



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**  
**Nation Religion King**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**OPENING SPEECH by**

*Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei* **HENG SAMRIN**, President  
of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of CAMBODIA  
and President of AIPA at the Opening of the Workshop on the "Roles of  
Parliamentarians in the protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant  
Workers in ASEAN"

*(Sunway Hotel, Phnom Penh, April 4, 2011)*



- *Honorable Heads and Members of the ASEAN Parliamentarian Delegations*
- *Lok Chum-teav, Excellencies, National and International Distinguished Guests*
- *Ladies and Gentlemen*

On behalf of the leaders of Cambodian legislature and president of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), I have the great honor and pleasure to preside over the Opening of the Workshop on the "Roles of Parliamentarians in the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers in ASEAN" here today; I would like to express my sincere appreciation and warm welcome the presence of Honorable Parliamentarian Delegations of AIPA to the Kingdom of Cambodia.

In this opportunity, I would like to express my profound thanks to the Federal Government of Germany for their contribution to this Seminar.

- *Lok Chum-teav, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen*

Presently, migration for jobs is a significant global issue which has been affecting almost every country in the world. We have observed that there are various factors that lead to the increase in numbers of migration such as people who have certain ages for job, but can not find job that suits their capacity and skills - local employment provides low wages that are insufficient for themselves or for their families - the lack of workforce for certain economic sectors of other countries and other factors which include demographic variations, socio-economic and political crisis, and the gap of wages between developing and developed countries, etc.

Those above mentioned factors are contributed to an inter-region and cross-border movement of migration for job-seeking, in particular women and children. So far, the majority of labor migration occurs only between neighboring countries, but presently, since the access to information is advanced and various and the mean of transportation is more convenient and cheaper, the geographical barrier is no longer exist for migration.

Migration for jobs is frequently facing various obstacles, particularly women's and young people's migration that are sometimes being exploited, trafficked, and forced to use drugs. These challenges not only cause them suffering but also create more difficulties for their family as well as for the whole society. The main and important solution is not to prevent them from migrating, but in capacity as countries' leaders, we should find appropriate means and measures to safeguard and to manage them at every stage of migration, including sending, receiving and crossing countries.

In addition, when we can provide an appropriate, effective and transparent management of labor migration (from the stage of advertising, recruiting, training/pre-departure orientation, during departure, employment, home remittance, during repatriation and re-integration into the community), then we can ensure the balance between the demand of local workforce and abroad, local sustainable development with the technical skills and resources acquired by our workforces.

**- *Lok Chum-teav, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!***

Labor migration is a long-lasting traditional phenomenon which continues to happen. The labor migration is one of the important methods for the Cambodian poor to get themselves out of poverty. The increases in the demand of labors and higher income generated in those less developed countries within the region are the main factors attracting the unemployed or non-fully employed Cambodian workers to seek for jobs abroad, though working abroad might be risky, including labor exploitation, human trafficking and social discrimination...etc.

At the regional level, freedom of movement of workforce is widely recognized as a method in maximizing the utilization of human resources. Since the implementation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area-AFTA in 2010, when the common market is established in the short future under the ASEAN Economic Community, then products, services, capitals and skill workers will mobile freely in the region by 2015. These developments will bring about new settlement and industrial labor requirement among the ASEAN member countries.

For the purpose of the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers, heads of state and heads of the government of the ASEAN member countries have issued a joint declaration in the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2007 in Cebu, the Philippines. The declaration also inscribed the obligations of the receiving and the sending countries to provide protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers. In 2008, the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers – ACMWM was established with the participation of the representatives from the ten member countries of ASEAN. The committee created a working group to issue an instrument for the implementation of the declaration, in which posed outstanding challenges in the preparation, namely the scope and form of such instrument—that is—there are two contrasting views.

The first view favors the sending countries who would like the instrument to have a scope of application over documented and undocumented migrant workers and their families and to be in a binding form. However, the second view favors the receiving countries, who would like the instrument to cover only documented migrant workers and in a non-binding form.

