

**Opening Remarks**  
**by**  
**H.E. Ambassador Apichart Chinwanno**  
**At Seminar on**  
***“Thailand’s Seafood Industry in Compliance with the EU Requirements”***  
**23 April 2013 at European Seafood Exposition, Brussels**

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**Mr. Wimol Jantharothai, Director-General of Fisheries Department,**  
**Mr. Patrick Deboysier, Advisor to DG-SANCO,**  
**Mr. Chanintr Chalisarapong, Vice President and Chairman of Tuna**  
**Processor’s Group,**  
**Distinguished guests,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great pleasure for me to be among the leaders of seafood industry at one of the world’s most important seafood events – the European Seafood Exposition.

I wish to thank the Fisheries Department and the Thai Food Processors’ Association for organizing this seminar entitled *“Thailand’s Seafood Industry in Compliance with the EU Requirements”* during this Exposition.

While the title of the seminar might focus on the EU requirements, I would like to set it straight at the outset that, while we regard the requirements from the EU as positive push, Thailand is well aware of its responsibility as one of the world’s top seafood producing and exporting countries.

The reason is clear. Last year alone, our seafood exports accounted for more than 6.19 Billion Euros. The industry has employed hundreds of thousand people. With this trade volume and the huge interests at stake, we realize that we have a big responsibility to uphold our best reputation as a reliable supplier of quality and safe seafood products. We also have equally high stake to ensure sustainable fisheries.

In this European Seafood Exposition, Thailand is proud to showcase our modern seafood industry, which is a result of close cooperation between the Thai public and private sectors to develop the whole food chain from the upstream to the downstream, as part of its *“Thai Kitchen to the World”* policy.

The Exposition is also a good opportunity to organize this seminar to present to our friends in Europe our coherent and continuous efforts, and the partnership approaches undertaken, on 3 main areas of particular interest to the European consumers - sea food safety, sustainable fishery and social responsibility of seafood industry.

The rationale behind seafood safety needs no elaboration. On sustainability issue, we fully share the same goal as the EU to counter illegal, unreported and unregulated or IUU fisheries worldwide.

Take canned tuna for example. The Fisheries Department has improved its traceability system to avoid IUU sources of raw materials for the tuna industry. At the same time, the seafood producers have significantly invested to improve their cooling system in order to avoid post-processing microbial contamination and improve the quality and safety of their products.

The resulting stricter control system capable of ensuring the highest seafood production standards also takes into account other social issues such as environmental impact, social responsibility, and labour welfare.

On labour welfare, in particular, the Government has established a National Committee for Anti-trafficking in Persons, which is chaired by the Prime Minister herself. The Action Plan for 2012-2013 is being implemented to fight against trafficking of employees in seafood industry.

This is to maintain the country's status as an ethical seafood producer of highest standard, widely recognized and welcomed in any regions of the world.

We will soon hear them in more detail from the Fishery Director-General from the perspectives of the national competent authority, and from the Vice President and Chairman of Tuna Processor's Group from the producers perspectives.

Since 13 percent of our seafood exports are destined to the EU market, we have particular interest to work with the EU to ensure that the European consumers are satisfied with our supplies. Therefore, I am delighted to have Mr. Patrick Deboyser, Advisor to DG-SANCO, with us today to give the EU perspectives on Thai seafood industry.

This might also lay groundwork on what Thailand and the EU can do together to advance our respective consumers and producers' interests.

I am confident that this seminar will provide interesting information for those active in fishery trade between Thailand and the EU countries.

Without further ado, I declare open the seminar on "***Thailand's Seafood Industry in Compliance with the EU Requirements***". I wish you all a successful seminar and fruitful deliberation.

Thank you and **Khob khun krab.**

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