

**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH OF DATIN HJH MASNI
HOST OF THE 17TH IFNGO ASEAN NGO WORKSHOP
DECEMBER 2007
BASMIDA
Brunei Darussalam**

Distinguished delegates of this 16th IFNGO ASEAN NGO's Workshop

- Justice Intuputi
- President of the National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand
- Police General Chavalit Yudmane – President, ASPAC NGO

May I, first of all, take this opportunity to convey BASMIDA's appreciation to our core gracious hosts and organizers of this 16th IFNGO ASEAN NGO's Workshop.

- National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand
- Asia-Pacific NGO on Drug and Substance Abuse Prevention
- The chief sponsor, the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, US Department of State

I hope that BASMIDA from a small country will be able to perform to the same high standards of efficiency and meet up your expectations.

At this workshop, it is my pleasure to sell old friends, for example Gen. Chavalit whom I met back in 1987 – him as the Secretary General of ONCB and me as the newly recruited government official trying to set up an anti-drug unit at the Ministry of Education and Health. I was fascinated by the challenge of anti-drug work and looked up at him as one of my mentors.

And of course at the workshop, I had met new acquaintances, especially Mr. Thom Browne of the US Department of State and some Afghanistan delegates working as staff at the United Nations in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Insyallah, 2007 represents the 3rd time that BASMIDA will host the IFNGO ASEAN NGO's Workshop, the first being in 1990's, the 11th in 2001.

BASMIDA as the national anti-drug NGO, is a non-profit, non-government organization is happy to host this forthcoming 17th IFNGO and had chosen the Theme: "Overcome the incidence of recidivism to ensure ASEAN DRUG-FREE 2015". The objective is not only on a platform to share knowledge and experiences and best practices but also to highlight to our decision makers on the relationship between unemployed or unemployability of ex drug addicts/poverty/crime and economic growth of the region.

We need standards to be able to compare how each other is doing in the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers.

The role of NGO's in helping the reintegration process of the ex-drug addicts is extremely important and effective especially those with grassroots support and networking. Micro credit without collateral by NGO's is another strategy in helping low-income families or unemployed ex-drug addicts, or to reduce poverty, with the main objective of increasing their self-esteem.

The business sector of the community, who are conscious of their social responsibility, needs to be continuously and diplomatically lobbied by NGO's which must practice transparency, accountability and good governance. The role of the family members and loved ones while the drug addicts undergo treatment and rehabilitation and reintegration into society is of giving continuous love and support while the NGO, as an advocate in networking with different community sectors can give job opportunities/vacancies, and retraining and counseling.

With these remarks at this auspicious moment, I have the honor , on behalf of BASMIDA to humbly accept.

Brunei, ASEAN Member Countries' Vision is "ASEAN Drug free 2015" envisioned Southeast Asia free from illicit drugs, free from abuse and free from producing drugs.

Collective and united efforts from the business community, from individuals, from government agencies are crucial in the success of a Workshop like the IFNGO ASEAN NGOs Workshop. I appeal to a more cooperative spirit to government agencies as NGO's are not here to compete but to complement the efforts of the government agencies. And of course, collaborative alliances with organizations like Colombo Plan Bureau, the agency responsible for the Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre, the educationists are as important to the ultimate goal of eradicating drug abuse.