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Person of the Month



Dr. Bounpheng Philavong

Dr. Bounpheng Philavong joined the ASEAN Secretariat in June 2004 and is currently Assistant Director and Head of the Health and Population Unit, Bureau for Resources Development. He coordinates regional cooperation in health and population matters, including communicable and emerging infectious diseases, avian influenza, pandemic preparedness and response, HIV/AIDS, food safety, and pharmaceuticals. Born in Vientiane, he is a graduate of the Medical Faculty of Charles University of Prague, Czech Republic. He received a Master of Public Health in epidemiology from the University of California at Berkeley, California in 1992 and a Doctor of Public Health in international health from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1998.

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ASEAN Competitiveness Enhancement Project and AFTEX to Enhance ASEAN Textile Production

The ASEAN Federation of Textile Industries (AFTEX) and the ASEAN Competitiveness Enhancement (ACE) Project, a project under the ASEAN Development Vision to Advance National Cooperation and Economic Integration (ADVANCE) contract, signed a memorandum of understanding for joint implementation of an action program to enhance competitiveness of the ASEAN textiles and apparel industry.

blueprint by ASEAN textile producers under AFTEX for a regional global production hub.

Using the ACE Project's "Upgrading ASEAN Textiles and Apparel Supply Chains" report as a guideline, the MOU underscores the need to reduce lead times and improve product capabilities both in terms of quality and innovation. The report is a survey conducted by the ACE project, in consultation with AFTEX, on constraints and priorities for increased regional integra-

tion in ASEAN's textiles and apparel sector.

Despite the global economic slowdown, textile exports from ASEAN countries have continued to grow. For example, while total garment and textile imports into the United States for the period of January to May 2008 fell by 3% from US\$ 38.3 billion to US\$ 37.2 billion, imports from ASEAN countries rose 5% to US\$

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Promoting Multi-Sector Pandemic Preparedness



From July 9-11, 2008, representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Thailand, Viet Nam, and the ASEAN Secretariat participated in a workshop in Bangkok on how to promote multi-sector pandemic preparedness. The workshop was organized to address the need for obtaining commitments from non-health sectors, as well as

Chris Ward of Constella Futures LLC and the participants of the ASEAN Workshop on Advocacy for Promoting Multi-Sector Response to Pandemic Preparedness and Response in Bangkok, Thailand, Jul 9-11, 2008. Photo: Shinta Manurung

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WASH—water, sanitation, and health—campaigns target school children to promote sustainable sanitation.

Photo: Jay Tecson/ECO-Asia

“All [cities] face similar problems, but if we can network and share experiences among these cities, then we can tackle a whole range of problems by focusing on capacity building. At the regional level, this is what we want to create”

USAID Joins with ASEAN To Promote Cleaner Cities

Cities in ASEAN countries face similar problems in management of water and wastewater: inadequate sewerage and drainage infrastructure, supply shortages, and limited access to safe supply and to sanitation services. The ASEAN Environmentally Sustainable Cities Initiative (ESC) has devised a Clean Water Framework to address these problems.

The framework calls for raising awareness of water supply and sanitation, especially among the urban poor; promoting good governance to ensure adequate public involvement; and improving policies, financing, and human resource capacities.

ESC is benefiting from the support of ECO-Asia, USAID’s Environmental Cooperation-Asia Water and Sanitation Program, which is sharing best practices in safe water access

and sustainable sanitation services with ESC. Together, ECO-Asia and ESC worked with 19 cities to develop a regional strategy to implement the Clean Water Framework.

In accordance with that strategy, ECO-Asia is facilitating city-to-city “twinning” arrangements for sharing information, best practices, and expertise on water and sanitation. For example, Iloilo, Philippines is sharing experience with Phnom Penh, Cambodia on raising awareness of improved sanitation services, initially targeting a single city district. ECO-Asia linked the Halong Urban Environmental Company of Viet Nam with the Indah Water Konsortium, a Malaysian utility, to strengthen Halong’s capacity for operating its wastewater treatment plants.

According to Dr. Raman Letchumanan, Head of the ASEAN Environment Unit, “all [cities] face similar problems, but if we can network and share experiences among these cities, then we can tackle a whole range of problems by focusing on capacity building. At the regional level, this is what we want to create.”

ECO-Asia and ASEAN are replicating city-to-city twinning initiatives with other ESC member cities, including linking Malaysia’s Indah Water Konsortium with the Tirtanadi Water Supply Company in Medan, Indonesia to share expertise on increasing demand for sanitation services.

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ASEAN Dialogue Partners Welcome Program Coordination Consultations

On July 9, 2008, donor agency representatives of ASEAN Dialogue partners—the United States, Australia, the European Union, Japan, and the Asian Development Bank—met for the first time to coordinate future work related to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint. Donors discussed the status of their programs,

possibilities for future collaborations, program coordination, and best practices in program implementation.

Organized by the ASEAN Secretariat, the Informal Program Coordination Consultations provided a forum for donor agencies to obtain the latest information on the AEC Blueprint and to coordinate programs to minimize

duplication of activities. ASEAN Dialogue partners welcomed the consultations and concluded that they should meet at regular intervals. The next informal consultations will be held before the end of the year.

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ASEAN Competitiveness Enhancement Project and AFTEX to Enhance ASEAN Textile Production (Continued)

“We are confident that the assistance the ACE Project is providing through this MOU will allow the ASEAN textile industry to compete more effectively with China and India as a full package source for garment buyers”

6.5 billion compared to US\$ 6.2 billion.

