

Intervention by the delegation of Thailand
Session II – Improving economic prospects in countries of emigration
25 May 2005 11.00-12.30 hrs.

Irregular migration emanates from various social and economic problems, such as widening economic disparities, unbalanced development, and poverty. These call for a need to consider strategy to reduce the development gap and promote closer economic cooperation. Our experience teaches us that return will not be sustainable without successful reintegration and attractive development options and incentives in countries of origin. We strongly believe that enhancing the capacity of countries of origin in providing better living conditions to their own citizens is very important not only to ensure the sustainable and effective reintegration of returnees, but also to prevent new outflows of their citizens.

In this connection, Thailand has promoted what we call the Economic Cooperation Strategy, especially in the border areas, with our neighbouring countries to develop an enabling environment for the economic rehabilitation and creation of employment. For example, the establishment of an economic zone along the border, the relaxation of border crossing for daily migrant workers in the economic zone. We also believe that this strategy could alleviate emigration pressure among the economically and socially vulnerable populations in our neighbouring countries as well as to address some concerns related to other transnational problems.

Developed countries can play important role in this development strategy by becoming our partners in various projects under this framework. In fact, a number of developed countries have already expressed their interest in supporting this initiative. This new partnership could better improve sustainable development in these countries of emigration than the traditional donor-recipient relationship.