

## Statement of ASSA Chairman

In recent years, ASSA has been very successful in promoting social security cooperation in the region through the forms of experience sharing, information exchange and joint researches. To date, ASSA has gathered 22 social security institutions in the 09 ASEAN member countries, becoming the largest regional forum of social security. This is a prerequisite for establishing an efficient and sustainable ASEAN social security network in order to maintain social stability and economic development, provide better welfare for the people.

Holding the 2010 - 2011 ASSA Chairmanship, Vietnam Social Security has made good efforts to implement the approved agenda. The 26th ASSA Board Meeting in Hanoi in September 2010 and the 27th ASSA Board Meeting in Singapore in March 2011 were very successful. Through activities such as meetings, seminars and site visits, the ASSA members shared practical experiences, took initiatives to promote the cooperation and studied the successful models in the region and the world in order to narrow the development gap among the ASEAN countries in social security field. The admission of the Cambodian National Social Security Fund has followed the ASSA roadmap. The effort including Myanmar into ASSA is properly carrying on.

In the future, ASSA should be an influential social security forum in Asia-Pacific region, constantly extend ASSA by admitting more new members, actively cooperate with non-ASEAN partners, take the reform measures in order to further improve its efficiency and prestige.

I believe that with strong commitment and traditional solidarity built by the ASSA members, we will together strive to achieve our goals developing ASSA and contributing to the ASEAN's prosperity.

Finally, I would like to thank all member institutions for their corporation and supports during my tenure. I also welcome the incoming Chairwoman of ASSA, Puan Norliah Haji Kula, Managing Director of Employees Trust Fund, Brunei Darussalam. I hope that under the new chairmanship, ASSA will continue growing and bringing practical benefits to the members.

**LE BACH HONG**  
*Chairman*  
*ASEAN Social Security Association*  
*Vice-Minister, Director General*  
*Vietnam Social Security*

# Statement of ASSA Secretary General

The 27<sup>th</sup> ASSA Board Meeting took place from 24 to 26 March 2011 in Singapore with the participation of almost 70 delegates from ASSA member countries including Brunei, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, observers from Cambodia and international guests.

This Meeting continued showing the commitments in improving effectiveness and practicality of ASSA meetings, focused on sharing good practice and experiences dealing with imminent and future challenges of social security systems. In Pre-Board Meeting seminar "Health care and long-term care financing", the ASSA delegates listened and discussed enthusiastically experiences of developed countries facing with the challenges for long-term health care, developing employees benefits, health care by group insurance, and prospects of the public-private partnership in health insurance.

In the 27<sup>th</sup> ASSA Board Meeting, through the admission of National Social Security Fund, Cambodia officially became the 9th ASSA member country joining with Brunei, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The Board members also discussed important issues concerning the activities of the Association.

With the role of providing information and reflecting member organization's activities between ASSA



Meetings, this ASSA News volume highlighted the contribution in voluntary complimentary pension of ETF Brunei, online services of CPF Singapore, activities celebrating the 10th anniversary of Social Security Organization of Laos, the latest news on the social security system of Philippines, the improvement of health benefits for members of EPF Malaysia, the cooperative ties in health insurance between Korea, Thailand and Vietnam, the extension of coverage to informal sector of SSO Thailand, and the cooperative activity on pension scheme between Jamsostek-Indonesia and SSS-Philippines.

Over the year, it is my great honor to serve as an ASSA Secretary General. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the member institutions for their supports and valuable cooperation. Also, I would like to extend the best wishes to my colleagues in ASSA Secretariat who have been actively contributing to the success of ASSA Meetings in the past year.

**Ph.D. DO VAN SINH**  
*Secretary General  
ASEAN Social Security Association  
Deputy Director General  
Vietnam Social Security*

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# Brunei: Voluntary Contribution At Tap Counters



**A**s part of a continuous effort to inculcate savings culture, Tabung Amanah Pekerja (TAP) or Employees Trust Fund (ETF) of Brunei Darussalam has introduced a new initiative allowing TAP registered members to make additional contribution on voluntary basis directly to any TAP counters. The Voluntary Contribution service officially commence on 1st March 2011.

