

*Thailand Ombudsman Office signed a MOU with the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration to swiftly and effectively solve complaints*



On August 10, 2022, Mr. Somsak Suwansujarit, the Chief Ombudsman of Thailand and Mr. Chadchart Sittipunt, the governor of Bangkok, jointly signed a collaborative MOU between the Office of the Ombudsman and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA). With Associate Professor Issaree Hunsacharoonroj and Mr. Songsak Saicheua, Ombudsmen of Thailand, along with the executives of both organisations attending the signing ceremony. After that, a public discussion was held to discuss a topic of “Solving problems for the people, going forward with our hands held together”.

This MOU between the Ombudsman of Thailand and BMA came into existence from the wills of both organisations to protect the rights and liberty of the people, as well as to deal with any grievances effectively. The integration of working methods and cooperation under the jurisdiction of both organisations can be categorized into five fields of operation as follows:

1. Dealing with and solving complaints with great urgency (FAST TRACK the Ombudsman & BMA), which will be a cooperation between both organisations to conduct on-site investigations, in order to swiftly and effectively solve complaints in the Bangkok area through a mobile application. This aims to provide a mean for the Ombudsman office and BMA to coordinate, including other means of coordination such as telephone, fax and e-mail. For the people who experience problems, have grievances or witness problems, they can report it via Line Official: “OMB FAST TRACK BMA” or through Thailand Ombudsman hotline tel. 1676 (free of charge).



2. In terms of public relations, both organisations will cooperate in proactive public relation to publicize the roles, powers, duties and missions of Ombudsman and BMA. This activity will be held in the form of mobile public relations unit, with free legal advice service and complaint reception. The goal is to hold this activity across Bangkok's 50 districts. The pilot activities were held recently in four districts, namely, Suan Luang, Thawi Watthana, Prawet and Din Daeng. Being well-received by the public, they were forums for the local residents' concerns to be heard and appropriate advices to be provided directly. Also, these activities allowed the public to acquire a better understanding of the system, regulations and operational procedures, as well as instilling in them a good viewpoint on the work of state agencies.

3. In regard to building a cooperative network at a community level, it aims to build a community-leveled network in the form of an activity titled "The People Doing Good", which provides training to representatives from communities, especially representatives who speak on behalf of and can influence the minds of the community. These representatives include community chiefs, public health volunteers, civilian disaster relief volunteers, community organisations' leaders, women's leaders, religious leaders and local elderly associations. The purpose of the training is to inform the representatives of the right of the people to participate in the undertaking of state agencies, including encouraging participation in suggesting a mechanism to promote governance and operations that bring fairness to the people. This activity will initially undergo a trial in Suan Luang district.

4. Forming a youth cooperative network will be achieved through an activity called "Good Youth for Society". This activity intends to provide training to over 100 youths from Bangkok's 50 districts regarding the right to participate in the undertaking of state agencies, including encouraging participation in suggesting a mechanism to promote governance and operations that bring fairness to the people. The activity is held with a high hope that this new generation of young people can become a voice and an important driving force that lead to problems being solved within their community.



5. As for promoting the use of crosswalks and higher traffic discipline, this can be materialized through an activity that aims to (1) encourage enforcing of the law such as limiting the speed of vehicles in community area, yielding to pedestrians crossing in the crosswalks etc. (2) improve physical components such as traffic lights. (3) campaign for people to be more mindful and aware of traffic disciplines.

In the future, both organisations plan to mutually and continuously expand their cooperation into other areas that benefit the people and the public at large, which includes:

- Solving systemic problems relating to grievances or impacts that concern the environment, for example waste management or issues pertaining to the safety and welfare of the people. This area of cooperation is intended to be a part of a joint effort to make Bangkok a smart city and a place that people want to live in.

- Promoting local enterprise and grassroots economy to encourage career development and increase the income level of the people in communities of Bangkok.

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