

Country Report
For Asia-Pacific High-level Meeting on International
Migration and Development
United Nations Conference Center in Bangkok
22- 23 September 2008
Presented by Pol. Maj. Gen. Thong Lim
Director of Cambodian Immigration Department

Chairman,
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and honor for me to attend the Asia-Pacific High-level Meeting on International Migration and Development, and first of all on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to express my sincerely thanks to the Representative of the United Nations and Distinguished guests for the opportunity to address this meeting and share the views, and may I brief as follow:

A-Social and Economic context of migration

In year of 2007, Cambodia's population was more than 13 millions people. The population growth rate was approximately 1.82 per cent for 2006. The country shares a border with Thailand to its west and the northwest, with Loa PDR to its northeast, and with Vietnam to its east and southeast. The south of Cambodia faces the Gulf of Thailand. Administratively, Cambodia is divided into 24 provinces and cities.

In the last decade, Cambodia has achieved notable macroeconomic stability, social and economic development. Between 1994 and 2006 the average annual growth rate was 9.8 per cent. In 2005, the growth rate jumped to 13.4 per cent. In 2006, the growth rate was 10.4 per cent. Even though the figure was lower than 2005, it is still ranked high and encouraging. From 1994 to 2006, income per capita has more than double, from USD \$249 in 1994 to USD \$500 in 2005 and USD \$513 in 2006.

Despite recent progress, however, the per capita income is still considerably lower than other countries in the region.

B-Policy and Legal Framework

In order to increase the well-being of the Cambodian people, improving their skills, create jobs, reduce poverty, reduce unemployment and enhance the income of the Cambodian people, the Royal Government of Cambodia passed sub-decree number 57 SDC dated July 20, 1995 relating to the sending of Cambodian worker to work abroad. Based on this sub-decree, Cambodian people of both sexes who are at least from 18 years of age can submit their application forms for a job to work overseas. To protect Cambodian people working abroad and to facilitate their legal employment, the Royal Government of Cambodia has signed two MOUs with countries dealing with labor migration. The first MOU dated 31 May 2003 is between the Royal Government of Cambodia and Royal Government of Thailand related to cooperation in employment of workers, and the second MOU dated 20 November 2006 is between the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Republic of Korea under their Employment Permit System.

C-Responsibilities

Internationally, labor migration is a complex phenomenon affecting the countries of origin, transit and destination. At the national level, labor migration involves a diverse range of stakeholders that have different responsibilities such as:

- Ministry of Foreign Affaires and International Cooperation (not yet establish labor attaché)
- Ministry of Interior that issue identity cards, ordinary passports and control access at the international border check points
- Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training that issue the licenses for private recruitment agency to operate and health certificate etc.

D-Implementation

In Cambodia today there are 18 recruitment agencies licensed to operate as a recruitment agency for people wishing to work abroad. The functions performed by these companies include:

- training people to the appropriate skill level;
- providing pre-departure orientation programs; and
- making the travel arrangements.

D-1 Role of Private Recruitment Agency

The private recruitment agencies are to:

- comply with the laws and regulations of both Cambodia and the receiving country;
- deposit a guarantee amounting to USD \$100,000 with the Government of Cambodia that they will act in a legal and professional manner;
- ensure that the worker has two 2 contracts
 - o one between the worker and the recruitment company; and
 - o another one between the worker and employer in receiving country; and
- ensure the protection of the workers' rights so they are not being trafficked or used for sexual exploitation.

D-2 Type of Labor and Statistics

The type of businesses that Cambodian workers have been working in Thailand, Malaysia, and Republic of Korea include fishing, fish processing, agriculture, rice mill, factory, transport, construction, mining, housemaids and other.

Following the regularization program from 2005 until 2008, the Cambodia Working Group has granted 50,140 certificates of identification to Cambodian migrant workers to work in Thailand, 12,063 for Cambodians to work in Malaysia and around 3,000 for Cambodians to work in the Republic of Korea.

E-Challenges

Challenges facing Cambodia relating to labor migration include:

- economic disparity;
- high population growth rates;
- low skill level of the workforce;
- irregular labor migration;
- a lack of effective mechanisms to monitor private recruitment agencies;
- a lack of a mechanism to follow up on returnees; and
- a lack of cooperation between the authorities and the employers in the receiving countries.

I am hopeful that this meeting is progressing, and look forward to more dialogue in relation to it.

In closing I again express my appreciation and the appreciation of the Royal Government of Cambodia in being able to make this statement. We look forward to future discussions and development.

Thank you.