

**Statement of General Chatchai Sarikulya, Deputy Prime Minister of
Thailand, to importers of seafood products on Thailand's achievement in
combating the illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing
9 January 2019**

Ladies and gentlemen,

- It is my great honour to be here in Brussels to share with you the story of Thailand's success in combating the illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. On behalf of the Royal Thai Government, I would like to express my appreciation for your confidence in Thailand and our fisheries products, especially when the country was undertaking steps to fight against the IUU fishing. Your generous support, especially through the Seafood Task Force, in forms of financial assistance, experts and recommendations, has led to the achievement of Thailand's fisheries sector reform today.
- Considering the complexity of the IUU fishing that usually takes at least 10 years to resolve, the Royal Thai Government, together with all other related sectors, had demonstrated a strong commitment, and thus succeeded in fighting against IUU fishing in a timely manner.
- Today, let me reassure you that Thailand has laid a complete foundation in preventing the IUU fishing with a strong determination towards sustainable fisheries. I would also like to take this opportunity to share with you our experiences in this matter as follows:
- **The legal framework** is an important foundation underpinning the reform of Thailand's fisheries to meet the international standard. The Royal Ordinance on Fisheries B.E. 2558 (2015) and the Royal Ordinance on Thai Vessels B.E. 2561 (2019) are in line both with the relevant United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization's conventions and agreements aiming to sustainable and responsible fisheries.
- **Fisheries and fleet management:** To address your concerns whether Thai fisheries are still associated with overfishing; whether the Thai authorities are able to exercise control over the vessels effectively; and whether we have a linkage system put in place to connect data from all the related agencies, I would like to reiterate you that Thailand has now overcome those issues. Today, the status of Thailand's marine resources has been improved both in quantity and quality. The government also took important actions to ensure a fair allocation of marine resources for both local and commercial fisheries sectors. Moreover, Thailand places the importance on the sustainable fisheries through the implementation of the Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) in various areas and various scope of marine resources. The government has also taken crucial steps to empower the fishing communities as well as to support fisheries that meets the

“Blue Band Standard”, which is developed to ensure the sustainable fisheries of local fishermen, which is an important foundation for the future of Thai fisheries.

- **Monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS):** it is one of the elements that demonstrates the degree to which the effectiveness in the fight against the IUU fishing has been achieved. I can assure you that today Thailand has developed effective MCS system, in controlling Thai and foreign vessels, on the basis of relevant international laws and the PSMA’s measures, under the framework of the Fisheries Monitoring Center (FMC), of which its operation is linked with all Port-in Port-out Control Centers (PIPO) in 22 coastal provinces of Thailand and with all fish inspection offices.
- **Traceability:** it is the most significant component for guaranteeing that Thailand’s fisheries products are free from IUU fishing. I can assure you with confidence that our present traceability system can prevent the entry of illegal catch and fisheries products into our supply chain, from all points of entry. Thailand commits to continue developing our traceability system and moving towards the IUU-free Thailand, thus assuring all consumers that fishes imported to or exported from Thailand will not stem from the IUU fishing.
- **Labour** is another issue which is of your concern. I wish to inform you that in parallel with addressing the IUU issues, the efforts have also been made in resolving the issues of the labour in the fisheries sector in order to ensure that the labour practice in the fisheries sector and related industries is subject to humanitarian principles and accountability. Thanks to our efforts, the ratification of the ILO Convention on Working in Fishing (C 188) is now possible because the important obligations imposed by the Convention have already been anchored at the core of all our works. It is also expected that Thailand can deposit the ratification to the Convention within this year.
- The accomplishment today would not have been made without the support from all of you who are present here. If you **“had stopped buying”** our products during our difficult times, our success would not have been gained within such a short period. It could therefore be said that the success today belongs to **“all of us”**.
- On behalf of the Royal Thai Government, I wish to reassure you that **“Thailand will not stop just now”** because the Government’s ultimate goal is to promote **“marine sustainability”** in all levels. On the way forward, Thailand will place high importance on fostering international cooperation to enhance network of partnerships towards SDGs by sharing our experiences and strengthening cooperative mechanisms. The marine sustainability in this regard does not refer to only sustainable fisheries, but

also the protection of marine environment, especially the marine debris which is currently the world's critical challenge.

- **Finally**, I wish to reiterate that today Thailand has taken a comprehensive reform of our fisheries sector that it now totally differs from the past. Thailand has overcome the challenges and reached the point where we can proudly say that Thailand as the world's fourth largest seafood producer and exporter has been part of the international ocean governance in protecting marine resources and conducting responsible fisheries. Let me reassure you that the fisheries products from Thailand will stem from legal fishing, in support of the sustainability of environment and marine resources, as well as from the work of labourers who are entitled to protection according to human rights principles. The Royal Thai Government will remain committed to working with all of you and all the countries to eradicate the IUU fishing and human trafficking in fisheries sector, and to lead the fisheries of Thailand and the world towards sustainability with a view to achieving the food security for the benefits of the global population.
