

Press Release
by the Chair of the High Level Panel on an ASEAN Human Rights Body
at the Conclusion of the 8th Meeting of the HLP on AHRB
14 February 2009, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR

The High Level Panel on an ASEAN Human Rights Body (HLP on AHRB) had their 8th meeting on 13-14 February 2009 in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, during which they have completed the first draft of the TOR of the AHRB which will be submitted to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting on 27 February 2009 during the upcoming ASEAN Summit in Hua Hin, Thailand.

The first draft of the TOR of AHRB is the outcome of 8 meetings of the HLP that have been held since July 2008. It covers 9 chapters dealing with purposes, principles, mandate and functions, nature, composition, modalities, secretarial support and funding of the AHRB as well as the amendment and review of the TOR.

The draft will be submitted to ASEAN Foreign Ministers in order to attain their inputs and guidance. Based on such inputs, the HLP will continue to work toward finalizing the draft TOR with the hope that ASEAN Foreign Ministers will agree to approve it in this July so that the AHRB can be formally inaugurated by ASEAN Leaders at the 15th ASEAN Summit by October this year.

One of the key issues that were discussed during this 8th HLP meeting was the need to set up a separate fund to support promotional activities of the AHRB. The HLP will further discuss details relating to modalities of such fund after the consideration by ASEAN Foreign Ministers.

The HLP also agreed to meet with representatives from civil society again in their Meeting in Kuala Lumpur on 19 March 2009 as a part of the ongoing process to engage all stakeholders in the drafting of the TOR of AHRB.