During the launching of the Voluntary Contribution service, Haji Md Noor Amali Haji Mirhasan Acting Executive Manager of Customer Service Unit mentioned that with the introduction of this new service, TAP members will have the opportunity to increase their funds to secure their retirement needs. However, funds deposited through this service are subject to the current TAP withdrawal schemes.

With this new initiative, TAP registered members both in private and public sector, are encouraged to make additional contribution on voluntary basis with a minimum of B\$10.00 and a maximum amount of B\$1,500.00. Although members are not obliged to

make the voluntary contribution on a monthly basis at a fixed amount but they are encourage to do so in order to benefit TAP's high dividend payout.

This service was also launched in conjunction with the Financial Planning month for the year 2011; this includes various financial-planning activities which have been arranged by TAP.

Since its launch, there has been a steady increase in the number of voluntary contribution. TAP believes that the initiative in conducting Financial Planning talks which have been carried out since 2005, has shown to be an effective effort by TAP to acknowledge the members of the importance of savings and more importantly their awareness of having systematic financial planning. Therefore, TAP will continue to plan and enhance the efforts to instill savings society to spend prudently. This will also indirectly support Brunei's Vision 2035 through one of its 8 strategies in sustaining the social safety nets for citizens. ■

# Cambodia: Employment Injury Insurance (EII) of National Social Security Fund (NSSF)



**E**mployment Injury Insurance is a compulsory social insurance covering all employees as defined by the provision of the Labour Law. An accident is considered to be employment injury consist of Accident at Workplace, Commuting Accident and Occupational Disease. In the first phase of the process of NSSF, every employer or owner of enterprises/ establishments under the Law employed from 8 employees shall have a compulsory

to registered and pay contributions for occupational risks to NSSF. Workmen compensation contribution is a separate compulsory of employer or owner of enterprise/ establishment. Workers/employees are not obliged to pay such contributions. Contribution rate for occupational risks is an agreeable rate which is determined by 0.8% percent of average wage in the level of monthly wage of workers/employees.

## Coverage

- ⌚ Total staff: 145  
(95 government officials)
- ⌚ 10 branch offices
- ⌚ 23 Hospitals and healthcare centers
- ⌚ 1 call center (24/h)



## CHALLENGES

### Internal Challenges

- ⌚ Further human resources improvement
- ⌚ Has to improve information technology system

### External Challenges

- ⌚ NSSF started its first operation amid the global financial crisis (late 2008)
- ⌚ Medical service providers (still to be improved)
- ⌚ Limited employers and employees awareness

## FUTURE PLAN

- ⌚ Social Health Insurance-SHI (2012)
- ⌚ Pension Scheme (2015)

## Membership (Semester I, 2011)

⌚ Employees of Enterprises having 8 and more employees	706,842
⌚ Employees Registered by NSSF	623,088

## Benefits of Occupational Risks

- ⌚ Emergency Service Provision
- ⌚ Provision of Caring Services and Treatment
- ⌚ Provision of Daily Allowance
- ⌚ Benefits for Permanent Loss of Working Ability
- ⌚ Contribution for Funeral
- ⌚ Survivor's/Beneficiary Benefit
- ⌚ Care Taker Benefit
- ⌚ Rehabilitation Service.

# Indonesia: Jamsostek and SSS - Philippines held a technical actuarial workshop on pension program



The enactment of Republic Act number 40 in 2004 concerning the National Social Security System (NSSS) is a pivotal point to the landscape of social security system in Indonesia. It mandates a reform not only in term of coverage extension but also program extension.

One of the extended programs is the implementation of Pension program for workers in both formal and informal sector. To date it exclusively covers the civil servants, run by PT. Taspen (Persero) and the army/police, run by PT. Asabri (Persero) while the workers in private sectors enjoy a provident fund program, run by PT. Jamsostek (Persero). It is expected that under the NSSS all workers will have both these two protections. It is realized that this mandate is really a big challenge for the entire existing social security administrator.

In June 2011, PT. Jamsostek initiated a 5-days technical "Actuarial Workshop on Pension Program Towards the Implementation of National Social Security System" in collaboration with the Social Security System of the Philippines in Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Jakarta. Mr. Rizaldy T. Capulong (Deputy Actuary of the SSS) with his rich experiences as an actuary and consultant was the resource person during the workshop.

