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Environmental lawyers have agreed that environmental laws should be reviewed and updated

Mr. Athapol Charoenshunsu, Director General of Pollution Control Department (PCD) revealed that Minister of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) by PCD organized the online dialogue on the topic of **“Is it time to strengthen environmental laws?”** Key environmental lawyers joined this event as a speaker were Mr. Panat Tasaneeyanon, former Dean of Faculty of Law, Thammasat University, Prof. Dr. Amnat Wongbandit, a lecturer in Environmental Law Department, Faculty of Law, Thammasat University, Dr. Wijarn Simachaya, Director of Thailand Environment Institute (TEI), Assoc. Prof. Dr. Khanuengnit Sribua-iam, an environmental law expert from Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University, Mr. Srisuwan Janya, Secretary-General of the Association to Protect the Thai Constitution (APTC), Mr. Somchai Amin, Association President of Legal Rights and Environmental Protection Association (LEPA), and Mrs. Dawan Jantarahassadee, senior officer and community advisor of Ecological Alert and Recovery Thailand (EARTH), together with Mr. Chatuphon Burutpat, Permanent Secretary of MONRE, who presided over the opening of the dialogue.

Mr. Athapol said that current environmental problems have been encountered more severe damage. Most of them are repetitive problems caused by those who break the law and intend to emit pollutions, hazardous wastes and wastewater from factories, which results damage to the environment, which difficult to rehabilitate, and cost for environmental restoration. Additionally, these could contribute to the causes of the pollution problems and impact on people. In terms of environmental law, it has been issued for a long time and does not suitable for the current situation. Therefore, in order to develop capability building and enhancing the environmental law effectively, PCD invited the senior experts on environmental laws to discuss and exchange point of view, knowledge, and experience on this matter to create perspectives, approaches, and solution on environmental law enforcement.

According to the perspectives and suggestions from the speakers in this dialogue, it is time to make amendment to environmental laws to have the decisive measures and be able to stop pollution emissions as well as solve the environmental problems and give compensation to people rapidly. Moreover, the suggestions included to improve the environmental fund to account budget for addressing pollution problems, to make the strong and appropriate punishment for all environmental damage and to authorize PCD in protecting and preserving an environment that PCD would be able to take action in solving pollution problems immediately as the same as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US.EPA) of the United States of America and should increase the role of public sectors in protecting and preserving the

environment as well. The reason is that environmental laws would be an important tool to assist people from pollution problems. On this occasion, PCD will accelerate to make amendment to environmental laws to be substantial, Mr. Athapol said.

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