

**ASEAN's Response to the Prevalence of Illicit Drugs Trafficking
Presented by Police Commissioner General, Gories Mere
the Chairman of ASOD**

- Your Excellency Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of AIPA,
- Your Excellency Post Dr.Cheam Yeap, Chairman of National AIPA Group,
- Honorable Heads of delegations,
- Distinguished Special observers,
- Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, I would like to thank the President of the National assembly of Cambodia and President of AIPA, for inviting me as Chairman of ASOD, to attend The Eight Meeting of the AIPA Fact Finding Committee (AIFOCOM-8) to combat the drug Menace.

It is a great honor for me to report to the eight meeting of AIFOCOM, about efforts and activities conducted by ASOD at the regional and national level of member countries, to pursue a Drug Free ASEAN, in 2015.

The menace of illicit drugs trafficking has been long prevalent as early as 1970s. Cooperation in drugs control was initiated in October 1972 with the convening of the ASEAN Experts Group Meeting on the Prevention Control of Drug Abuse. The Group was renamed the ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) in 1984 and currently has five working groups: 1) Working Group on Preventive Education, 2) Working Group on Treatment and Rehabilitation, 3) Working Group on Law Enforcement, 4) Working Group on Research and 5) Alternative Development (Rural/Urban)

The most important mission of the ASOD now is to realize by 2015, a Southeast Asia free of illicit drugs in terms of their cultivation production, manufacture, trafficking, and abuse. This mission is mandated by the Joint Declaration on A Drug-Free ASEAN adopted by the ASEAN Ministers of Foreign Affairs in July 1998. Since then, ASOD has developed appropriate projects to implement the initiatives outlined in the Declaration. These

include projects on training of trainers in interpersonal skills and peer support counselling in drug education, youth empowerment against drug abuse, and promoting drug abuse prevention activities among out-of-school Youth, also training in law enforcement, treatment, and rehabilitation.

With the entry into force of the ASEAN Charter, the ASEAN has reinvented itself into a rule-based legal entity. The vision of establishing a community is collectively supported by three Community Pillars- ASEAN Political and Security Community, ASEAN Socio-Culture Community and ASEAN Economic Community. Each Community is guided by guides called “blueprints” in realising their respective community’s mission statements and working towards the attainment of the ultimate goal of one community. The ASEAN Socio-Community Blueprint includes community-based drug prevention, treatment and control of drug abuse, in parallel with eliminating drug trafficking and illicit drug supply through law enforcement and alternative development in order to make drug control sustainable specified in the ASEAN Political and Security Community Blueprint. As the ASOD is the catalyst in ensuring South-east Asia region free of illicit drugs the work of ASOD is being reported to both Communities.

Using the welfare security approach in order to accomplish the responsibility, ten years after the ambitious vision of a community free of drugs by 2015, a project on Study on Achieving Drug-Free ASEAN 2015 Status and Recommendations was jointly organised by the ASEAN Secretariat and the U.S. The UNODC experts carried out the study on the feasibility of attaining the goal, on challenges at national and regional level and made the recommendations. The UNODC experts presented the draft Report of the Study, which was compiled based on assessment of available data on combating illicit drugs in the region as well as on the consultations with stakeholders. The Report focused on progress and gaps in response towards achieving the objective of *Drug-Free ASEAN* by 2015.

The workshop agreed that the vision of a drug-free ASEAN 2015 is **to successfully and effectively control illicit drugs and mitigate its negative consequences to society**. These include significant and sustainable reductions in:

- i. Illicit crop cultivation;
- ii. Illicit manufactured and trafficking of drugs and drug-related crime;
- iii. Prevalence of Illicit drug use.

1. The Meeting also agreed on the benchmarks for the key elements as follows:

i) Illicit crop cultivation

- a) Insignificant opium poppy cultivation by 2015;
- b) Insignificant cannabis cultivation by 2015; and
- c) Provision of sustainable livelihood to former illicit crops producing farmers.

ii) Illicit manufacturing and trafficking of drugs and drugs-related crime:

- a) Elimination of syndicates involved in the clandestine manufacture of illicit drugs;
- b) Elimination of syndicates involved in the trafficking of illicit drugs, precursors and essential chemical;
- c) Elimination of diversion and smuggling of precursor chemicals; and
- d) Enhance cross-border and transnational law enforcement collaboration and cooperation.

iii) Prevalence of illicit drug use:

- a) Reduce the overall prevalence of illicit drug abuse in the general population, in particular students, youth and those in high-risk and vulnerable groups (i.e. street children, sex workers and employees in labour-intensive occupations);
- b) Increase access to treatment, rehabilitation and aftercare services to drug abusers to ensure full re-integration into society; and
- c) Increase and enhance partnerships between the public and private sectors and civil society organizations in response to the abuse of illicit drugs.

Based on the vision and benchmarks, the ASOD undertook the task to determine specific targets and timelines to be incorporated into its Work Plan encompassing the following:

- a) strengthening regional legal frameworks
- b) mainstreaming drug concerns in other relevant ASEAN bodies
- c) supporting and sustaining alternative development efforts including increasing market access for such products

The ASEAN Work Plan on Combating Illicit Drug Production, Trafficking, and Use (2009 -2015) or the ASOD Work Plan was drafted by a special workshop held immediately after the 29Th ASOD held in 2009. The drafting process took stock relevant provisions of the existing documents, including the ASEAN Political and Security Community Blueprint and the ASEAN Social and Cultural Community Blueprint, the recommendations made by the Study on “Achieving Drug-Free ASEAN by 2015: Status and Recommendations”, the ACCORD Plan of Action and the illicit drug trafficking component of the SOMTC Work Programme.

