



ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**THE 11<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE AIPA FACT-FINDING COMMITTEE (AIFOCOM)**

**TO COMBAT THE DRUG MENACE**

**12<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014, Landmark Mekong Riverside Hotel**

**Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic**

*THEME: "Enhancing Parliamentary Cooperation for a Drug Free ASEAN Community"*

Opening Speech

by Her Excellency PanyYathortu,

President of National Assembly of Lao PDR and President of AIPA

**for the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of AIPA Fact-Finding Committee**

**(AIFOCOM) to Combat the Drug Menace**

**13<sup>th</sup> May 2014, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR**

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Honourable Heads and members of delegations,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

First of all, as President of AIPA and President of National Assembly of Lao PDR, It is my great pleasure to welcome all delegates from AIPA member parliaments, representatives of international organizations and all distinguished guests to the 11<sup>th</sup> AIFOCOM today in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR.

This AIFOCOM meeting is an important and meaningful event forming part of the mechanism for cooperation within AIPA framework. It offers an opportunity for members from AIPA member parliaments as well as representatives from regional and international organizations to engage in a dialogue and share experiences on prevention and combating against drug threats aiming at realizing the drug-free ASEAN community agreed upon by ASEAN leaders.

**Honourable members of Parliament,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Drug is a chronic problem that is hard to solve all at once in our ASEAN region as well as world-wide. In the past, though regional and international organizations and governments have gradually strengthened and linked legal, financial and educational measures to combat and prevent drug production, use and trafficking; drug is still a menace and a huge threat to national security, political stability, social harmony and development progress.

Lao PDR has suffered ongoing drug threats. The government has put in place the national strategy and effective detailed measures to seriously address the drug menace. Some legal instruments have been adjusted to meet real circumstances. Public awareness has been raised, especially amongst the youth and adolescence on the harms of narcotic drugs. Moreover, the government has also provided assistances to former poppy growers to shift to more sustainable employments and livelihoods; drug victims have easier access to treatment though mental as well as physical rehabilitation so that they can become good citizens again. In addition, Lao PDR

has actively adhere to its regional and international commitments by mainstreaming international agreements into national laws and also cooperates strongly with friendly countries and international organizations.

As President of National Assembly of Lao PDR representing the people of Laos, I would like to express our appreciation for the support and assistance from parliaments of ASEAN member countries, their governments and the people. Our gratitude is also delegated toward regional and international organizations and all friendly countries for the support given to Laos.

**Honourable AIPA delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Facing the threat and danger of drug menace to human of all genders, ages and generations; one organization or country alone cannot solve this problem. It is therefore necessary for parliaments to enhance their roles in passing suitable laws and overseeing their enforcement, to increase closer cooperation and collaboration aiming at concretely and effectively implementing laws and international commitments.

I strongly believe that all honourable delegates who participate in this meeting will brainstorm and offer your invaluable inputs on matters outlined in the agenda and in the following directions.

- (1) Increase efforts to effectively implement AIPA resolutions and ASEAN agreements relating to law enforcement for the drug-free ASEAN.
- (2) Intensify information sharing on situations, legal instruments and practical measures.
- (3) Revises existing national laws in order to proceed with appropriate amendment.
- (4) Raise Public awareness especially for the youth and students to say “No” to drug.
- (5) Encourage governments and concerned organizations to be more committed in addressing drug issue under their roles and responsibility.

I sincerely hope that, after this AIFOCOM, Parliament of member country will have its own action plan to realize these meeting resolutions concretely, for the best interest and happiness at families, youth and people in general.

In conclusion, I would like to wish all honourable delegates and distinguished participants best of health and success in your noble tasks. On this occasion, I hereby declare the opening of the 11<sup>th</sup> AIFOCOM Meeting from this moment onwards.

Thank you.