



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

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MESSAGE

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Secretary Rosalind Dimaplas Baldoz, the Department of Labour and Employment, Secretary Imelda M Nicholas, Chairperson of the Commission of Filipino Overseas, Ms Remedios L.Rikker, Chairperson of the Philippine Commission on Women, Mr Jeff Laurence, the Director, ILO Country Office, Colleagues from ASEAN Member States and distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

It is my great pleasure to address this Conference today and I would like to sincerely thank the Organising Committee for allowing me to speak despite the extensive agenda.

It was just not long ago when ACWC was inaugurated on 7 April 2010. Since then, ACWC among others, have completed our Work Plan 2012-2016. Some projects and activities under the Work Plan have been implemented while others are now ready for implementation. We have engaged with the sectoral bodies in ASEAN and other external parties and one of those we engaged with is ACW. Women affairs in ASEAN, as everybody here knows, is under the purview of ACW. I am here representing ACWC, an inter-governmental human rights body for the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children. For the benefit of those who are not familiar with ACWC, it is a Commission comprising of 20 representatives from ASEAN Member States with each ASEAN Member State sending two representatives. Ten representatives on women rights and ten on children rights.

When ACWC was inaugurated, it has become another landmark for the history of human rights in ASEAN, specifically for women and children. Since the adoption of human rights into the ASEAN Charter, ASEAN established several institutions which deal with human rights issues, namely: the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), the ASEAN Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), ACW and the ASEAN Committee on Migrant Workers (ACMW). ASEAN is the only region or rather sub-region having a commission for the rights of women and children. This shows strong commitment of ASEAN to see that women and children of ASEAN are treated according to the international standard. Women and children rights are very close to the hearts of the people of ASEAN.

With the establishment of ACWC and ACW, we can see there is a growing commitment, not only expectation towards the protection and advancement of women and children in this region; it is now considered rights instead benefits and privileges. But as this is still an evolving process, it is the duty of everybody in ASEAN to ensure that these institutions will bring better impact on the lives of the people of ASEAN.

As I stated earlier, ACWC and ACW both deals with women issues in ASEAN, as such there are bound to be overlapping thematic areas of interests. When ACWC looked at its work plan and the activities under it, we decided that there is need for collaboration with ACW. Collaboration will ensure there will be harmonization and synergy of work between the two bodies instead of duplicity. It will save resources and time. Against the backdrops of that realization, ACW and ACWC have made a positive attempt and the result is today's event. Issues of migrant workers are in the agenda of work both ACW and ACWC and projects coordinators and initiators on both sides happened to be the Philippines, the best way is to work together. On behalf of ACWC, I would like to thank and show our appreciation to the ACW and ACWC representatives who have worked together to start off the collaboration effort between the two bodies. We thank the Government of the Republic of the Philippine and the ILO for the financial, organizational, technical and administrative supports.

After this Conference we look forward to future work together so both bodies can contribute more effectively to the people of ASEAN. With that I would like to end my remarks and wish everyone a fruitful conference. Thank you.