The objectives of the workshop are to increase the understanding of pension actuary principles and to learn from good practices of pension program around the world, including the experiences of the Philippines.

The workshop was limited to 25 participants but representing all of the related stakeholders like the Ministry of Finance, the Social Security Council, the Association of Indonesian Pension Program and also the representatives of the existing social security organizations (Asabri, Jamsostek and Taspen).

The topics during the workshop was really comprehensive which consisted of theory and good practices of social security system, social security financing, the SSS experiences, Indonesian social security system compared to the rest of the world, highlights of the NSSS, the actuary's role & statutory actuarial provisions, international actuarial standards, actuarial valuation for social security, actuarial standards for retirement plans, application of standard deviations in Investment, pension funding and valuation.

Mr. H. Hotbonar Sinaga, CEO of PT. Jamsostek, during the closing of the workshop had successfully gained a strong commitment of all participants from all institutions to use this workshop as the foundation of future network to communicate and collaborate in designing the Government regulation. ■

# Laos: SSO Celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

2011 is the year for Social Security Organization of Laos celebrating its 10th Anniversary. Since its establishment in 1st June 2001, with tremendous support from Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, it has engaged more than 50.000 working employees and provided more than 110.000 beneficiaries as part of its mission to protect employees and their dependents against risks.

The Social Security Organization held a community walk along the Lane Xang Avenue to mark its 10th Year Anniversary. The ceremony was attended by Vice-minister of Labour, Mr. Bounkhong Larsoukan, chairman of SSO Board of Directors, Mr. Khamphuang Inthaseng General Director of SSO and other stakeholder participants.

"For 10 years, the Social Security Organization has played a critical roles in developing and using a comprehensive social security system in Laos by providing 8 types of benefits namely, health insurance,

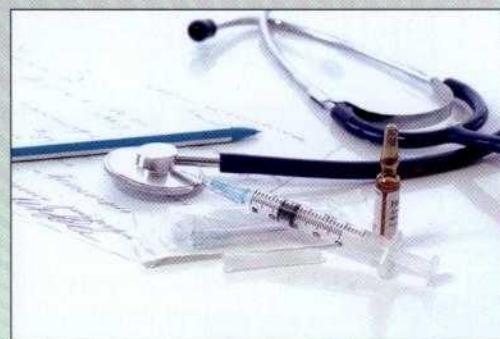


sickness benefit, maternity benefit, death grant, old-aged pension, invalidity pension and survivor pension, to its members. Recently, it has seen a gradually growth and increasing public recognition, it constantly pays great attention in public education, particularly among entrepreneurs to realize the importance of the social security affairs" said Mr. Khamphuang Inthaseng, Director General of SSO. 'Organizing this walking for health is one of the activities to raise public awareness and employees should realize their subscription to the social security system to ensure their welfare benefits when experiencing occupational accidents, medical treatment, illness, maternity, death, retirement and invalidity' he added.

After a short brief on SSO, Vice-minister, Chairman of SSO Board of Director, Mr. Bounkhong Larsoukan attended the stage for official open the walk and led thousands of walkers participating in the event. ■



# Malaysia: EPF enhances health withdrawal to ease members' burden



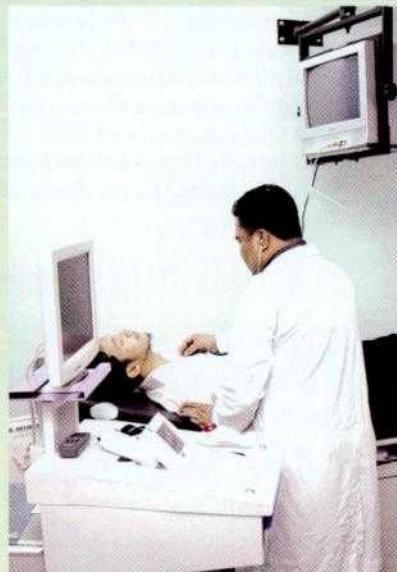
**M**edical cost has been escalating year on year. In Malaysia's dual healthcare system, patients of private hospitals are likely to receive a much more expensive medical bill in the future, while the country will be further saddled by the rising subsidies that it has to funnel to the Government-led, public-funded hospitals to offer affordable medical treatment to the people.

