



ข่าวสารนิเทศ • Press Release

กรมสารนิเทศ กระทรวงการต่างประเทศ Department of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Tel. 02-643-5105 • Fax.02- 643-5106-7 • Email: information02@mfa.go.th mfathai.media@gmail.com
Website: <http://www.mfa.go.th> Facebook: www.facebook.com/ThaiMFA Twitter: www.twitter.com/MFAThai

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Thai Government, Nestlé and Thai Union to launch ‘Demonstration Boat’ to protect fishery workers’ rights

On 18 March 2016, Thai Government agencies and Thai leading private sectors in fishery industry agreed to join forces to launch a project called ‘Demonstration Boat.’ The project, made possible by the Department of Fisheries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nestlé and Thai Union Group, aims to raise awareness among fishing boat owners, captains and crews of best practices concerning the rights of fishery workers. A fishing boat for the project will be provided by the Thai government while Nestlé and Thai Union Group, together with partner NGOs, will then support and oversee the renovation of the fishing boat into a model boat with improved working conditions and labour standards on board the vessel.

This ‘demonstration boat’ will serve as a capacity building model for fishing boat owners, captains and workers. The training course will be jointly designed by all project partners, including the Department of Fisheries and the Ministry of Labour.

The Thai Government is committed to promoting and protecting the rights of fishery workers. A new Ministerial Regulation which came into force on 25 February 2016 is set to secure the health, safety and welfare of seamen. The regulation requires the boat owner to provide appropriate safety equipment as well as adequate and clean food and drinking water for the crew. Appropriate rest, dining and leisure areas on-board the vessels are mandatory, along with a first-aid kit and a toilet facility with proper sanitation standards.

The ‘Demonstration Boat’ project complements the new Ministerial Regulation. Boat owners and crew will witness first-hand a real fishing boat that meets all the requirements set by the law. Most importantly, they will learn the practical steps needed to transform their own fishing boats into ones with decent working and living conditions. Through this approach, the ‘Demonstration Boat’ lessons will bring tangible improvements on-board fishing boats across Thai waters, making a difference to the lives of hundreds of thousands who work at sea.

In addition, on 17 March 2016 the Thai Government supported Nestlé’s labour rights training for 150 fishery migrant workers in Ranong province. The Thai authorities are pleased to learn that Thailand’s strict law enforcement has contributed to significant traceability improvements along Nestlé’s supply chain, ensuring that Nestlé products are traceable to fishing vessels. The Thai Government concurs with Nestlé that enhanced traceability system is a vital step towards rooting out human rights abuses in the Thai seafood industry.

The ‘Demonstration Boat’ is a case in point for a viable public-private-civil society partnership (PPCP) to combat human trafficking and labour abuses in the Thai seafood supply chain. This will also be the world’s first demonstration boat to exhibit best practices in the protection of human rights of fishery workers. The first training session is scheduled to kick off in the second half of 2016. The project may later be extended to cover the regional fishing industry at the ASEAN level.

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