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Permanent Secretary for Labour, Minister Counsellor, US House Representatives Discuss Ways to Solve Human Trafficking in Thailand

Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Labour met with Thai Minister Counsellor and U.S. House representatives to discuss ways to remove Thailand from 'Tier 2' watchlist of the Trafficking in Person Report (TIP Report). He said the ministry is improving ministerial regulations to meet international standard and pointed out that fishing crews should be allowed to get onshore after a certain period of work on a fishing vessel and to phone their family members while on a vessel. Authorities were also instructed to work with marine police and naval officers to ensure protection of migrant workers.

Mr. Somkiat Chayasriwong, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Labour, said after receiving Mr. Saroj Thanasanti, Minister Counsellor at the Royal Thai Embassy in Washington, and U.S. House representatives, who paid a courtesy call on him to discuss human trafficking issues including protection measures and ways for migrant works to make complains while they are on fishing a vessel, that Pol. Capt. Chalerm Ubamrung, Minister of Labour, attaches importance to solving human trafficking, helping Thailand remove from the 'Tier 2' watchlist within six months, preventing drug problems in workplaces through the drug-free workplaces project and promoting labour relations between employers and employees. The labour minister has held talks with fishery operators, worked with the Royal Thai Police in taking care of and inspecting protection of migrant workers on fishing vessels. On August 17, Ministry of Labour was to invite police officers and fishery operators for another round of discussion.

Mr. Somkiat said the problem arose due to labour shortages. Migrant workers are needed to fill in the shortages and there are some illegal ones working in the industry. Ministry of Labour has carried operations to legalise these migrant workers. It is working to improve the ministerial regulation to meet international standard. The regulation will require fishery workers to have an employment contract. They will also be given a rest period onshore after a certain period of work on a fishing vessel and allowed to phone home while on a fishing vessel. Ministry of Labour has agreed with marine police and naval officials to strictly inspect protection for migrant workers.