

Department of Fisheries' Conference with Seafood Industry Representatives

Over 300 seafood industry representatives from export factories, primary processing industry and fishing fleet in Thailand gathered to discuss ways to improve labour rights in Samut Sakhon on 12 November 2012. Also present were Central and Provincial Government officials from labour, fisheries, special police forces responsible for investigation of trafficking cases and the ILO.

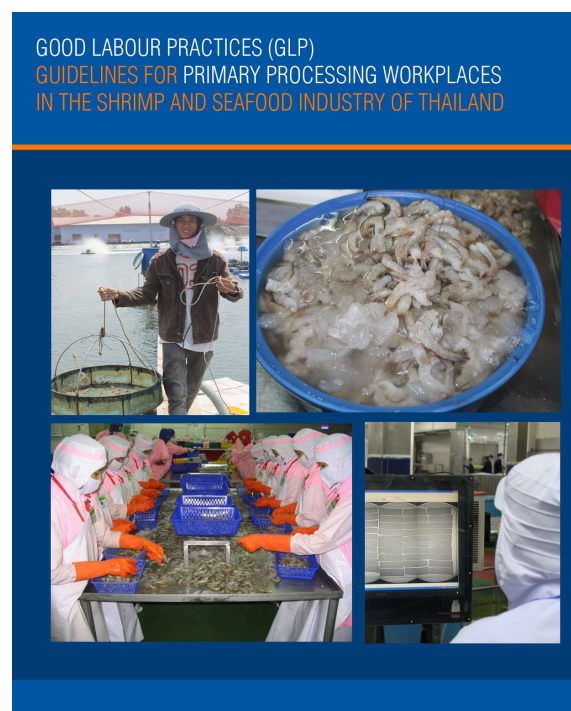
The meeting was presided over by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture Mr. Siriwat Kajornprasart senior officials from the Department of Fisheries (DOF) and the Deputy Governor of Samut Sakhon Province. They confirmed their support and commitment to the recent initiatives to address labour violation in the industry and to see through real changes in improving working conditions in this sector.

As part of the ceremony, a vow to support labour rights in the industry was made by key representatives of the fishing sector in Thailand represented by Thai Food Processors' Association (TFPA) Thai Frozen Foods Association TFFA, National Fisheries Association of Thailand (NFAT) and peeling shed operators. They agreed on the importance of the role the industry plays in the Thai economy, acknowledged the positive leadership role that the industry must play in ensuring that labour rights are met and pledged to work towards eradication of human trafficking.

The ILO through its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) was part of a panel discussion on measures that must be taken to establish adequate protection for workers and to address child labour and forced labour. The conference was also used as a soft launch for the Good Labour Practices (GLP) Guidelines developed by ILO-IPEC and the Department of Labour Protection and Welfare (DLPW) and DOF. The Guideline serves as the industry's benchmark aimed at increasing awareness on labour laws and standards and good practices.

The GLP Guidelines will be in the future supported by a GLP training programme and similar guidelines at the farm level. Hearings and provincial meetings to improve the guidelines are envisioned in early 2013 with the authorities, seafood businesses, trade unions and other workers organizations and NGOs.

Using the seminar as a launching pad, TFFA and TFPA also launched a workers' Labour Center helpline (number 0908930766) that is intended to advice workers on labour laws and standards and on working conditions, as well as help workers in need of assistance. A Samut Sakhon based NGO, Labour Protection Network (LPN) foundation supported by ILO-IPEC, will work together with the industry to follow up on reported cases. Since many of the migrant workers are from Myanmar and Cambodia, multi-lingual services on the help line will be provided.



The ILO-IPEC project (2010-2014) aims to create a shrimp and seafood processing industry that is free of child labour and offers decent working conditions and opportunities to all workers, including migrant workers who contribute to the industry wellbeing and to the economic development of Thailand. Special attention is given to the situation of children and adolescents at risk of entering or/and involved in hazardous child labour. The ILO-IPEC programme is financed by the US Department of Labour.