

Opening remarks
Annual meeting to review the implementation process of the Labour Migration Policy

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Phnom Penh Hotel, Phnom Penh

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- His Excellency Hou Vuthy, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training
- Other representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and key line ministries present with us today
- Workers' and employers' representatives
- Civil Society partners
- Colleges from the UN family
- Colleagues and friends

On behalf of the ILO, I am very happy to welcome you all to this yearly workshop to **review the progress of the implementation of the Labour Migration Policy.**

International labour migration in ASEAN has increased **many times** over the past decades. There are now about 10 million migrant workers in the ASEAN region – roughly half are women. These migrants have moved to another country to find decent work that will allow them to support their families and build a future.

Without doubt, many migrant workers have positive migration experiences. They are able to save and remit money home and gain valuable skills they can use when they return home. However, many migrants are facing exploitation and abuse, sometimes so bad that it amounts to trafficking and forced labour.

Cambodia is no exception to this story.

And it is here that the Cambodia migration policy is so important. The Policy was developed by the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MOLVT) in 2014 with support of the ILO TRIANGLE project. It covers a period of four years, 2015-2018.

Here, I would like to point out that of the five Mekong countries, Cambodia is the only country that has a migration policy. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training for being progressive and demonstrate regional leadership in this regard. Having a migration policy is certainly a good practice that should be promoted and replicated among other countries in the region.

The policy calls for a yearly assessment of how it is progressing towards its objectives and goals. It also calls for the development of a yearly, detailed plan of action. And the purpose of our meeting today is to exactly that – to discuss progress so far, and identify and agree on the priorities for 2018.

During our next session, we will listen to a detailed presentation of the findings of the policy review. While I don't want to say too much about the findings at this stage, let me highlight a few that I think are particularly noteworthy:

I want to highlight two broad findings on the positive side:

- **There has been significant progress towards reaching the goals and targets of the migration policy:** We see very satisfying progress particularly in three areas: development of international and institutional frameworks; and in the delivery of support services. Broadly speaking, these are on track.

The areas that require more attention are particularly migration and development and return and reintegration. This is perhaps no surprise; when looking at the regional and global situation, migration and development and return and reintegration are the two areas where least is being done. Perhaps the situation here in Cambodia is a reflection of the fact that there are relatively few good practices and models to learn from in these areas at the global level.

- **The second areas where great progress has been made is in stakeholder awareness:** Compared to the review done last year, almost ALL stakeholders demonstrate knowledge and awareness of the labour migration policy. Line ministries are implementing activities, and are working together with development partners and civil society organizations. Government staff considered their work on labor migration

a priority and wanted to ensure the best delivery possible. This of course is great news as it marks a significant progress since last year.

The review also identifies two areas that still needs to be worked on:

- **Stakeholder Coordination:** While progress has been made during this reporting period, the report note that there is still some lack of coordination of activities between ministries, social partners and CSOs. This causes some overlap and duplication in some areas, at the same time some leadership and resource gaps in other areas.
- **Government financial allocation for migration governance:** The review shows that the implementation of the policy to a large extent is funded by donors rather than by the government. For sustainability and ownership, the Government of Cambodia should increase its financial commitment to the implementation of the policy.

Let me highlight that the **current migration policy is coming to an end in Dec 2018 and it is** time to start formulating the new policy. The ILO, through its TRIANGLE in ASEAN programme stands ready to support the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, other line ministries, the social partners and CSOs in this endeavor.

Before I end, I would like to thank the Australian Government for its support to the ILO TRIANGLE in ASEAN, and thereby to this review process.

I would also like to note **all the work done by our workers and employer organizations, the civil society organizations and international organizations that are vital in ensuring the successful implementation of the policy.**

Finally, I would like to thank the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training for organizing the meeting today and for **leading** the implementation of the migration policy.

Let me end by wishing the meeting great success. Thank you.