

**Statement of General Chatchai Sarikulya, Deputy Prime Minister of  
Thailand,  
at the Press Conference on Thailand's Achievement in Combating the  
Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing  
8 January 2019**

**Commissioner Vella,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

- This morning, I had a discussion with His Excellency Commissioner Vella on various issues related to marine sustainability. In light of the warm and friendly meeting, our discussion reflected the cordial relations between Thailand and the European Union and close collaboration in promoting sustainable fisheries during the past 3 years.

- I am pleased to announce that, today, Thailand has successfully elevated our commercial fisheries sector both within Thai waters and international waters to a higher level that is in line with international standards, and we are ready to partner with the European Union in promoting sustainable fisheries at both national and regional levels.

- The Royal Thai Government has strong determination and evident political will to eradicate IUU fishing, recognizing the necessity to ensure the sustainability of marine resources for the next generations, not only in Thailand but the world as a whole. As a result, the fight against the IUU fishing has been set as Thailand's national agenda. I have been appointed by the Prime Minister to be in charge of supervising this matter closely, and reporting to him on a weekly basis.

- I am confident that Thailand has successfully laid a strong foundation for the prevention of IUU fishing, ranging from legal framework, control measures, and law enforcement, in which I consider as a joint success of Thailand and the European Union. I wish to take this opportunity to share our experiences on this matter to all members of the press here as follows:

- Regarding legal frameworks, Thailand has amended laws governing both fishing activities and fishing fleet, as well as issued numerous implementing regulations to ensure effective enforcement of the laws, and to leave no legal loopholes that could allow illegal vessels to return to the system. It can be said that Thailand possesses one of the world's most modern and forceful fisheries laws.

- In fisheries management, the Royal Thai Government is now able to curb the overfishing by exercising control over fishing gear, fishing days, and issuance of fishing licenses in accordance with the quantity of marine resources that can be caught on a sustainable basis. This has resulted in restoring the abundance fishes in the seas as confirmed by Thai fishermen.

- As for fleet management, Thailand has successfully reduced the size of the fishing fleet by half to 10,565 commercial fishing vessels with domestic fishing licenses. We are running the system to control and monitor the appropriate size of the fishing fleet via the development of the linkage system—connecting data among the Department of Fisheries, the Marine Department, and law enforcement agencies to ensure the effective management of the fishing fleet.

- In terms of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), the Government has allocated more than 2.5 million Euros (95 million Thai Baht), and over 4,000 personnel to set the system under the Command Center for Combating Illegal Fishing (CCCIF), and establish Thailand's Fisheries Monitoring Center (FMC) which is one of the most advanced centers in the region. The Center has also utilized technology, such as the vessel monitoring system (VMS), and linked with relevant agencies such as the Port-in Port-out Control Centers (PIPO). As for the foreign vessels, Thailand strictly abides by the Port State Measures Agreement (PMSA), which enabled Thailand to successfully seize illegal vessels and restrict the import of illegal marine resources. This has positioned Thailand at the forefront of the implementation of such Agreement and as a good example for other countries to follow suit.

- Concerning traceability, Thailand has developed the traceability system to ensure that no illegally caught fisheries products enters Thailand's supply chain. We utilize a well-refined electronic verification process which is recognized as a very efficient system. This undertaking will continue as we are moving towards achieving the IUU-free Thailand to gain the consumers' confidence that marine animals imported to or exported from Thailand are not derived from IUU fishing.

- With regard to law enforcement, Thailand has prosecuted cases of illegal vessels with the hefty fines of over 12 million Euros (458 million Thai Baht), which in turn acts as an effective deterrence against future crimes. The cooperation among relevant law enforcement agencies has also been strengthened to expedite the legal process of both criminal cases and administrative sanctions within the set timeframe.

- With all this tangible progress, the European Union has confirmed that at present Thailand is running the most vigorous anti-IUU system in the region which could be referred to as a model for the region.

Distinguished guests,

- Currently, the Royal Thai Government is implementing our policies to promote the marine sustainability at all levels. This is one of our priorities during Thailand's ASEAN chairmanship this year. The marine sustainability is not limited to only sustainable fisheries, but also the protection of marine environment, especially from marine debris which is a very critical issue in Asia. I am of the view that Thailand and the European Union can enhance our partnership to a broader ground, not only on combating the IUU fishing, but also

incorporating the marine sustainability in all dimensions in a way that would meet the mutual interests of both regions.

- Before I finish my statement, I am well aware that there is one more issue in which the Government's effort has been closely monitored. That is how Thailand has addressed the labour issues in the fisheries sector. I wish to emphasize that the Royal Thai Government has put much effort towards labour issues in parallel with tackling the illegal fishing. Various measures have been taken to enforce the protection of labour in the fisheries sector, thus resulting in its much improved situation compared to four years ago, as reflected in the relevant reports of the ILO. Moreover, the Royal Thai Government has portrayed its leadership for being the first country in Asia to ratify the Protocol to the ILO Convention No. 29 on Forced Labour (P29) on 4 June 2018, and will also be the first Asian country to ratify the ILO Convention No. 188 on Working in Fishing (C188) in late January this year. I wish to assure you that the Royal Thai Government will do its utmost to protect those working on board fishing vessels in order to promote ethical fisheries, which is also in line with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

- Finally, I wish to reiterate that Thailand has reformed our fisheries sector in a comprehensive manner. We have overcome all those challenges of the past. We can proudly say that Thailand, as the world's fourth largest seafood producer and exporter, is proud to be part of the international ocean governance and ready to share the international community's responsibility in protecting marine resources and promoting fishing in accordance with internationally accepted principles. Let me reassure you that the fisheries products from Thailand will be from legal fishing, in support of the sustainability of environment and marine resources, as well as from the work of labourers who are protected according to human rights principles. Ultimately, the Royal Thai Government will work with the European Union to support marine sustainability with a view to achieving Goal 14 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to mutually use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development and more.

- Thank you.

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