

Thai Tuna Industry Association STATEMENT Towards the Downgrading of Thailand to Tier 3 by the USA

1 July 2014

The downgrading of Thailand to Tier 3 by the USA in their annual Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP), while disappointing, is accepted as a challenge to the Thai Tuna Industry Association (TTIA) members to further improve areas in the seafood sector that are not in compliance.

It should be noted that the USA government has stated the propose of the downgrade is not meant to be punitive and does not advise or discourage USA companies from doing business with Thailand in respect to the TIP process.

TTIA wish to advise they regard any form of human trafficking and slavery as completely unacceptable and preventable. All members of TTIA are required to have thorough and comprehensive third party audits of their processing facilities and supply chain to ensure full compliance with local and international laws and regulations regarding social and ethical standards.

The members of TTIA remain committed to providing a safe and respectful workplace for all employees, take any allegations of illegal activities in the seafood sector seriously and will work with Local Government and International Organizations as well as responsible NGOs to ensure full compliance of workers' rights.

To this effect, TTIA has been collaborating with Government, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other responsible NGOs on matters of Ethical Standards as follows:

1. **Ethical Code of Conduct:** to be accepted as a member of the TTIA, the applicant is required to declare, in writing, intention to comply with the Ethical Code of Conduct in accordance to Thai labour law. Please refer to **APPENDIX**
2. **Collaboration with Government and the International Labour Organization on Ethical Standards:** TTIA collaborates with the ILO, Department of Fisheries and Department of Labour Protection and Welfare to organize Good Labour Practice (GLP) trainings for tuna processing facilities. The courses were developed on principles of sustainability and are offered on a voluntary basis with self-assessments. To date, all 17 members of the TTIA have held GLP trainings.

3. **Collaboration with Responsible NGOs: TTIA recognizes the good work NGO's are doing and that there is still room for Industry to improve.** TTIA works closely with NGOs to receive and process labour complaints for investigation in any issues that may arise.

3.1 Collaboration with the National Fisheries Institute (NFI): TTIA signed an MOU on 28th March 2014 with the US-based NFI that all tuna export to the United States of America are produced in accordance with the NFI Ethical Standards. Currently, most of the Thai tuna exporters have already complied with the three NFI Ethical Standards which are:

- *Ethical Trading Initiative Base Code (ETI)*
- *Business Social Compliance Initiative Code of Conduct (BSCI)*
- *Safe Quality Food Ethical Sourcing Code (SQF)*

3.2 Collaboration with labour NGOs such as the Migrant Worker Rights Network (MWRN) and Labour Rights Promotion Network Foundation (LPN).



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Migrant Worker Rights Network (M.W.R.N)



3.3 Collaboration with Thai Fishery Producers Coalition (TFPC): TTIA is a founding member of the TFPC with the mission to support and promote good labour practices, prevent and eradicate child labour, forced labour and human trafficking.

Thai Tuna Industry Association

E-mail : ttia@thaituna.org

Tel: +662 661 8992-3, Fax: +662 661 8994

Ethical Labour Practice Code of Conduct on Workers, by TTIA

1. Child Labour

No workers under age of 18 years old is engaged or employed in the processing plants. Upon recruiting, all applicants shall provide a government-issued passport, Identity card and/or work permit for verifying age and legality to work respectively.

2. Forced and Compulsory Labour

Workers are not required to pay deposits or recruitment fee to the company. The company shall not lodge passport, Identity card and/or work permit belonging to the workers. The company shall not withhold any part of workers' salary and benefits.

3. Health and Safety

Occupational health and safety of workers shall be of the utmost concern for the company. At minimum, all legal requirements of related laws must be fulfilled. They include to the provision of necessary personal protective equipment at the employer's expenses, first aid treatment, and assistance for follow-up medical treatment.

4. Freedom of Association and Right to Collective Bargaining

As permitted by Thai law, the company shall respect the rights of workers for freedom of association and collective bargaining.

5. Discrimination

The company shall not allow any behavior indicating harassment, discrimination or bullying. Education and training on the fundamental of human rights shall be conducted for all personnel concerning the supervision of workers and security practice. The company shall have in place the mechanism and grievance handling to ensure fair treatment of workers.

6. Disciplinary Practices

The company shall not engage in or tolerate the use of corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion, or verbal abuse of workers. Deductions from wages as a disciplinary measure are not allowed.

7. Remuneration

The minimum daily wage shall be fully paid according to Thai law to every workers. Overtime work shall be reimbursed at a premium rate and paid leave shall be granted as defined by Thai Law.

8. Welfare and Benefit

Social security payments are contributed by both workers and company – in accordance with Thai Labour Law – which ensure all workers are eligible for national health care coverage. The company shall register every workers to this scheme from the first day of employment. For the period where the national health care coverage is not yet in effect, the company shall provide adequate medical treatment and expenses to assist any work-related injuries and illnesses.

Source: All text concluded from the meeting of tuna processors group dated 29 April 2013.