

Royal Thai Government Ministries Launch New Guidelines in Responding to Human Trafficking for Labour Exploitation

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ILO Bangkok: The Royal Thai Government has today taken an important step forward in adopting a set of Guidelines that will help the authorities better respond to cases of trafficking for labour exploitation in the Kingdom.

The adoption of *Operational Guidelines on Prevention, Suppression, Assistance and Protection of Trafficked Persons for Labour Purposes* is the result of a joint initiative of the Ministry of Labour (MOL) and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS). The International Labour Office, via its Mekong Sub-regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women, provided technical support.

"It is very encouraging to see that these two important Ministries of the Royal Thai Government dedicate themselves to work together to improve the ways in which victims of trafficking for labour exploitation are treated – in a coordinated fashion – and regardless of whether those victims are Thai or non-Thai," said Mr. Bill Salter, the ILO's Sub-regional Director for East Asia.

In particular, the Guidelines are designed as an instructive tool for the MOL to more clearly define its role in responding to cases of labour trafficking involving migrant workers. The Guidelines are also consistent with the new Thai law on trafficking which, amongst other things, significantly broadens the protections afforded to victims of trafficking in Thailand. The new law is scheduled to enter into force on 5 June 2008.

"Given the recent tragic deaths of 54 migrant workers from Myanmar in southern Thailand, the authorities at both local and national levels need to have clearly defined their roles and responsibilities in responding to such cases – and identifying victims in need of assistance. I would urge both Ministries to implement these guidelines without delay," Mr. Salter said.

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