

## Promoting cross-border movement of skilled laborers in ASEAN

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JAKARTA (ILO News) – Paving the way for the cross-border recognition of skills in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) will be discussed by ASEAN member countries' high-level representatives in Jakarta today.

The two-day meeting, from 24-26 September, will discuss the mutual recognition of skills, once the AEC comes into effect in 2015, and develop action plans through discussions between government, workers' and employers' organizations.

"The mutual recognition of skills is the major instrument for skilled labour mobility in ASEAN," said Carmela Torres, the ILO Senior Specialist on Skills and Employability. "The ILO, as a vital player in the labour area, will stay committed to providing technical support, to ensure smooth pathways to decent work as we move towards the goal of the AEC in 2015".

Attended by representatives from ASEAN governments, employers' and workers' organizations, the workshop will play an important role in helping the ASEAN member states accelerate their mutual recognition of skills. The event has been organized by the ILO Regional Skills Programme, the ILO project to improve labour migration in ASEAN (ASEAN TRIANGLE), the ILO Country Office for Indonesia, and the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration (MoMT) of Indonesia. It is supported by the Canada Government and the ILO/Korea Partnership Programme.

"We aim to reduce the exploitation of labour migrants in the region through increased legal and safe migration and improved labour protection. The mutual recognition of skills is considered to be one of the essential tools for rights' protection," said Manuel Imson, Senior Programme Officer/Project Coordinator for ASEAN TRIANGLE project.

The ILO has provided a range of technical assistance and advisory services related to the mutual recognition of skills. This has included the development of Regional Model Competency Standards (RMCS), which have been used as a benchmark for developing national skills standards in the region, and activities to promote mutual skills recognition mechanisms in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. In addition a study has been published, the "Assessment of the Readiness of ASEAN Member States for Implementation of the Commitment to the Free Flow of Skilled Labour within the ASEAN Economic Community from 2015".

Earlier, a validation and action-planning workshop was organised, with ASEAN senior labour officials and skills focal points, to help identify priority skills sectors for mutual recognition. Subsequently the identified skills sectors were presented to employers at an ASEAN Employers' regional meeting in October 2013.

The ASEAN Secretariat has been actively involved in the consultation meetings and played a key role in developing the ASEAN Regional Qualifications Framework (AQRf).

"Cooperation among stakeholders is the key to success," said Peter Van Rooij, Director of the ILO Country Office for Indonesia. "This initiative was well supported by Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, Indonesia, which plays an important role in skills development."

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