Under the MOU, the ACE Project, will be responsible for preparing a work plan for the action program to enhance competitiveness and will provide technical assistance, training, and other support to accomplish the objectives of the joint program. AFTEX will be responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Action Program, including

soliciting information and staff collaboration from AFTEX member associations.

“We are confident that the assistance the ACE Project is providing through this MOU will allow the ASEAN textile industry to compete more effectively with China and India as a full package source for garment buyers,” RJ Gurley, director of the ACE project, said.

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Promoting Multi-Sector Pandemic Preparedness (Continued)

health sectors, to prepare for pandemics.

The nineteen workshop participants analyzed sector requirements for pandemic preparedness and response and received instruction in advocacy skills. Facilitated by Dr. Gracyana Rompas of the ASEAN-US Technical Assistance and Training Facility and Chris Ward of Constella Futures International LLC, participants learned how to map key actors and decision-making forums for promoting multi-sector pandemic preparedness and response, and how to de-

velop and use policy briefs as advocacy tools.

Participants also devised recommendations for seven non-health sectors to be considered at the first meeting of the Technical Working Group on Pandemic Preparedness in Medan, Indonesia on July 21-23, 2008.

Recommendations included having each sector develop a plan that meshes with national plans for pandemic preparedness, establishing an oversight body to ensure plan implementation, providing training in avian influenza preparedness

and response in each sector, and establishing a funding mechanism to ensure that sectors are able to implement plans during an actual pandemic.

“No pandemic preparedness plan can be effective without strong commitments from all sectors involved,” Dr. Gracyana Rompas of the Facility said. “And a successful advocacy program is the key to getting those commitments.”

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Lao to Make Progress on Three Trade Fronts Through One Project

“The common commitments of the WTO, BTA, and AEC make a single package of assistance an ideal vehicle for coordinating progress on reforms”

Through the Lao BTA Compliance and WTO Accession project, the government of Lao PDR is benefiting from support in implementing reforms necessary for Laos to join the WTO, implement the US-Lao Bilateral Trade Agreement, and fulfill commitments to achieve an ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by 2015 as outlined in the Vientiane Action Program and the AEC Blueprint.

The common commitments of the WTO, BTA, and AEC make a single package of assistance an ideal vehicle for coordinating progress on reforms. Over a one-year period, the program is working with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, line ministries, and the National Assembly to raise awareness of reform

needs, develop a trade resource center, and provide targeted legal and economic analysis.

The project organized a trade in services workshop on June 19-20, 2008 that focused on issues important to Lao negotiators and service sector regulators. The workshop provided a range of expertise that included a presentation by a Viet Nam services negotiator who provided insights into how Viet Nam implemented its obligations under its bilateral trade agreement with the United States.

The project is part of the ASEAN Development Vision to Advance National Cooperation for Economic Integration (ADVANCE) contract of the U.S. State Department and U.S Agency for Inter-

national Development. Victoria Waite, Project Director and Trade Specialist, is managing the program largely from Nathan Associates' headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. She is supported by a local subcontractor, Enterprise & Development Consultants. Program activities were launched in early January 2008.

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The Facility Bids Farewell to One Dedicated Staff and Welcomes a New One

Cena Maxfield, Trade Specialist and Training Coordinator of the ASEAN-US Technical Assistance and Training Facility, is returning to the United States to pursue a joint MBA and MA in international economic policies. Ms. Maxfield has been involved with the Facility since its inception. She helped draft the Facility concept paper and proposals, and supported the project from

Washington D.C. for two years before coming to Jakarta in 2006. Ms. Maxfield's dedication and expertise will be greatly missed and all Facility staff wish her the best in her future endeavors.

The Facility also welcomes Lisa Hillmann, who arrived in Jakarta in July to replace Ms. Maxfield. Ms. Hillmann has been supporting the Facil-

ity, the ASEAN Single Window, and the umbrella ADVANCE contract from Nathan Associates' home office in Arlington, Virginia.

East-West Dialogue Spotlights the Importance of ASEAN

Michael Plummer of the East-West Center and Johns Hopkins University believes that ASEAN is so important to U.S. economic diplomacy that it deserves special attention. A successful ASEAN economy of 585 million people will strengthen, balance, and stabilize the economic architecture of the Asia-Pacific region.

In the latest issue of the *East-West Dialogue*, published by the East-West Center, Plummer calls for deepening civic and cultural ties between

the United States and ASEAN through two ambitious initiatives: a U.S.-ASEAN Economic Space and a U.S.-ASEAN Partnership Fund. Commentaries by Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary General of ASEAN, Scot Marciel, U.S. Ambassador for ASEAN affairs, Kishore Mahbubani, former Singapore ambassador to the UN, and Chalongphob Sussangkarn, former Minister of Finance of Thailand, elaborate on these initiatives in the same issue. All agree that the ASEAN-U.S. relationship is vital, that the region is

receptive to U.S. initiatives, and that both ASEAN and the United States stand to gain from deeper partnership.

East-West Dialogue is available at <http://forum.eastwestcenter.org/eastwestdialogue/>

For further information, contact the Convener of the *East-West Dialogue*, Peter A. Petri, Senior Fellow of the East-West Center and Professor at Brandeis University:

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EVENTS

Event	Place	Time
Roundtable on UNECE Global Technical Regulations (Automotive Product Working Group)	Lao PDR	August 4
Information Infrastructure Roundtable	Indonesia	August 22-23
40th ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting	Singapore	August 25-29
8th Telecommunications and IT Ministerial Meeting (TELMIN)	Indonesia	August 28-29

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