



ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ORGANIZATION
27TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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Statement delivered by

H.E. THONGSING THAMMAVONG
(President, National Assembly, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

*Excellencies,
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Honorable Leaders of AIPO Members, Special Observers and Observers delegations,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

On behalf of the National Assembly of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and congratulations to His Excellency Jose De Venecia, Jr., President of AIPO, President the Philippines House of Representatives for the kind invitation extended to me and my delegation to attend this 27th AIPO General Assembly here in the beautiful City of Cebu. My delegation and I extend our very sincere congratulations to the host for excellent arrangements and organization of this meeting. We extend our thanks to the Philippines Congress and the people of the Philippines for the warm hospitality extended to us on our arrival.

Mr President,

With general trend of peace and cooperation, our region and the world is still under threat of war, terrorism, racism and religious conflicts. One of the most prominent problems of the present is cross-border terrorism in different forms and by different conflicting groups; they pose serious threat to peace and well-being of the innocent people. In solving this problem, no one country can do it in isolation, it requires joint efforts and multilateral measures to address the issues based on the principle of respecting each others independent and sovereignty and in consistence with the United Nations Charter.

In the recent years, ASEAN Countries have strived for trade liberalization and free trade with each others; while at the same time, trying to attract more trade and investment into the region. All of this is to serve faster economic growth in the region and to improve living conditions of the people. Nevertheless, countries of the region are still at different levels in terms of background, potential and readiness to compete in the free trade system, particularly the new members like the Lao PDR. These countries are still in need of support and assistance in different areas from the older members and the dialogue partners, at the same time, the new members should also do their best to upgrade themselves so that they can make the best use of opportunities offered by free trade. AIPO should aim at creating a harmonized legal system in the economic field for ASEAN Countries; this will be one of the significant steps towards a more effective and integrated AIPO.

Avian flu, flood, drought, earthquake and tsunami occurrence in the recent years caused tremendous loss and severe impediment on economic development of the region. It is necessary to make sure that preventive measures and early warning system is in place in order to mitigate and minimize loss. Many countries still lack of resources, technology and experience in handling such a natural disasters. However, all of the above are common problems for all, it requires coordination and cooperation in addressing them to make sure that they are being kept under control within a specific scale and in order to use experience from one place to build preventive and handling measures in other places.

This year, Lao PDR has also experienced cases of avian flue but we could manage the situation very well and there was no case of transmission from animal to human and now the situation has returned to normal. In recent years, our region has enjoyed a generous assistance from friendly countries in handling avian flu and emergency relief for tsunami victims. Taking this occasion, I would like to express my deep sympathy with the people of Indonesia who experienced loss in life and property due to tsunami attack this year. At the same, I would also like to thank to those countries who extended to us a helping hand.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Poverty reduction is a priority for Lao PDR and it is still a common focus of the region; employment creation that will further result in income for a living and thus directly contribute to poverty reduction is essential. However, employment is linked with migration from places with less economic activities to places with more economic activities, both in country and abroad. Making sure that there is a harmonious legal system in the field of labor migration between ASEAN countries should be among main focus of AIPO legal cooperation. This is to ensure that migration of labor is legal, safe, easy, cheap and transparent and to prevent abuse of migrant workers, especially women and children.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our AIPO has gone through an evolution process for nearly three decades, in the past, the organization has made significant contribution in strengthening solidarity and cooperation between parliaments and peoples of the member countries. AIPO has greatly contributed to peace and stability in the region. Nevertheless, an organization that was created 30 years ago bares with it some aspects that are not relevant to present reality. In this regard, I would like to expressed my appreciation to the Ad-hoc working group for progress made in studying issues relevant to making AIPO a more effective and integrated organization, especially on the relations between AIPO and ASEAN and between governments and parliaments of member countries and, the re-naming of the organization.

The National Assembly of the Lao PDR supports the direction to make our Inter-Parliamentary Organization an effective and integrated one. Revision of the existing statute to make it more responsive to current situation and reality should be one of the first steps to be taken, once this is done, we shall start with their timely implementation to see if all aspects can work accordingly.

Distinguished delegates,

Taking this opportunity, I would like to inform you on the new National Assembly of the Lao PDR. Elections for the Sixth National Assembly took place on 30 April 2006, the assembly is consisted of 115 members representing different ethnic groups and social strata, among them there are 29 female members who cover 25% of the total number of members.

In implementation of its role, the National Assembly will focus on three main priority roles, namely representative, legislative and oversight. To respond to the needs in management of the State and the society in the new conditions, we aim at creating more new laws and revising old laws. Members of the National Assembly would have more interaction with their constituents in order to learn about their ideas and needs; to address their problems jointly with other concerned authorities. We aim at promoting compliance with the constitution and the laws of the country by the state authorities to make sure that laws are used in management of the state and the society. We will also monitor closely the implementation of the National Socio-Economic Development Plan and the state budget of each year.

Continuing the works of the former President of the National Assembly of the Lao PDR, H.E. Mr Samane Vignaket, myself and the Leadership of the National Assembly will make our best to contribute to the common cause of AIPO. I hope that we will continue to enjoy your kind support in our future endeavor.

Once again, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Philippines Congress for the warm hospitality and excellent preparations for this meeting.

I wish this General Assembly and all delegates a great success and happiness.

Thank You Very Much.