Increasingly, more individuals are purchasing medical insurance to cover the medical expenses for treatment at private hospitals. With the rising costs, it would mean that the individual would also have to pay a higher premium. However, a point will eventually be reached where the individual will no longer be able to keep up with the rising premium resulting in him not being sufficiently covered in terms of medical care.

The costs factor may drive many to seek treatment at government hospitals which charge nominal fees for outpatient treatment, consultation with specialist and hospitalisation. But there is no certainty that this rate can be sustained.

In view of that, the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) has recently extended its list of types of critical illnesses that are eligible for Health Withdrawal from 39 to 55 in an attempt to ease the financial burden of its members.

The additional 16 types of illnesses in the revised list include severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung fibrosis, chronic inflammatory bowel disease, systemic sclerosis with pulmonary hypertension and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), and three types of mental illness.



In addition, through the same withdrawal, members are now allowed to purchase medical support equipment and paraphernalia required by patients undergoing treatment for all malignancy (Cancer) illnesses and illnesses which involve the disorders of cardiovascular system, respiratory system, nervous system, musculoskeletal system and ear.

Members can withdraw from their Account 2 to not only finance the medical treatment for himself but also that of his family member's. Under this withdrawal, the definition of "family members" include spouse, children, stepchildren or legally adopted children, parents, parents-in-law, step-parents or legal foster parents, and siblings.

The allowable withdrawal amount is based on the total cost of the medical treatment subject to the availability of funds in Account 2. As such, the EPF allows its members to withdraw jointly with other family members from their respective savings in Account 2 to assist in financing the medical treatment of the patient in the event withdrawal from one is insufficient to get the patient through the necessary medical treatment.

Withdrawal eligibility also comes with a caveat since Health Withdrawal is a pre-retirement withdrawal thus bleeding the member's accumulated retirement savings.

Those whose medical expenses are fully undertaken by their respective employer, or their family member's employer, are not eligible to make the withdrawal to preserve the EPF's fundamental role of providing a retirement income for their members when they are in their golden years. ■

# Philippines: Computerworld honors Text-SSS as “visionary application”

Computerworld Publishing, a US-based global media firm, recognized the “Text-SSS” service of the Philippine Social Security System (SSS) with one of its 2011 Honors Laureate distinction for “visionary applications of information technology” that gives members access to their SSS contribution and loan records using text messaging on their mobile phones.

SSS President and CEO Emilio de Quiros, Jr. was presented with the Honors medallion during ceremonies held in Washington, D.C. on June 20, 2011. The Text-SSS facility is an awardee under the Economic Opportunity category of the 2011 Computerworld Honors Program, which recognizes organizations “that create and use IT to promote and advance the public welfare, benefit society, and



**SSS President and CEO  
Emilio De Quiros Jr. (le) is  
congratulated by  
Computerworld Publisher  
John Amato (right) during  
the 23rd Computerworld  
Honor Laureates Ceremony  
and Gala Awards at the  
Andrew Mellon Auditorium in  
Washington, D.C. on June 20,  
2011.**

change the world for the better.”

“The Computerworld recognition is a testament to the success of

Text-SSS in bringing social security services closer to workers in the Philippines, which is now known as the ‘Text Capital of the World,’ President de Quiros noted. “Access to information is important to our members. Thru Text-SSS, we have provided them that.”

The Text-SSS service launched in February 2010 and about 130,000 members have since registered with Text-SSS as of May 2011, which enables them to check their contributions and loan status. The SSS plans to expand its Text-SSS services to allow inquiries on benefit eligibility and claim status, location of SSS servicing branches, and documentary requirements for benefit applications. Loan and benefit applicants would also receive status notices through text messages instead of letters through the mail. ■

## New SSS savings window to increase members’ retirement benefits

The SSS plans to open this year a voluntary savings program for members so they can look forward to more benefits in the future, on top of their retirement pension, a top official said.

SSS President and CEO Emilio de Quiros, Jr. stressed that the voluntary provident fund (VPF) program will offer members guaranteed retirement earnings that are higher than ordinary savings deposit rates.

