce, Thai Federation of Industries, Thai Bankers Association, and Thai Fishery Producers Coalition (TFPC), which includes Thai Frozen Food Association, Thai Food Processors' Association, Thai Shrimp Association, Thai Tuna Industry Association, National Fishery Association of Thailand, Thai Overseas Fishery Association, Thai Fishmeal Association and Thai Fishmeal Producer Association, and Charoen Pokphand Foods Public Company Limited (Thailand).

In the meantime, a group of Thai private sector encompassing all major players in the seafood industries on January 15, 2016 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Thai Government's Command Center for Combating Illegal Fishing and other 11 government agencies to eliminate forced labor, human trafficking and illegal fishing in the supply chain.

Under this MOU, the signatories have pledged to prevent seafood products that are found to have come from illegal fishing or are involved in illegal labor practices or human trafficking from being sold to their seafood processing facilities. Key signatories of this MOU include National Fishery Association of Thailand, Thai Overseas Fishery Association, Thai Frozen Food Association, Thai Tuna Industry Association, and the Thai Union Group, for example.

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