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Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thai Frozen Food Association Discuss Ways to Address Human Trafficking

Following a meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Thai Frozen Food Association to discuss operations to solve labour abuse, child labour and human trafficking problems, the Ministry of Labour asserts it has a clear policy to seriously and intensively curb the problems.

ML Puntrik Smiti, Deputy Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Labour, said in a joint press conference with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Thai Frozen Food Association about progress of Thailand's operations to solve labour abuse, child labour and human trafficking problems that the Ministry of Labour has had clear policy to address forced labour problems since 1969. The Thai laws prohibit people aged less than 15 year to work and inspections to ensure compliance of the laws have been intensive. It is important to legalize all illegal migrant workers so they receive legal protections. The ministry has also allowed illegal migrant workers to register with the ministry twice a year. It also supports their employers to give them an employment contract. The ministry also has ministerial regulations on wages, holidays and work safety to take care fishery workers, whose work conditions differ from workers in other fields. It is also amending ministerial regulations to ensure better protection to the workers.

The press conference was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs's Headquarters in Bangkok and was attended by Thai and foreign journalists. Thailand was downgraded to Tier 3 Watch List, the lowest standing, in the US Trafficking In Persons (TIP) Report 2014.

ML Puntrik said Thailand plans to ask the US to withdraw four of the five Thai products from the list of products it believes to have been produced by child labour. The products are sugarcane, fish, shrimp and garment. Thailand plans to clarify the US about protection measures for workers in production process of these products as well as their production chains.

Mr Pot Aramwattananont, President of the Thai Frozen Food Association, said the National Council for Peace and Order's clear labour policy helps boost the private's sector confidence. They believe the situations will continue to improve since foreign countries see Thailand is seriously working to solve problems of informal workers. He confirmed that no orders have been cancelled by US or European firms.