



ข่าวสารนิเทศ • Press Release

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Deputy Prime Minister led the Diplomatic Corps to Observe the Demolition of Unregistered Fishing Vessels and a Demonstration of Thailand's Traceability System

On 12 September 2018, General Chatchai Sarikulya, Deputy Prime Minister, led Ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps from the European Union Delegation, European Union member states, United States, and ASEAN Member States, a total of 10 countries, to observe the demolition of 9 unregistered fishing vessels in the Tha Chin River in Samut Sakhon Province, and subsequently visited a seafood processing plant to learn about the development of Thailand's traceability system which is compliant with international standards.

The Royal Thai Government has inspected shipwrecks stranded in rivers, canals, beaches, and islands in 22 coastal provinces, which has led to the demolition of shipwrecks that were not registered in the Thai vessel registration system. The purpose of the exercise was to rule out the possibility of misusing the shipwrecks, to accurately attain the size of the Thai fishing fleet, to clear any obstructions that could pose harm to vessel navigation, and to improve the scenery of rivers and beaches. Since August 2018, the Thai authorities have demolished 9 vessels in the provinces of Trad, Prachuab Khirikhan and Chanthaburi, and will pursue the demolition plan continuously in other coastal provinces.

The Command Center for Combatting Illegal Fishing (CCCIF), the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), and the Marine Department have conducted joint inspections resulting in 861 shipwrecks being located. Subject to Article 121 of the Navigation in Thai Waters Act B.E. 2456 (1913), the Marine Department posted notifications requesting that vessel owners report to the authorities within 30 days. If the owners present themselves in that time period, they are obliged to inform the date and time of the demolition to the Marine Department who will later dispatch officers to take photos of the demolition as evidence. Assets remaining from the demolition (such as wood or steel) are regarded as property of the owners. In the case that the owners fail to present themselves within the deadline, the Marine Department will coordinate with concerned authorities to conduct the demolition, with photos taken and reports made at the police station as a record. The assets from the scrapping will then be auctioned by the Marine Department, and the proceeds will be returned to the government.

In the case that the owners express their desire to demolish their own vessels, they can apply for a certificate from the Department of Fisheries and submit a demolition plan to the Marine Department. Once the plan is approved, the Marine Department and the Department of Fisheries will send officers to inspect and take photos of the demolition as a record. The owners will maintain ownership of

the assets left after the demolition. The above-mentioned process is in accordance with Article 54/9 of the Thai Vessels Act B.E. 2561 (2018).

The Deputy Prime Minister stated that Thailand is committed to promoting sustainable fisheries, based on three important principles, namely control of fishing fleets, proper fisheries labour management, and legal fishing, which are to be realised through amendments of legal frameworks and improvement of working processes for enhanced effectiveness. Regarding fleet management, Thailand was previously unable to clarify the number of fishing vessels, which contributed to the disproportionate fishing with regards to the quantity of marine resources. The Royal Thai Government has expedited its efforts to increase accuracy in maintaining the fleet size. As a result, on 16 August 2018, the Royal Thai Government was able to declare the directory of 10,743 legal fisheries-related vessels (White List). On 28 August, 2018, the Royal Thai Government also published a directory redefining 6,315 vessels which could not be located, the owners could not be traced, or were previously reported as sunk, damaged, or sold abroad without sufficient evidence, as permanently lost vessels, to ensure that these vessels will not be able to re-enter into the Thai vessels registration system or dock at any ports in Thailand. In doing so, the Royal Thai Government has successfully accounted for the entire fishing fleet for the first time in history.

Afterwards, the Deputy Prime Minister led the diplomatic corps to visit the Unicord Public Company Limited to witness the advancement of Thailand's traceability system, which renders the whole supply chain traceable, and ensures that Thai fisheries products will be strictly free from the IUU fishing. The system consists of 2 parts: one for catches from Thai fishing vessels and the other for catches imported from abroad.

As for the catches from Thai fishing vessels, it is required that the fishing vessels record their actual fishing activities in the logbooks, including information on species and quantities of the catches, fishing areas, and fishing gear. At the port, the species and the quantities of the offloaded catches will be recorded by the port. Thereafter, the seller and the buyer must also fill in the same information in the Marine Catch Purchasing Document (MCPD), thus keeping a record of the entire supply chain.

As for the imported catches, Thailand has taken measures to prevent the entry of IUU catches from all channels; at port, on land, and by air. The Department of Fisheries will examine the catches and related documents such as logbooks, catch certificates, fishing licenses, as well as the vessel's navigation routes and behaviours. If the information is verifiable, the Department will grant permission to the importer by issuing the Import Movement Document (IMD) which will specify the source of the catches, species and quantity as well as the purchaser's name. Moreover, the Department has also been conducting random inspections at tuna processing plants during night time operations to prevent any illegal catch infiltration. So far, 50 inspections in 20 plants have been carried out.

Furthermore, the Department of Fisheries has upgraded the IT database system for both schemes, namely the Thai-flagged Catch Certification System (TF) and the PSM-linked and Processing Statement System (PPS), in order to enable quick access to information on the entire physical flow, starting from offloading to

the distribution, the processing, the issuance of catch certificates or the processing statements, up to the exportation of the fisheries products. An automatic cross-checking function for every stage of the process has also been added in to increase the speed and effectiveness of management.

The members of the diplomatic corps expressed their admiration for Thailand's advanced measures for both the fleet management and the traceability system. This reflects the remarkable progress Thailand has undergone in the fight against IUU fishing. The measures implemented are compliant with international standards, have increased transparency and accountability, as well as demonstrate Thailand's commitment as a responsible partner of the international ocean governance. All of these are the outcome of the Royal Thai Government's unwavering commitment to tackling this issue over the past three years.

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14 September 2018