

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Sek Wannamethee,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand
to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva,
at the Opening of the 2nd session of Team of Specialists on Sustainable Fisheries,
on 31 January 2019, at the Palais des Nations**

Madam Executive Secretary of the UNECE,
Distinguished delegates,

1. It is an honour and pleasure to be here with you today among specialists working together to end overfishing and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU). The issue of sustainable fisheries is at the heart of SDG 14 and intrinsically linked to the livelihoods of people across the globe. Thus, it is in our mutual interest to preserve and effectively manage our fish resources.
2. International cooperation on sustainable fisheries requires a common understanding of the data available on vessels, stocks and catches in order to facilitate the exchange of such information between stakeholders. This is why we attach great importance to the implementation of the Fisheries Language for Universal Exchange (UN/FLUX) and my colleague from the Digital Government Development Agency will elaborate further on this matter in his presentation later today.
3. Since 2015, Thailand has embarked on the arduous task of overhauling the fisheries sector with a view to achieving a sustainable and responsible fisheries and seafood industry, **utilising advances in technology to replace the paper-based system with an electronic one**. All Thai flagged commercial vessels operating in Thai waters must now obtain **a new E-license**. This enables all relevant Thai agencies to **integrate and share data seamlessly** allowing them to monitor, control and inspect all commercial vessels with efficiency. Moreover, their databases are linked through **Business Intelligence system**. Stringent measures are now in place to control the operations of shipyards and ports to ensure that there is no presence of illegal vessels in the fishing fleet.

4. Through effective control of the vessel lifecycle, Thailand has been able to publicise **the legal vessels directory** or the white list, the watch list, and the permanently lost vessels list which can be accessed by the general public.
5. Furthermore, Thailand now possesses **the best state-of-the-art Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) system in the region** which operates harmoniously with the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA).
6. Thailand has also implemented a reliable tailor-made **electronic traceability system covering the value chain for Thai flagged vessels** to ensure that no illegal catch or fisheries product enters Thailand's supply chain.
7. Regarding the control measures for Thai vessels, Thailand has upgraded the **Fisheries Monitoring Center (FMC)** to become one of the most advanced centers in the region. Its operation is linked with all **30 Port-in Port-out Control Centers (PIPO)** in 22 coastal provinces which will provide **exchange of electronic inspection and sighting reports**. In addition, Thailand has utilised **the vessel monitoring system (VMS) technology, the risk assessment system, as well as the deployment of at-sea patrol and air surveillance** to monitor the activities of Thai fishing vessels.
8. As for those vessels operating outside Thai waters, they are required to be equipped with **the electronic reporting and monitoring system (ERS/EM)** which is linked to the FMC for the purpose of control their fishing activities, transshipment, relocations, and labour practices in line with relevant international labour standards, including ILO's Work in Fishing Convention (C188) which Thailand has just ratified yesterday. Thailand is the first Asian country to ratify the Convention and the 14th country of the global community to accede to the Convention. ILO will use Thailand as a model to encourage international community including EU member states to ratify the Convention.
9. This upgrade of Thailand's entire fishing industry is recognized by many international organizations including the European Union which has lifted its yellow card for Thailand earlier this month (8 January 2019) in recognition of its efforts in fighting IUU fishing. Our efforts do not end here, we are working hard in making Thailand an IUU-free country. In addition, we are also strengthening our

conservation of marine resources and sustaining marine eco-system with the goal of achieving SDG 14.

10. Today I am pleased to inform you that Thailand stands **ready to be a role model for the region** to share our lessons learned and best practices on the fight against IUU fishing. To reiterate the theme of our ASEAN Chairmanship this year, we will push towards “Advancing Partnership for Sustainability”. To that end, we are working closely with our ASEAN colleagues regarding the development of the ASEAN General Fisheries Policy. In April this year, Thailand will host the ASEAN Workshop on IUU Fishing to discuss the possibility of establishing the ASEAN IUU Taskforce. The progress of UN/FLUX will be complementary to our efforts.

11. Moreover, on 7-8 March 2019, Thailand will host **the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) High-Level Meeting on Marine Sustainability** in Bangkok and we welcome those who are interested to take part in the meeting.

12. Thailand has come a long way. Nevertheless, we still have a long way to go to achieve our common goal and I can envisage UN/FLUX playing a significant role in this endeavor. We look to international collaborations like yours to help us on our path. I hope that your meeting today will be fruitful and wish you all every success in your endeavours.
