

Press release
on the Official Launching of the Project on
Combatting Unacceptable Forms of Work in the Thai Fishing and Seafood Industry
on Thursday 17 March 2016, 08.30 - 12.00 hrs.
at Chomphon Por Piboonsongkram Auditorium, 5th Floor
Ministry of Labour, Bangkok

Currently, labour shortage becomes a reality of major industries in Thailand, leading to influx of migrants from neighbouring countries, especially Myanmar, Lao PDR and Cambodia, to Thailand in search of economic opportunity. Accordingly, Thailand values the potentials and contribution of migrant workers to the country's economic development. The Royal Thai Government therefore attaches great importance to ensuring migrant workers protection of human rights and labour rights, as well as access to social protection and healthcare, in an equal and inclusive manner.

To step up such attempt and strengthen partnership among stakeholders involved, the Ministry of Labour of Thailand extends its cooperation with European Union (EU) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in launching a project on "Combatting Unacceptable Forms of Work in the Thai Fishing and Seafood Industry." The launching ceremony will be co-hosted by the executive and high-level representatives from the three parties, namely, General Sirichai Distakul, Minister of Labour, Mr. Jesus Miguel Sanz, Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the EU to Thailand, and Mr. Marizio Bussi, Director of ILO Country Office for Thailand, Cambodia, and Lao PDR. The ceremony will be held on 17 March 2016, 08.30-12.00 hrs. at Ministry of Labour.

The project will contribute to the prevention and reduction of forced labour, child labour and other unacceptable forms of work in the Thai fishing and seafood processing sector. This will be achieved by enhancing the effectiveness of labour inspection by strengthening governance, systems, capacities, cooperation and transparency. Application of laws will also be promoted through empowering workers to exercise their rights. Efforts to better regulate the industry and manage migration will reduce employers' reliance on unscrupulous labour recruiters and irregular migrants' vulnerability. Children of migrant workers or unaccompanied child migrants will be protected from labour exploitation.

Those vulnerable groups, including women, men, and children, will benefit from the project as they will be protected from exploitation and condition of forced labour and worst form of child labour in fishing and seafood processing sector. Government agencies involved, such as the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the Royal Thai Police, the Ministry of Interior, the Royal Thai Navy, the Ministry of Justice, the Department of Fisheries, and the Marine Department, will also benefit from the project through capacity building activities which will introduce Good Labour Practices concept and enhance their capability on effective law enforcement.

The Office of Permanent Secretary,
The Ministry of Labour.
March 2016



International Labour Organization
Organisation internationale du Travail
Organización Internacional del Trabajo



Press Release

NEW ILO PROJECT TO COMBAT UNACCEPTABLE FORMS OF WORK IN THE THAI FISHING AND SEAFOOD INDUSTRY

For immediate release: Thursday 17 March 2016 (ROAP/16/03)

BANGKOK – The International Labour Organization (ILO), in partnership with Thailand's Ministry of Labour and the Delegation of the European Union to Thailand, is launching a new project, "*Combatting Unacceptable Forms of Work in the Thai Fishing and Seafood Industry*", on 17 March 2016, in Bangkok.

The 42-month project is funded by the European Union (EU) and the ILO. It aims to address working conditions that deny fundamental principles and rights at work in the Thai fishing and seafood processing industry.

"We are eager to get started and work with all partners to transform an industry which today is associated with unacceptable forms of work – to an industry associated with social justice and decent work. The project is about tackling forced labour and child labour and going beyond. At its heart, is an emphasis on dignity – the essential feature of decent work," said Mr Maurizio Bussi, Director of the ILO Country Office for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic.

A range of mutually reinforcing methods will be utilised to tackle unacceptable forms of work, especially forced labour and child labour, and to reduce and prevent the exploitation of workers, many of whom are migrant and in certain cases exposed to trafficking risks. These include enhancing Thailand's legal and regulatory framework in line with international labour standards, strengthening effective law enforcement on land and at sea, improving compliance through voluntary private sector initiatives, working with buyers in Europe, North America and Oceania as well as empowering workers and increasing their access to support services. The issues of gender equality, good governance, private sector engagement and environment will cut across project strategies.

"We are committed to firmly supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, leaving no one behind. We are concerned that many victims of forced or child labour have no voice and no possibility to escape from extreme working conditions. We welcome the firm commitment of the Thai government to move ahead and address the issue with determination. The programme will help Thailand comply with International Labour Standards," said Ambassador Jesus Sanz, Head of the Delegation of the EU in Thailand.