The ASOD was of the view that Work Plan should be achievable and practicable so as to realize the agreed benchmarks while being mindful of the relevant ASEAN Community Blueprints.

The ASOD Work Plan was divided in three parts which consisted of eight benchmarks and fifty-five detailed action lines, aiming at the sustainable reduction of (i) illicit crop cultivation, (ii) illicit production manufacture trafficking and drug related crimes, and (iii) the prevalence of illicit drug use.

On Way Forward

The Special Workshop also agreed the following:

- Baseline as the indicator to measure the progress of implementing the Work Plan was to be developed in the Standardized Country Report format, utilizing the statistic data of 2009 as baseline indicator. The data should be in percentage terms as applicable. The percentage data would be the comparison rate between drug data and the total population of the each Member States, as applicable.

- With regard to the timeframe for review and assessment of the Work Plan, a Mid-Term Review the Work Plan would be undertaken in 2012 and the final assessment of the implementation of the Work Plan in 2015.

Adoption of the ASOD Work Plan

Adoption of the ASOD Work Plan was endorsed by the 30th ASOD held in October 2009 in Phnom Penh and further adopted by the 7th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC) held in November 2009 in Siem Reap.

The 30th ASOD commended that the ASOD Work Plan should serve as basis in the ASOD's cooperation with Dialogue Partners, regional and international entities in future.

Cooperation with Dialogue Partners

Cooperation with China, Japan and Republic of Korea (Plus Three Countries) on illicit trafficking is guided by the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation in Transnational Crime Work Plan and the East Asia Cooperation and the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan (2007-2017). With a view to enhancing collaboration with plus Three Countries, the SOMTC+3 Working Group on Illicit Trafficking met back-to-back with the annual ASOD Meetings since 2006.

With China, under the framework of ASEAN-China MoU for Cooperation in the Field of Non-Traditional Security Issues, annual work plans are proposed by China which include capacity building training course for narcotic investigations through enhanced regional networking.

With Japan, the focused area of cooperation is drugs analysis and training courses for the selected ASEAN Member State are organized annually.

With ROK, a project entitled “**ASEAN – ROK Knowledge Transfer Programme on Narcotics Crime**” was first implemented in Lao PDR in 2007 with technical assistance from Supreme Prosecutor Office (SPO) of the ROK. Following the Success in Lao PDR, the knowledge Transfer Project was replicated in Cambodia and Viet Nam in 2008, the Philippines

in 2009 and Indonesia for 2010. The project strengthened the criminal investigation capabilities of the designed ASEAN Member State and the SPO of ROK proposed the success augured through the project to be leveraged to a new dimension.

Subsequently, the SPO of ROK proposed the establishment of the Asia Pacific Information and Cooperation Centre (APICC) involving all ten ASEAN Member States and the SPO of ROK. The MoUs for Cooperation on the establishment of the APICC were signed individually between Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, the Philippines and the SPO of ROK during the 20th Anti-Drug Liaison Officials' Meeting for International Cooperation (ADLOMICO) held in 2010 in Seoul. Then, the same MoUs were signed individually between Brunei, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, and the SPO of Republic of Korea during the preliminary working group meeting for General APICC in May 17, 2011, held in Jeju. Under the MoU, the anti-narcotics bureaus of ASEAN Member States and the narcotics control division of SPO would set up a secure IT based network for sharing information and collaboration in investigating the narcotics crime.

Cooperation with the regional and international entities

The United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) works closely with ASEAN Member States individually, sub-regionally, and regionally. The UNODC together with the ASEAN Secretariat is the Joint Secretariat for the ACCORD Programme which concluded in 2010.

In April 2003, ASEAN Secretariat and UNODC signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ASEAN Secretariat and UN ODC on Drug Control and Crime Prevention Corporation. The main thrust of the MOU is to further promote closer relationship and cooperation between ASEAN Secretariat and UN ODC in combating drug problems in the region by identifying and developing joint technical cooperation projects and programmes.

Almost all ASEAN Member States are participating in the UNODC's PATROL project-a border liaison network.

In relation with AIFOCOM, the Chair of the 24th ASOD and the ASEAN Secretariat were invited to the 3rd AIFOCOM which was held on 5-9 May 2004 in Phnom Penh. Since then, the presiding Chairs of ASOD have been attending the annual AIFOCOM Meetings.

Future Direction of ASOD

The threat of illicit drug trafficking is imminent in ASEAN and no country is immune from this prevailing threat. The menace of illicit drugs should be addressed aggressively through collective and effective regional framework. Much needed regional networking is to be cultivated overarching the region's ultimate goal of ASEAN Community building.

Enhanced strategic partnership with Dialogue Partners, regional, and international organisations would be assured.

ASOD is strongly committed and pledges to attribute to the realization of the ASEAN Drug Free by 2015 through attainable and practicable regional approach. For the wellbeing of the people of ASEAN and the world as a whole, all those shared the common values and concerns, must stand united. As the ancient wisdom teaches us, "United We Stand, Divided We Fall".

Thank you for your attention.

Chairman of ASOD

**Gories Mere
Police Commissioner General**