

**International Labour Organization and the
Embassy of the Philippines in Singapore**

**Capacity Building Workshop on Strengthening the Role of ASEAN
Labour Attachés in Singapore**

26 April 2016

The Orchard Hotel Singapore
Singapore

Concept Note

1. Background

The ASEAN TRIANGLE Project (ATP) aims to significantly reduce the exploitation of labour migrants in the region through increased legal and safe migration and improved labour protection. The Project promotes both bilateral and regional approaches to deal with shared concerns, make regionalism more effective, and enhance the capacity of institutions in ASEAN.

The appointment of labour attachés or consular officials to major countries of destination is one important measure for migrant sending countries to strengthen the protection of their migrant workforce. Labour Attachés perform a vital role in the protection of migrant workers and in the development of effective labour migration policies. For countries that do not have labour attachés, the protection and promotion of migrants' rights in countries of destination is the responsibility of consular officials. These officers work on the frontline of protection: vetting would-be employers and contracts, responding to and resolving grievances and facilitating repatriation of their citizens.

Recommendation 13 from the 6th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML) in 2013 stated that ASEAN Member States should “Ensure and strengthen the roles of labour attachés, embassies, and consular officials to include support services on availing of complaint mechanisms for migrant workers.” Similarly, earlier recommendations were adopted at the 5th AFML in 2012: Recommendation #16 establishes that Member States should “enhance the functions of labour attachés and consular officials in ASEAN Member States to verify information of job offers and employment contracts, as feasible, in receiving countries...” and from the 3rd AFML, Recommendation #4 indicated the need to: “strengthen [the role] and raise the visibility of labour attachés and consular staff in collecting and providing information, and responding to rights violations against women and men migrant workers...through close engagement with the migrant community and employers, and in cooperation with authorities of the host countries.”

In 2013 in Malaysia, the ILO GMS TRIANGLE Project has partnered with the Malaysian Bar Council Sub-committee on Migrants and Refugees to support the regular consultations with labour attachés and embassy officials from sending countries. The ASEAN TRIANGLE Project (ATP) provided technical support to these meetings.

In Thailand, the ASEAN TRIANGLE Project (ATP) partnered with the Thai Ministry of Labour (MOL) to support the quarterly consultation for labour attachés and embassy officials from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar now posted in Bangkok starting in 2015. The activity was designed to strengthen dialogue between Thai MOL and the labour attachés and consular officials from CLM countries. The fourth consultation is scheduled on February 26, 2016 in Bangkok.

These consultation meetings with labour attaches are part of the over-all Capacity Building Program for CLM-V countries adopted in 2014 with ATP. Under the three-year program adopted, capacity building activities for these countries will cover the following five areas: data collection, bilateral agreements and MOUs, workers welfare fund, skills recognition and the labour attaches. The program for labour attaches includes, among others, training and skills upgrading, formulation of an operations manual and the institutionalization of regular dialogues at country level in the major destination countries in ASEAN, namely, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

In Singapore, a consultation workshop for labour attachés and embassy officials from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam posted in Singapore will be convened starting in 2016. The first meeting, serving as an introduction and overview, will be a half-day meeting in Singapore. The follow-up consultation workshops and their themes and modality will be discussed and decided among the participants in the first meeting..

2. Objectives

Overall objective: To enhance the capacity of ASEAN Labour Attachés now in Singapore for providing service and protection for their migrant workers through better coordination and dialogue with relevant Singapore officials and stakeholders.

Objective 1: To familiarise labour attachés and consular officials on relevant issues, including: Singapore labour laws and policies, registration procedures, complaints mechanisms, international labour standards, and the role of labour attachés.

Objective 2: To strengthen relationships among Labour Attachés; facilitate communication and develop synergies between the embassies, authorities, social partners and NGOs. It is hoped that greater cooperation between the various organizations involved in the provision of support services to migrants will increase efficiency and result to more positive outcomes for migrant workers.

3. Proposed Date and venue

Tuesday, 26 April 2016 in Singapore. An appropriate meeting room in a hotel convenient to participants will be identified.

4. Co-organizers

The Labor Office (POLO), Embassy of the Philippines in Singapore
The International Labour Organization/ ASEAN TRIANGLE Project (ILO/ATP)

5. Participants

The workshop will bring together not more than 20 participants, to include:

- Labour Attaché + 1 from seven (7) ASEAN Countries coming from the Embassies of Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam (based in

Singapore). In the event that a country has no labour attaché, appropriate consular officials can be nominated (14)

- ILO ASEAN TRIANGLE Project staff (2)
- Support staff from the Labour Office of the Philippine Embassy (2)

6. Funding

Funding will be provided by the ASEAN TRIANGLE Project, ILO

7. Agenda items

The half-day meeting will cover 3 sessions:

9:00 - 9:30 am	Opening: Embassy of the Philippines, ILO
9:30 - 10:00 am	Session 1: Current trends on labour migration in ASEAN; updates on ILO regional training program for labour attaches (ILO – 20 minutes)
10:00 - 10:15 am	Break
10:15 - 11:45 am	Session 2: Brief country presentations of their current activities, programmes and services to migrant workers. (7 countries – 10 minutes each); Q & A
11:45 - 12:15 pm	Session 3: Moving Forward: Discussion of future meetings and themes.
12:15 - 12:30 pm	Closing: ILO
12:30 - 2:00 pm	Lunch