"I believe that to solve these problems, success can only be achieved through cooperation. The launching ceremony, held at the Ministry of Labour, marks closer cooperation and constructive engagement between the Royal Thai Government, Thai workers' and employers' organizations, the private sector and civil society organizations, in working together to combat unacceptable forms of work in the Thai fishing and seafood industry," said General Sirichai Ditthakul, Minister of Labour, Thailand.

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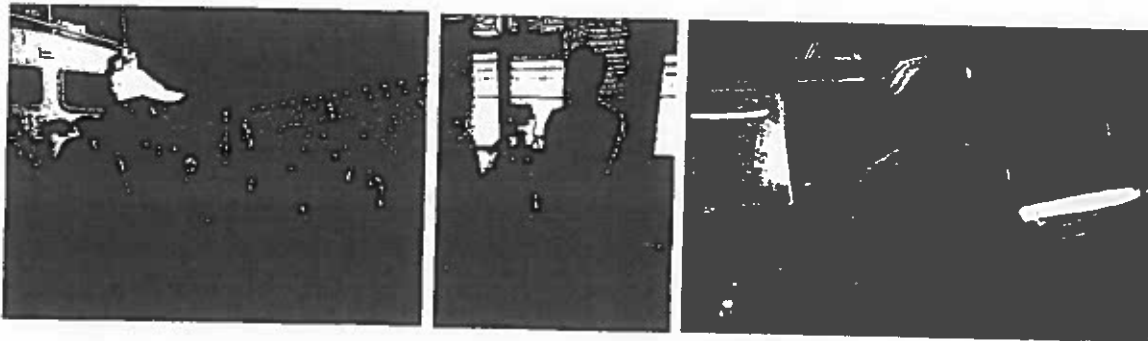
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COMBATTING UNACCEPTABLE FORMS OF WORK IN THE THAI FISHING AND SEAFOOD INDUSTRY

Project Fact Sheet



OVERVIEW

In recent years, a number of reports have triggered an increased awareness of the serious human and labour rights abuses committed in the Thai commercial fishing and seafood processing industries, particularly against men, women and children migrant workers. The Thai Government, industry, workers' organizations and civil society organizations have all stepped up efforts to respond to these abuses. The project will work closely with these partners and beyond to further contribute to the prevention and reduction of unacceptable forms of work in the Thai fishing and seafood processing sectors.

Objectives

The overall objective is to prevent and reduce forced labour, child labour and other unacceptable forms of work, and progressively eliminate the exploitation of workers, particularly migrant workers, in the Thai fishing and seafood processing sectors.

The four specific project objectives are:

- To strengthen the legal, policy and regulatory framework in the fishing and seafood sectors by raising labour standards and facilitating more legal migration into the seafood and fishing sectors.
- To enhance the capacity of Government officers, including the labour inspectorate, to more effectively identify and take action against human trafficking and other labour rights abuses in the fishing and seafood processing sectors.
- To improve compliance with the fundamental principles and rights at work (core labour standards) in the seafood and fishing industries through the implementation of the Good Labour Practices (GLP) Programme, an effective complaints mechanism with increased awareness and ownership across the supply chain.
- To enhance access to support services to workers and victims of labour abuses, including children, through engagement and empowerment of civil society organizations and trade unions.
- The issues of gender equality, good governance, private sector engagement and environment will cut across the four objectives of the project.

Expected Results

- A strengthened national legal and policy framework and improved social dialogue in the industry
- An improved knowledge base on conditions in the industry and on the effectiveness of different types of responses
- Increased number of labour inspections of vessels and subsequent orders observed by employers
- Enhanced access of workers to an effective conciliation and complaints mechanism, and timely and fair responses to those grievances
- Workers associations in the industry strengthened, and links strengthened with trade unions
- Effective voluntary compliance tools and processes developed by industry associations in collaboration with workers' organizations
- Increased number of workers withdrawn from forced labour and the worst forms of child labour
- Workers and children in the sector have greater access to a range of quality support services provided by NGOs, trade unions and government.
- Increased awareness about the conditions in the sector from buyers, retailers, and consumers

Implementation and Cooperation

The project is implemented by the ILO Country Office for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao PDR. The project started on 1 February 2016, and will last 42 months.

Activities will be carried out in cooperation with a number of Royal Thai Government Units including the Department of Labour Protection and Welfare and the Department of Employment in the Ministry of Labour, the Department of Fisheries in the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, and the Command Centre to Combat Illegal Fishing (CCCIF); trade unions, workers associations and civil society organizations; employers' organizations, industry associations and buyers and retailers groups.

Cooperation with a range of other actors and initiatives at the national, regional and global level will be leveraged to address unacceptable forms of work in the industry.



For more information

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