“The voluntary provident fund is intended to augment benefits under the regular SSS program. We are finalizing the infrastructure and system support needed to implement the program and we expect to complete preparations in the coming months,” De Quiros said.

The VPF will be open to members who are less than 55 years old, including self-employed (SE) workers, voluntary members (VM) and overseas Filipino workers (OFW). SE-VMs and OFWs must be paying at the maximum amount of contributions under the regular SSS program --- now pegged at P1,560 per month --- for at least six months immediately prior to the month of enrollment in the VPF. For employed members, payments in the VPF would

be on top of their regular SSS contributions.

“Unlike regular SSS premiums that have fixed deadlines, contributions to the VPF can be made anytime. A member can put in up to P100,000 per year, with a minimum contribution of P1,000 per payment which must be in multiples of P100,” De Quiros explained.

He added that provident fund savings are intended for retirement, total disability, medical and general purposes. Funds withdrawn by members before the end of the five-year retention period from the medical and general purpose portion will be subjected to penalties and charges. Savings for retirement can be withdrawn in lump sum, as monthly pension, or a combination of both when the member is separated from employment at age 60 or onwards.

“Another advantage of the program is that SSS would compute the fund’s actual yield at the end of every year,” he said. The SSS plans to set up an online provident fund account system in the SSS website ([www.sss.gov.ph](http://www.sss.gov.ph)) to enable members to monitor their investment earnings through the Internet. ■

# Singapore: “*my cpf* - CPF Service Transformation” wins World Summit Award

The CPF Board has been conferred the prestigious World Summit Award (WSA) 2011, in recognition of *my cpf* online services. The WSA is a global activity to select and promote the world's best e-Content and most innovative Infocomm Technology (ICT) applications. The award categories are:

- e-Business and Commerce
- e-Culture and Heritage
- e-Entertainment and Games
- e-Government and Institutions
- e-Health and Environment
- e-Inclusion and Participation
- e-Learning and Education
- e-Science and Technology

Over 460 submissions from 105 countries were assessed on the basis of content and creativity by an esteemed Grand Jury in Hong Kong in April 2011, with the five most outstanding products in each of the eight categories selected for the award. Members of the Grand Jury were from various continents, with backgrounds in telecommunication, advertising, journalism, research, teaching and creative industries.

*my cpf* was recognized as one of the five most outstanding best practice developments in the “e-Government & Institutions” category. This

award category credits public administrations that tap into the potential of ICT to significantly improve processes and enhance public service delivery to individuals, businesses and organizations.

*my cpf* has revolutionized the service delivery model of public service in Singapore. To educate and empower an ageing but increasingly IT-sophisticated population to plan early for a secure retirement, the CPF Board has leveraged on the innovative use of ICT and close engagement of CPF members to develop a full suite of interactive retirement planning tools and materials customized to various member profiles, according to their different life events and levels of IT-savviness. This “Different Strokes for Different Folks” approach ensures that no member segment is left out. More IT-savvy members have the option of using mobile and new media channels, while less IT-savvy members have access to more conventional e-services. This spectrum of various services helps “Bridge the Digital Divide” across different member profiles. ■

## My.SSS portal expands online services for SSS members

The SSS has enhanced the services offered through its website ([www.sss.gov.ph](http://www.sss.gov.ph)) via its My.SSS portal which allows the online submission by registered employers of loan and contribution collection reports, maternity notifications, as well as the certification of their employees' salary loan applications. For self-employed and voluntary members, the My.SSS portal also allows them to view their social security contribution records and employment history, as well as to set appointments with their SSS servicing branch.

According to SSS President and CEO Emilio De Quiros Jr., the website enhancements would enable

