

**Summary Report on the Situation of Human Rights in 2016
from the Participatory Seminar of NHRC and People
in the Northeast Region (28th-30th March 2016)**

The National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRC) has organized the participatory seminar of NHRC and people in the Northeast region in Khonkaen province on 28th-30th March 2016

The objectives are:

(1) To strengthen knowledge and understanding of the roles of the NHRC and the NHRC staff, as well as to introduce the third batch of Human Rights commissioners to the local networks.

(2) To get information on human rights situation which reflected from people and the networks in the area. The information and suggestions from the public arena will be used for the preparation of reports assessing the human rights situation in the country, as well as to discuss the ways and measures to solve problems on human rights violation,

(3) to cooperate with human right networks on the promotion and protection of human rights, along with the establishment of the education and coordination of human right Center and a mechanism for collaboration between NHRC, Civil society and education institute networks in the Northeast region.

The situation of human rights in 2016 was summarized and gathered the comments from 300 people of the forum in the Northeast region. They have reflected the need of human rights mechanisms and asked NHRC to solve the problem which was classified in the region.

For the situation of human rights in the Northeast region, there are 6 issues as follows:

1. Forest and Land Resources.

According to the development on legislation, orders and Policy of the state such as the National Council for peace and Order no.64/2557 and 66/2557, the Master Plan for the Protection of Forest Resources, the declaration of the national park area and the declaration of the forest reserves zone which have been operated all over the country, as a result, people in the Northeast have experienced the problems in land rights such as the forced and eviction of housing, the arable land and forest encroachment, which are criminalization.

2. Water Resources, Dam Construction and Fishery.

As a result of the Water Management project along the Khong, Chee and Mool River, which was operated since 1989, could not provide water as targeted by the government. It effected the water allocation to agriculture in public areas. The governmental project also affected the living of people, such as the changing water level which is not natural, the distribution of saline soil and the imbalance of forest ecosystem.etc.

2. Energy and Mining

Most of the development of projects in energy and mining had been operated without the participation process, including the preparation of the environmental impact report on social and health care and the process of the community participation. So there are the objection of building a coal plant, potash mining and petroleum drilling projects because local people are concerned about the impacts that will occur, especially pollution and chemicals that affect their health and the environment in a long term.

4. The Special Economic Zone Development Project, a Large-Scale Industrial and Urban Planning:

The state determined the area in Nongkhai.Mukdahan and Nakhon phanom provinces to be the special economic zone in the Northeast region. As a result, the villagers in the area faced the problems of rights in arable land, due to expropriation

and forced to leave the area with the creation of large projects such as power plants, airports, warehouses and industrial park which support the development of special economic zones. The Villagers worry that the special economic zone project will affect both the arable environmental living conditions and lifestyle changes.

5. Civil Rights and Political Rights/ Rights of Various Groups (such as children, women, labor) and Trafficking Cases:

Due to the state policy, the establishment of a special economic development zone may result in the expansion of the big city. The shift labor from rural to urban society will affect the management and relationships within the family which is the basic unit of society. As a result, the population is at risk for human rights violations such as children, women, the elderly, disabled, Thai workers and migrant workers. They will face with threats, such as drugs, violence or sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as the access to basic utilities and problems of migrant workers etc.

6. The Rights of Farmers:

The social context that is likely to change from agricultural society to industrial society. It makes the farmers' network worried about the lack of mechanisms to ensure the legal protection of the rights of farmers. They concern that the future generations will work in the industrial sector instead of agriculture. They also concerned about the problems for natural resources between agricultural and industrial sectors, the problem of being monopolized by the capitalist in production and marketing, including the contaminated chemicals into the natural resources.

In the seminar, NHRC and the staff have shared and learned together with the community such as self-management, nature preservation including the promotion and protection of human rights in all forms and NHRC has emphasized on giving suggestion on policy level. NHRC received complaints about community rights and resource management in several areas, so NHRC thought that it was important for the community to work together on the resource management in the area in order to

promote and protect human rights in the long term. They should work through the mechanism of participation from both the public sector and civil society which will be sustainable management rather than working on case by case. NHRC will propose the policy suggestion to the government to issue a ministerial regulation or act for protection of communities who are ready to manage resources in accordance with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E.2540 and 2550 which community rights has been placed in article 66 and 67. Including the National Human Rights Plans, vol. 3 (B.E.2557 – 2561) that the authorized agencies will need to take part in participatory resource management. NHRC, as Part of the Committee to coordinate the cooperation in the promotion and protection of the rights of the people, will ask other agencies to carry out the National Human Rights Plans and bring together the resources management model to resolve the conflict in various areas across the country, which will be the effective and sustainable solution.

