

## **Improvement of the Work System of the Court of Justice: Case Study of Senior Judge System**

The Senior Judge System Improvement Project was aimed at following up and evaluating the senior judge system and extension of length of service of judges in order to identify the right system for enhancement of capacity of the court of justice system, administration of justice and protection of rights and liberties of the general public according to the current economic and social condition of Thailand, studying problems, weakness and non-conformities which are restrictions to the potentials of the senior judge system and to the extension of length of service of judges, and providing guidelines for improvement of the senior judge system or proper alternatives for enhancement of capacity of the court of justice system.

According to the research result, it was found that the number of all types of cases tended to increase rapidly and vary according to factors of different economic and social condition; meanwhile, the number of judges tended to increase slower and variant not in conformity with the job burdens of trial; as a result, there were problems of the increasing number of pending cases and increasing job burdens of trial for judges. Therefore, the provision of senior judge system shall help relieve problems of shortage of judges, and there were demands for senior judges or extension of length of service of judges for more than 60 years of age because it was expected that the shortage of judges will continue in the future, particularly the reduction of job burdens of trial for each judge which would improve the provision of justice and protection of rights and liberties to the general public.

However, the senior judge system which has been implemented still had restrictions on assignment of works to senior judges which were not in conformity with their potentials and health condition, and the assignment of duties for senior judges in the court which were not higher than the previous positions before assuming the position of senior judges would result in the improvement of efficiency and capacity of the Court of Justice because there were the increasing demands for judges in the Superior Court, and the shortage of judges in the Superior Court was more severe than those in the Court of First Instance, and the job burdens in the Superior Court were in conformity with the potentials and health condition of senior judges rather than those in the Court of First Instance. Moreover, the adjustment of proportions of job burdens in the Court of First Instance and other works to be proper to the potentials and health condition of senior judges would increase the efficiency and capacity of the Court of Justice.

Therefore, the extension of length of service of the judges after the age of 60 years old would be worthy economically and socially. The senior judge system was a more suitable alternative when compared to the system of extension of length of service because of its flexible structure which can be better adjusted in accordance with the demands and problems of shortage of judges and potentials of judge in a more convenient and efficient manner. Moreover, the Court of Justice should consider guidelines for slowing down the expansion or reduction of cases and guidelines for selection of new judges for consistent increases according to the demands.