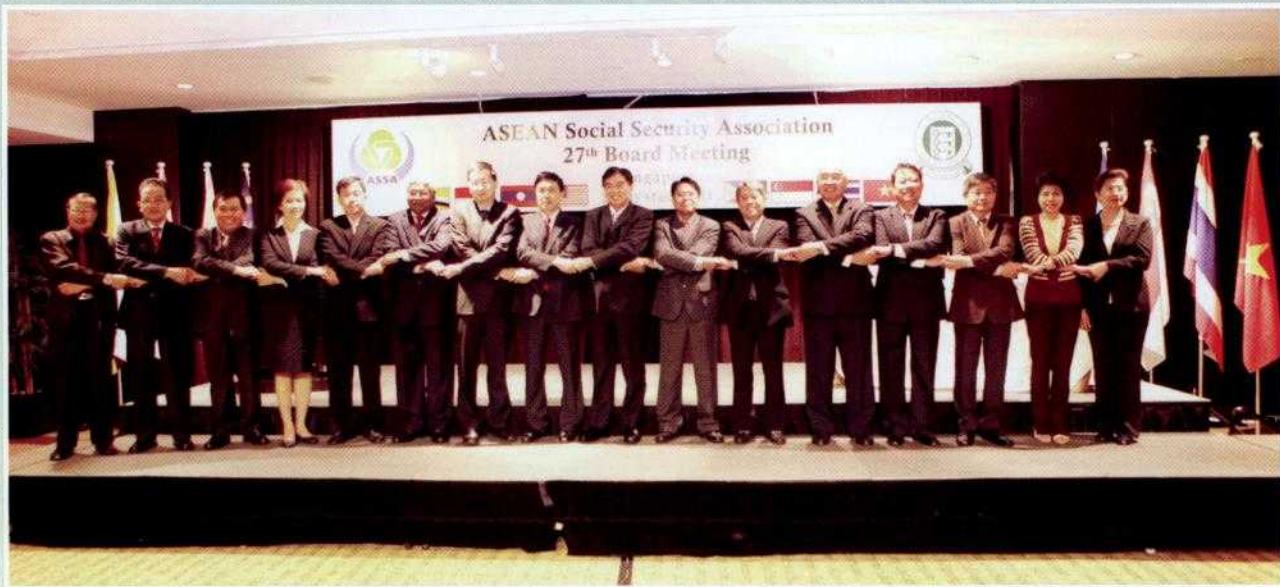
members to transact with and access SSS services in a fast and convenient manner.

“We aim to spare our members the time and effort of physically going to our branches for basic inquiries or to file benefit claims and loan applications,” De Quiros said. “Through the SSS website, they can transact with us 24 hours a day, from anywhere in the world.”

The enhanced website is among the SSS’ self-service, round-the-clock facilities. However, members and employers must be registered users of the website to access its online inquiry and submission services. ■

# 27th Asean Social Security Association Board Meeting





# Thailand: Health Security Coverage of Thai People

Over the past four years, close to 100% of Thai people entitled to receive health care services under the universal health coverage scheme (UC) now already have health security. The core benefit package of the scheme has been developing so that the people under the UC can have better access to more necessary health care services including heart transplant, child liver transplant, Thai traditional medicine, and the better primary health care services.

The National Health Security Office (NHSO) want it successor to carry on the efforts to resolve major health problems that are facing the Thai population and to cut the costs of high-cost treatment that still are financial burdens to many families. At June 2011, It is achieved in ensuring that 99.24% of the about 63.08 million Thais who have the right to receive health care service under the UC have health security. Thailand currently has a population of 63.57 millions. There still are about 484,658 people who have not registered for their health care rights under the UC and about 1.33 million people are waiting for their nationality verification. An over the past four years, the UC's core benefit package had been developed significantly such as the development of Thai traditional medical service.

NHSO also has sped up developing the primary health care services and supported the development of the so-called Tambon (Sub-district) Health Promotion Hospital. The other areas of development that the board has achieved include the development of a system of caring for patients with chronic diseases (such as diabetes and high blood pressure). NHSO has begun providing specific health care services to people suffering a consequence of the economic crisis and the unemployment problem especially the HIV/Aids group. The 15-day limit of a



maximum admitted and treated as in-patient for the Mental Disorder and the two-time-per-year limit of receiving emergency health care services out of the main hospital one has registered with have also been lifted.

Another system has also been developed to ease the problem of patients waiting in a long line for their turns to see the doctors at the hospitals under the Universal Coverage Scheme. More health care benefits added under the UC over the past four years included caring for patients with kidney stones, kidney transplanting services in child patients, heart transplant services that will begin from Oct 1 on, and improving public access to a number of expensive life-saving medicines.

