

PRESS RELEASE

ILO supports new centres for Cambodian fishery workers and their children in Pattani

Pattani (ILO News) - 12 June 2018 - The EU-funded ILO Ship to Shore Rights Project officially opened the Stella Maris Seafarer's Centre and the Migrant Children Learning Centre in Pattani. This year, the official opening of this new centre for fishers jointly commemorates the World Day Against Child Labour and the World Day for Safety and Health at Work (SafeDay) to put a spotlight on the need to end child labour and improve safety and health of young workers.



Operational in early 2017, the Seafarer's Pattani Centre joins two other already established centres funded under the Project in Rayong and Chonburi. Over the last year, more than 7,000 workers have connected with the three Centres to receive access to health services, to seek legal advice, and to learn about their rights and responsibilities as migrant workers and fishers under Thai law.

The addition of the new Migrant Children Learning Centre mainly aims to serve over 80 Cambodian migrant children mostly aged 5 - 13 years living near the Pattani fishing port to improve learning and to keep them safe from potential workplace hazards. Parents of the children are part of the leadership of the Centre, and will support it with partial school fees and administrative help.

According to 2014 data of Ministry of Interior, it is roughly estimated that there are more than 400,000 migrant and undocumented children under 18 years old in Thailand. The 2017 Baseline Research from the Ship to Shore Rights Project shows significant progress in working conditions in the Thai fishing and seafood industry with 99 percent overall compliance to minimum working age at 18 years old. However, 19 per cent of all fishery and seafood workers had a work injury requiring medical attention – 27 per cent for fishers and 13 per cent in seafood processing. The ILO Ship to Shore Rights Project in collaboration with our partners aims to provide workers with knowledge on occupational health and safety in the fishing sector.

The opening ceremony brought together provincial government, employers and workers representatives, and civil society organizations to commit to work together against child labour and to improve the health and safety of workers. Educational briefings and fun games for children on staying safe around the fishing port were organised.



Anand Borvornavalak, Inspector-General, Department of Labour Protection and Welfare, Ministry of Labour reiterated the Ministry's "strong commitment to end child labour and all forms of labour violations in fishing and related industries. The set-up of this Centre is aligned with our aim to ensure that Thais and migrant workers are treated fairly and their labour rights are protected."

Luisa Ragher, Deputy Head of the European Union Delegation stated that "this initiative is commendable; it is the concrete translation of the principles discussed during the EU-Thailand labour dialogue launched in Brussels on 17th May 2018. The EU and Thailand cooperates to guarantee decent working and living conditions to all workers, including their families and children, and safe migration, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Decent Work Agenda."

Apinya Tajit, Deputy Director of Stella Maris reaffirmed the organization's commitment as a worldwide Catholic mission to "provide humanitarian assistance and welfare services to fishing workers and their families and children, especially those in distress and in need of help without discrimination based on nationality, religion, language, and skin color and respecting their religion and beliefs through field activities."





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Supavadee Chotikajan, National Project Coordinator, ILO Country Office for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao PDR said: “ILO works on the basis of tripartism dialogue bringing together government, employer’s and worker’s organizations, trade unions, and civil society organizations which is so important to improve conditions and to make Thai seafood stronger. We trust that the new Learning Centre will be a safe learning place for children and empower migrant parents to collectively manage the Centre for future sustainability.”

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The EU-funded **Ship to Shore Rights Project** aims to prevent and reduce forced labour, child labour and other unacceptable forms of work, and progressively eliminate the exploitation of workers, particularly migrant workers, in the Thai fishing and seafood processing sectors by cooperating with the Ministry of Labour, other government agencies, and social partners.

This year, the World Day for Safety and Health at Work (SafeDay) and the World Day Against Child Labour (WDACL) are coming together in a joint campaign to improve the safety and health of young workers and end child labour. Every year 12 June marks the annual World Day Against Child Labour first launched in 2002 aiming to raise awareness to prevent child labour in any of its forms. Every year 28 April marks the World Day for Safety and Health at Work to promote occupational safety and health.

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