

**Opening Remarks of the MOL Deputy Permanent Secretary
at the ILO/ASEAN Seminar on the Future of Social Protection
in ASEAN**

4 July 2019, Amari Watergate Hotel

693 words – medium pace 6.30 minutes

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- *Madam Panudda Boonpala, Deputy Regional Director for Asia Pacific of the International Labour Organization,*
- *Mister Shinichi Akiyama, Deputy Assistant Minister for International Affairs for the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan*
- *Excellencies,*
- *Distinguished guests*

Good afternoon...

1. On behalf of the Ministry of Labour Thailand, it is a great honour for me to attend this important “ILO/ASEAN Seminar on the Future of Social Protection in ASEAN”. I would like to express my appreciation and sincere thanks to the ILO, ASEAN Member States, the Government of Japan and various development partners for long-standing partnerships across ASEAN and the wider Asia-Pacific region.
2. Social protection or social security is a set of measures put in place by the state to protect its population from unexpected events in life cycle. In the labour point of view, social security is key to ensure that workers do not fall below the poverty line and help them move up the ladder in the economic sphere.
3. In this region, social security is a priority in ASEAN agenda. In October 2013, ASEAN adopted a Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection as one of the key areas to achieve growth with equity. Under the ASEAN Labour work plans, studies related to social insurance coverage,

portable social security and old-age income security are underway.

4. Today globalisation has created both challenges and opportunities for policy makers. Innovation has given rise to non-standard forms of work which produce job opportunities. But at the same time proves to be a challenge to standard social security coverage. Along with this phenomenon is the growing demographic change where many aspects of social security need to be reinvented. Another difficulty for ASEAN governments is the informal economy. In many ASEAN Member States, workers in the informal sector remain unprotected and vulnerable to decent work deficits. It is important that we prepare for the future of social security.
5. As stated by the Deputy Regional Director, investing in social protection benefits worker themselves, enterprises and societies at large. The UN SDGs call for social protection for all. This is very much consistent with the ILO's mandate for social justice and Thailand's national priority.

Security in life promotes learning new knowledge and skills which lead to decent employment. We can see that many ASEAN Member States have increased their budget allocation for social security. Thailand for its part is funding a project in which we work alongside the ILO to build capacity in actuarial services and deliver it to the national level – and subsequently to the sub-regional level.

6. **Excellencies, distinguished guests**, as many of you know, the ILO in close coordination with Thailand planned this two-day seminar to be organised following the fifteenth Senior Labour Officials Meeting. We believe it is important for policy makers and stakeholders in the region to participate in today's high level dialogue on the future of social protection in ASEAN. We will be able to reflect on the challenges and opportunities for today's social protection and in the coming decades. Tomorrow experts in social security will join the technical sessions.

7. The objective of the two-day seminar is to promote the discussion among the ASEAN tripartite representatives about concrete recommendations and policy options for the extension of social protection coverage. The following regional studies have been conducted to contribute to the policy dialogue:

a. Expanding Social Protection to Workers in Informal Employment in ASEAN;

b. Old-Age Income Security in ASEAN Member States: a vision of key policy concepts, trends, challenges and opportunities.

8. At the end of this two-day seminar, the representatives will be able to identify common grounds for regional recommendations. The results of policy dialogue will be brought to the further discussions at the SLOM Working Group.

9. **Ladies and Gentlemen**, allow me to close my remarks by stressing that the topic of the future of social protection in our region could not be more important or more timely. Social security is essential to people empowerment, making economies productive, and leaving no one behind. I hope you will find the seminar helpful and insightful as we work together to build better world of work for ASEAN citizens.

10. Thank you.

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