Aside from these, one of the most important works of the National Health Security (NHS) board was their decision to compensate the hospitals for the costs of providing emergency health care services to patients diagnosed with the avian flu. Also listed as an achievement of the current NHS board was adopting suggestions by the House of Representatives and the Senate regarding how to improve the core benefit package of the UC. Another example of the board's other achievements was the urgent assistance provided to patients and

health care units in the flooded areas in Ban Mo district in Saraburi province and Hat Yai district of Songkhla province.

All these achievements have helped decrease health care costs of the families under the UC significantly. As a matter of fact, the National Statistical Office (NSO) reports showed that in 1992 the health care costs accounted for 8% of the average amount of family spending in the poorest group of the population. The percentage became 2.8% and 2.5% in 2002 and 2006 respectively. In the so-called "low-income" group of the population, the NSO reported that the average health care cost per family was 4.4% of the overall spending of the family in 2000. The percentage became 2.5% and 1.8% in 2002 and 2004 respectively.

NHSO wanted to continue improving the system of treating diseases seen as persistent threats to the public health, cutting the health care costs in the high-cost treatment group, and further developing the primary care service system in order to bring the health care services closer to the people's homes. More importantly, the vision of developing the national health security between 2012 and 2016: "Every person living in Thailand is entitled to receive health security equally and with confidence". ■

# Thailand: SSO extended the Social Security Coverage to Informal Sector

**A**t present, the total population in Thailand is about 65 million people. According to the result of National Statistical Office's survey, it is found that 37.8 million people are in labour force. Of this number, 24.1 million workers (63.7%) are in informal sector while 13.7 million (36.3%) are formal sector.

"Informal sector" refers to those who work without an employment contract or work without legal employer or who defined by the labour law. Most of them graduated in less than elementary level (70 %) and worked in agricultural sector (62.1 %). In order to have a better life and be protected by law, informal sector which is the largest group of labour force need the government to remedy for the problem on low income, discontinuous employment, chemical toxic safety as well as on work place environment. However, as the result of the research on the needs of essential welfare of the informal sector conducted by Chulalongkorn University in 2008 and by Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University in 2009, it was found that their requirements was not only the medical cares without charges from National Health Security Office but also cash benefit in case of sickness, injury, invalidity benefits and pension.

The Social Security Act B.E.2533 (1990) provides the coverage for 3 types of insured persons (1) Compulsory insured person under Article 33 is the employees of the enterprise with one or more employees who are mandatory coverage by law. Currently, there are 9,017,797 insured persons under the social security Fund. (as of March 2011) (2) Voluntary insured person under Article 39 is the insured persons who used to be the insured person under Article 33 and has paid contribution continuously for not less than 12 months, but the status of being an insured person is terminated. However, they can keep on being insured person by applying for voluntary insured person under Article 39. Currently, there are 767,021 insured persons. (as of March 2011) (3) Voluntary insured person under Article 40 is the person who is not insured person under Article 33 and age between 15-60 years old. Currently, there are only 41 insured persons (as of March 2511) because the benefits and contribution payment do not motivate them to apply for being insured person. The insured person under Article 40 has to pay solely contributions at the rate of 3,360 baht per year and only receive 3 types of benefit namely maternity, invalidityand death.

The cabinet on the 18th January 2011, approved a draft of royal decree subject to the criteria setting of Social



Security benefits and contribution rates including the rules, the eligible condition for benefits of the person who apply for the insured person B.E.....The essence of the draft decree is that there are 2 options for workers in informal sector as follows:

- The first option: if the informal workers contribute 70 baht a month, the state will contribute 30 baht. They will receive 3 benefits consisting of sickness, disability and death.
- The second option: if the informal workers contribute 100 baht a month, the state will contribute 50 baht. They will receive 4 benefits consisting of sickness, disability, death and old-age lump sum. In case that they prefer to get more old-age benefit, they could contribute more for this portion, but not more than 1,000 baht per month.

For the first year, it is expected that 2.4 million informal workers across the country could join the social security scheme.

