Your Excellency

SUPPORT TO BUSINESS TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT

We are writing as leaders of some of Thailand’s largest business organizations. The Foreign Chambers Alliance (FCA) is an alliance between the American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand (AMCHAM), Australian-Thai Chamber of Commerce (AustCham), British Chamber of Commerce Thailand (BCCT) and German-Thai Chamber of Commerce (GTCC) representing together more than 2,000 companies and approximately one million employees operating in Thailand. Our member companies are major investors as well as small and medium sized businesses and are committed to the well-being of the country, its economy and its citizens.

We would like to express our support and appreciation of the government in its critical work to address the coronavirus outbreak, which clearly has to remain the overriding priority. The outbreak is having an enormous impact on business in Thailand, and we welcome the range of measures the government has already undertaken to support business. However, many companies in Thailand are now on the verge of shutting down their operations and laying-off workers as they cannot meet their payroll obligations due to the severe impact of Covid-19.

For many businesses the issue is not one of medium-term relief, but of short-term survival, due to prolonged periods without revenue. The offering of up to 62% of salaries in social security support, for example, could be extended to employees in businesses not yet closed by government order, but instead any business not in a position to service their payroll due to a significant drop in incoming revenue. This revenue drop is an unfortunate by-product of the exact measures required to remedy the current pandemic, for which our members support fully. Maintaining employment and reducing forced redundancies would of course assist in the following:

- Keep money flowing through the economy through continued worker spending;
- Help avoid a sharp rise in unemployment which has significant negative social consequences
- Maintain individual workers’ skills
- Preserve companies’ capacities to rebuild their business once the worst of the pandemic is over
- Help retain talented employees
- Ensure Thailand remains an attractive destination for foreign investment

We are therefore writing to humbly request the government to consider, as a priority and a matter of urgency, providing direct and easy-to-access financial support to employees. This is seen as a key and immediate measure to maintain employment, as well as to position Thailand to recover faster post crisis. We would be pleased to work with the government on this, and our individual chambers may also provide further detailed suggestions.

We recognize that this would be an exceptional step. However, these are exceptional times, with many businesses in Thailand, and their employees, facing unprecedented pressure. We stand ready to offer any help and support to the government during this period, and of course well into the future to aid in the prosperity of Thailand and its people.

Yours faithfully

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Copy: H.E. Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister