

**ASEAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS ON
STRENGTHENING THE PROTECTION AND EMPOWERMENT
OF WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS**

13-14 November 2014, Manila, Philippines

WELCOME REMARKS

Remedios I. Rikken

Chairperson, Philippine Commission on Women

To our honored guests;

Our Keynote Speaker, Honorable Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment, Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz;

ILO Country Director, Mr Lawrence Jeff Johnson;

Secretary Imelda Nicolas of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas;

Honorable Datin Paduka Hajah Intan bte Haji Mohd Kassim,

The Chairperson of the ASEAN Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC)

Distinguished delegates from the ASEAN member countries;

ASEAN and Philippine civil society groups promoting the rights of migrant workers;

Colleagues in government;

A pleasant morning and a warm welcome to everyone!

The ASEAN Conference on Strengthening the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women Migrant Workers is happening at a very opportune time. ASEAN integration in 2015 will mean an increased mobility among the people of ASEAN member states, particularly among workers. While many are into professional and skilled work and are therefore covered by country policies and protection, some find themselves in vulnerable situations, and many of them are women - like the domestic workers, those who are victims of forced labor, those who are caught in conflict situations and those who are vulnerable to or victims of human trafficking. Their

being women, their being low educated and their poverty exacerbate their vulnerabilities.

The ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, signed in Cebu City on January 13, 2007 is a landmark policy document that addresses the concerns of migrant workers. The Instrument to implement the Declaration is presently being discussed, and this Conference expects to submit its recommendations to the ASEAN Committee on Migration, or ACMW, that is tasked to formulate the Instrument. It will be our contribution to the continuing effort to promote and protect the rights of women migrant workers, particularly the most vulnerable ones. It will be our contribution to the building of a caring ASEAN socio-cultural community.

We therefore look forward to the sharing of good practices and experiences in addressing the vulnerabilities of women migrant workers, as our reference in formulating our recommendations to the ACMW. We thank the member countries, the country representatives, and the civil society organizations zealously promoting the rights and welfare of migrant workers, who are here to share their experiences.

We wish everyone a very productive and meaningful Conference.

Again, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, a very warm welcome and a pleasant good morning to all.