The royal decree came into force on 1st August 2011. However, SSO tried to encourage workers to register under article 40 by connecting with community network, namely village headman, Sub - District Administrative Organization (SAO), Village Heath Volunteer and Local leader and providing information on informal sector for them. The SSO also released a mobile unit to facilitate worker's registration and contribution payment. As a result, there were 325,085 voluntary insured persons under Article 40 or 13.54%.As the total number of such workers, 322,957 informal workers (99.35%) have chosen the second option and 2,128 workers (0.65%) have chosen the first option.■

# Vietnam: Activities of Vietnam Social Security



## Laos Vice Minister of Labour and Social Welfare visits Vietnam

**O**n July 01st 2011, a delegation of Lao Social Security Office (SSO) led by Mr. Bounkhong Lasukan, Vice Minister of Labour and Social Welfare paid an official visit to Nghe An Province, Vietnam.

Mr. Le Bach Hong, Vice Minister, Director General of Vietnam Social Security (VSS) warmly welcomed the delegation and held talk with Mr. Bounkhong Lasukan. Attending the meeting, there were VSS's Office Director, Director of International Cooperation Department, leaders of Nghe An Social Security Office and representatives of External Relations Department of Nghe An Province.

In his welcome speech, Mr. Le Bach Hong highlighted that the comprehensive cooperative relationship between Laos and Vietnam is always fostered by the States and the Parties of the two countries in different fields in which there is the social security cooperation between Vietnam Social Security and Lao Ministry of Labour and Social welfare.

Vice Minister Lasukan expressed his heartfelt thanks for the warm reception of VSS and Nghe An Social



Security Office. He confirmed that in the last ten years, SSO has gained encouraging achievements with the valuable supports from VSS. During the visit, SSO delegates wanted to learn Vietnam's experience in developing the Laws on social insurance and health insurance as well as managing social security schemes and extending the coverage in Vietnam.

At the meeting, Mr. Lasukan asked VSS to create favorable conditions for SSO's staffs to research, study and exchange experiences at VSS in order to help

Laos in perfecting the legal framework on social insurance and health insurance, and to implement effectively social welfare policy for Lao people.

Mr. Le Bach Hong agreed with Mr. Lasukan's proposal and assigned related VSS departments to work with SSO developing an action plan for future cooperation.

The visit of Vice Minister Lasukan and SSO delegates has strengthened the traditional friendship and cooperative ties between the two agencies. ■



## Republic of Korea, Thailand and Vietnam strengthen cooperation in Health Insurance sector

**H**ANOI on 25th July, National Health Insurance Cooperation of Republic of Korea (NHIC), National Health Security Organization of Kingdom of Thailand (NHSO) and Vietnam Social Security (VSS) took a further step to strengthen the cooperative ties by signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Health Insurance Collaboration at VSS Headquarters.

Attending the Signing Ceremony were Mr. Le Bach Hong- Vice Minister, VSS Director General, Mr. Nguyen Minh Thao- VSS Deputy Director General, Dr. Chung Hyung Gun- NHIC President, Dr. Weerawat Phancrut- NHSO Deputy Secretary General, and high ranking officials from the three organizations. In his keynote address, Mr. Le Bach Hong hailed the close and

long-standing cooperative ties in social insurance and health insurance sectors amongst Republic of Korea, Thailand and Vietnam. Through recent visits, VSS, NHIC and NHSO had opportunities to study and exchange experiences in implementing HI amongst the three countries. In addition, both NHSO and VSS are active members of ASEAN Social Security Association (ASSA), in which the two organizations have achieved many extraordinary outcomes through bilateral and multilateral cooperations within ASSA framework.

On behalf of NHIC of Republic of Korea, Dr. Chung Hyung Gun said NHIC highly valued the results achieved by VSS in the last years. The contents within the MOU signed between NHIC and VSS expressed the strategic vision on the

mutual collaboration and development between the two organizations. Regarding to future cooperation, NHIC are willing to share information and experience on HI fund management as well as other issues that VSS might be interested in, with the ultimate goal of assisting VSS in achieving universal HI coverage.

Dr. Weerawat Phancrut also highly valued the objectives set in this MOU, and believed this was a remarkable milestone in improving collaboration on HI between the NHSO and VSS. Dr. Weerawat Phancrut hoped the two organizations soon to develop an action plan and identify short-term and long-term goals, in order to enhance the bilateral cooperation on the basis of solidarity of ASSA members. ■



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