



Interpellation Title: Language proficiency and the Preparation of Thailand for Moving towards ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)

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Cabinet Term:	Miss Yingluck Shinawatra, Prime Minister
Proposed by:	Mr. Watchara Petthong, Democrat Party, Party List
Persons who are questioned:	Minister of Labour (Pol. Capt. Chalerm Yubamrung)
Replied by:	Minister of Labour (Pol. Capt. Chalerm Yubamrung)
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Summary of the Questions

The free flow of skilled labour is one of the missions of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), a regional organization which will fully be established in 2015. However, one of the major hindrances towards the free flow of skilled labour among ASEAN member countries is the language proficiency which varies among all 10 ASEAN countries with 10 different languages. Considering individual aspect, those who can perform foreign language skill, especially English as a universal language, will benefit from higher competitive labour market in their countries and will also be able to compete in other higher-paid labour markets. In national level, a country that has population with language proficiency will attract more foreign investments than the other countries. From the reasons above, the interpellant would like to raise questions as follows:

1. What is the government's national development policy in language proficiency in order to prepare workforces for entry to ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)? In case the government plans to set up a budget for this language capacity development, will the activities be applied by the Fiscal Year 2014 or 2015?

2. If the government already prepared national development policy in language proficiency, as mentioned in Question 1, what are the measures to providing language trainings for Thai workforces and people? Please clarify in details.

Summary of the Answers

Answer to the questions In the Fiscal Year 2014, Department of Employment will proceed with language proficiency and skill of labour development project in correspondence with global labour market's need and with competency development course for Thai workforces, in order to be able to compete with other countries' workforces in South Korean, Japanese and Chinese markets. The Department of Employment will also provide Korean, Japanese and Chinese languages courses for Thai workers. Besides, other foreign language courses for specific professions will be conducted through e-Learning system. Department of Skill Development, as the secretary to Sub-committee on Workforce Capacity Building on Language and Culture to Coping with Free Flow of Labours, already set up "Strategic Framework for Workforce Capacity Building on Language and Culture Capacity Standardization", which aims to meet 3 target groups' needs which are (1) group of those who just enter the labour market (2) group of registered workers and (3) group of unregistered workers. The said Sub-committee already planned to increase language and cultural proficiency on specific group, especially the workforces in main industry who will be affected from the competitiveness in labour market. The training will focus on speaking and communication skills, cultural proficiency and application of ICT and all kinds of media resources, which will enable the listening and speaking skills of the learners. Public relations method is also applied to all relating sectors as a mean to emphasize on the importance of language and culture learning, as well as applying incentive methods to stimulate more labours to the training. Pilot project was already conducted with English, Japanese, Vietnamese and Khmer language courses for tourism, manufacturing industry and hospitality services. The strategic goal aims to (1) In educational aspect : to provide additional education for the graduates in order to enter Thai market with language capability and cultural awareness, which serves to compete with other workforces in ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), (2) In labour productivity : to increase the number of workforces with the same standard of language and cultural proficiency in AEC, (3) In competency standard : to prepare Thai workforces in language and cultural proficiency in order to seek for better opportunity in labour markets through trainings and evaluations, as well as promotion, support and pursuit of cooperation with public and private sectors and other corresponding agencies and (4) In decent labour management : to integrate and cooperate with all parties involved in order to achieve the strategic goal in increasing Thai labour productivity capable of language and cultural proficiency. Department of Labour Protection and Welfare is the agency that precisely provides business support service to businesses in training to their employees for entry to the forthcoming AEC. Social Security Office provides English-language training for the workforces as the preparation for entry into the AEC for 5 classes in 2012 and another 5 classes in 2013.