



Press Statement

The Airport Alliance of Thai Trade Unions State Enterprises Workers' Relations Confederation (SERC) and Thai Labour Solidarity Committee (TLSC)

On “Concern of Workers in Aviation Industry under the Outbreak of Covid-19 Crisis”

The outbreak of a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) started at the end of 2019 and spread broadly and intensely so that on 11 March 2020, World Health Organization (WHO) announced it a global pandemic. Not only in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China but coronavirus also dispersed throughout China and invaded into more than 199 countries. 677,705 confirmed cases and the death toll of 31,737 have been reported (updated on 29 March 2020)¹. In Thailand, the dispersion get worse therefore emergency decree BE 2548 was announced on 26 March 2020 to limit the spread of coronavirus.

Worried and insecure feeling caused by the outbreak affected the aviation industry. It resulted the lower demand of air travel, the prohibition, by the virtue of the emergency decree BE 2548, on foreigners entry to Thailand, ‘work from home’ policy and etc. Numerous low cost airlines temporarily reduced/suspended their operations. At the present, Thai Airways International Public Company Limited announced the temporary suspension of its flight operations, both in the region, European and Australian routes until 31 May 2020. All of those previously stated negatively impacted airline business in Thailand including an employment of more than ten thousand workers and the aviation industry and in its supply chain. This situation impacts 10,000 subcontract and outsource workers that will possibly be laid off and permanent workers will also possibly be reduced their benefits and salaries.

The announcement of Thai Airway’s temporary suspension of operations drastically impacted 20,000 permanent workers and 4,900 Wing Span Services Co., Ltd workers, a subsidiary company of Thai Airways. The Airport Alliance of Thai Trade Unions, State Enterprises Workers’ Relations Confederation (SERC) and Thai Labour Solidarity Committee (TLSC) extremely worried about the situation. The spread of coronavirus brought the crisis to the globe. It caused unavoidable effects to various countries including Thailand, however the situation of workers should not be worsen by the companies’ survival plan such as dismissal. It was reminded that a huge profit had been made in the industry once and all of those workers were parts of the companies’ success. Therefore, we would like the government and employers to support all the workers and we all will overcome the crisis together.

The Airport Alliance of Thai Trade Unions, State Enterprises Workers’ Relations Confederation (SERC) and Thai Labour Solidarity Committee (TLSC) would like to call on the government, employers, and all supply chain companies in aviation industry in Thailand, Thai Airways and Wing

¹ <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

Span Services Co., Ltd to protect permanent workers, outsource and all subcontract workers according to the International Labour Standard and respect the human rights. The following are our recommendations:

1. The employers in all aviation sectors should provide collective forum with trade unions for their consultation in order to jointly identify the companies' survival policies. If any policies will impact the workers' working condition, all the policies shall respect on the principles of labour laws, international labour standard and human rights principles to prevent for the least impact to the workers.
2. The employers in all aviation sectors, who have already announced any temporary suspension of the production, have to identify concrete time frame to call the workers back to work or re-open their businesses after the Covid-19 situation is solved out. This would prevent any sorts of measures leading the unfair layoff to all airport workers by using Covid-19 crisis.
3. The employers particularly outsource and subcontract companies in the aviation sectors (precarious employment) should take responsibility to strictly compliance your businesses with the respect of the Thai labour protection act. The employers should stop forcing and threatening the workers to sign any resignation with the intention in avoiding the compensation payment to the workers by using this Covid-19 crisis to violate and inhumanly behave to the airport workers.
4. The employers in the aviation sectors should sufficiently provide protection equipment, masks or any related protection tools to all airport workers including outsource and subcontract workers. All airport workers are still providing services to the passengers at the airports, they deserve to be safe and protected from any risks in the workplace.

The Airport Alliance of Thai Trade Unions, State Enterprises Workers' Relations Confederation (SERC) and Thai Labour Solidarity Committee (TLSC) completely understand the difficult situation that impact the global economy, health and the livings of the citizens including Thailand. We would like to convey our strong support to all business in aviation sectors and all airport workers to overcome this Covid-19 crisis together with our strong beliefs in the power of unity and faith.

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