



Annex 1

Background information

National Seminar

Research findings on Child Labour and WFCL in 5 provinces & follow up action

Organized by Ministry of Labour in Collaboration with International Labour

Organization (ILO)

6-7 July 2006

Background and Justification:

Thailand has taken concerted action to combat child labour since the early 1990s. Over the past decade, progress has been made in putting in place a number of policy and institutional mechanisms to combat child labour and the worst forms. Progress made includes raising the minimum age for admission to employment to 15 years, revising legislation related to combating prostitution, promoting nine-year basic education, devising policy and programmes to combat trafficking of children (within Thailand and across the border).

Despite substantial progress in recent years, the child labour problem still persists. The Ministry of Labour's Department of Labour Protection and Welfare (DLPW) conducted an analysis on the situation of working children aged 15-17 who are legally employed in registered establishments in 2005. There are approximately 300,000 children in this group (60% male and 40% female). This data is based on its labour force survey of July-September 2004. Two major problems were identified: (a) namely there was a serious violation of the minimum wage (50% received lower wages than the legal daily minimum wage), and (b) long working hours (more than 70% of the children work more than 40 hours per week). The report recommends the strengthening of law enforcement mechanisms; raising awareness among employers; and providing basic social services for working children, including education and vocational training. In addition, Thailand continues to face challenges in combating some of the worst forms of child labour. Children who are victims of trafficking, under-age non-Thai working children, children used in begging, and children in domestic labour are considered priorities for action along with child labour in the chemical, furniture manufacturing and fishery industries; and in the agricultural sector. Vulnerable groups of children at risk of child labour have been identified, comprising children of ethnic minorities, migrant children, children in poverty, runaways, school drop-outs, children from broken homes, and children without birth certificates or other official identification papers.

Since Thailand ratified the ILO convention No. 182 in 2001, the government has been preparing for implementation of its commitment. The Ministry of Labour has drafted a national plan of action on the worst forms of child labour (NPA WFCL) in consultation with key stake holders from other Ministries, workers and employers organization, civil society and academic institutions. The proposed strategies include:

- Improving child labour data systems and conducting more study and research especially in the informal sector;
- Extending the labour protection law to cover all workers in the informal sector;
- Accelerating effective enforcement of Labour Protection Act;
- Awareness raising about child labour and disseminating information about child rights;
- Fostering networking among Government agencies, workers and employers organizations, academic institutions, civil society and international organizations to combat child labour;
- Mobilizing the participation of community organizations;
- Facilitating vocational training and apprenticeship for children above the legal minimum age; and
- Establishing child friendly employers' network, enhancing corporate social responsibility.

Following the preparation of a draft NPA WFCL, ILO-IPEC proposed a research on selected worst forms of child labour in order to fill in the knowledge gap identified in the draft NPA WFCL. The MOL endorsed the research work plan in October 2004 and appointed its staff to provide necessary advisory support. The workshop to discuss the research plan was organized by Thammasat University in May 2005 with the participation of MOL's representatives. Following this workshop, ILO-IPEC provided technical assistance to 5 research institutes to conduct researches in 6 provinces during the period October 2005-May 2006), namely:

- Tak, covering child labour in agriculture – by Chiang Mai University
- Chiang Rai, covering child labour in Karaoke, child domestic labour and child begging – by Chiang Rai Rajabhat University
- Samut Sakhon, covering child domestic labour, child labour in fishing sector - by Chulalongkorn University
- Udorn Thani, covering child labour in agriculture – by Khon Khaen University
- Songkhla and Pattani, covering child labour in fishing sector – by Prince of Songkhla University

The National Committee on ILO C.182 was appointed by the Cabinet on February 20, 2006. The Committee, chaired by Minister of Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, has the following core duties:

1. Considering the NPA on WFCL
2. Providing policy recommendations in accordance to ILO C.182
3. Oversight, advise and monitor implementation of the NPA
4. Promote research work in support of the elimination of WFCL
5. Coordinate with concerned agencies both in and outside of the country to eliminate WFCL

6. Consider directions to report on the implementation of C.182 obligations
7. Appoint sub-committees or working groups as deemed appropriate
8. Perform other related appropriate duties

Objectives

The main objectives of the seminar:

- Discuss the researching findings on WFCL in 5 provinces and propose follow up action. The follow up action will aim at preventing child labour and its worst forms, protecting working children and providing options to those withdrawn from the worst forms of child labour
- Mobilize the participation of key agencies in action to combat child labour and its worst forms at provincial and national level

Outcome of the seminar

- Key areas of interventions at provincial and national level proposed, including mechanism for coordination at provincial and national level

Participants

- 50 Representatives of National Committee on WFCL, Line Ministries, Workers and Employers Organization, academic institutions, NGOs at Central level
- 30 Representatives of key agencies from 6 provinces & research institutes (Tak, Chiang Rai, Samut Sakhon, Udorn Thani, Songkhla and Pattani)