



Interpellation Title: Countermeasure for engaging in ASEAN Free Trade Agreement

Interpellation no. 0358 / 2553 The 23rd House of Representatives B. E. 2550 (2007)

Date of Proposal :	28 July 2010
Cabinet Term :	Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, Prime Minister
Proposed by :	Mr. Nakorn Machim, Democrat Party, Changwat Phitsanulok
Person who is questioned :	Prime Minister (Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva)
Replied by :	Prime Minister (Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva)
Interpellation Type :	Replied in Government Gazette
Interpellation Status :	Replied by the Minister Government Gazette Vol. 128 Special Edition 43 Ngor Page 33-36 dated 12 April B.E. 2554 (2011)
Remarks :	In case where the reply of interpellation is to be made in the parliamentary sitting but replied in the Government Gazette, it refers to Rule 162 paragraph 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives which prescribes that an interpellation to be replied in the sitting which is placed or not placed on the agenda in each session when it is at the end of the session, the Speaker shall collect such interpellation and inform the concerned Minister. The concerned Minister shall reply such interpellation in the Government Gazette within thirty days.

Summary of the Question

In 2012 Thailand and ASEAN countries would be under obligation of ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA). Thailand as one of the ASEAN member countries would be obligated and affected both in positive and negative ways from this agreement. So far, the Thai government still has no clarity on preparation plan or measure for remedy for people who would be affected by this agreement. From all reasons above, the interpellant would like to raise questions as follows :

1. Does the Thai government have any measures to prevent problems, which might affected Thai people, after engaging in any international agreements and ASEAN? Please provide more details on this.

2. What is the plan and solution of the Thai government to solve the above mentioned problems? Please provide more details on this.

3. What is the plan of the Thai government on human resource development for the coming of ASEAN Free Trade Agreement? Please provide more details on this.

Summary of the Answers

Answer to the first question

Overall the establishment of ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) would have a positive result for ASEAN member countries. In strategic perspective, ASEAN would precede the liberalization under AFTA gradually. The step of liberalization has been preceded since 1992. Particular government agencies related to agreement making, held public hearing through meetings regularly, so that people who would be affected by this agreement would have time for adaptation and government as well could prepare themselves for more and higher level of liberalization. This public hearing would help providing necessary information, framing negotiation as well as preventing possible problems that may occur after liberalization.

The Thai government has prepared measure to prevent problems that might occur to Thai citizen after being a part of AFTA as follows:

1. Impact measures of abolishment of Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ) of 22 agricultural products comprising three systems which are:

1.1 Import management system: the Ministry of Commerce in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives have set up measures for sensitive products such as the requirements of import license, and health certificate of some products etc.;

1.2 Import tracking system: database for tracking import of 22 agricultural products which are on the list of World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement;

1.3 Import monitoring and assessing system: amount and price of import products would be studied and analyzed closely and fast, in order that government could cooperate, find solution and prepare countermeasure.

2. Safeguard Measure (SG): according to Safeguard Measures against Increased Imports Act, B.E. 2550 (2007), if there is any increased import that causes serious injury to the entrepreneur, the safeguard measures such as more import tariffs, indicate import quantity, TQR etc. These measures would be applied to import products from every country for not longer than 4 years (once applied).

3. Anti-dumping (AD) and Countervailing Duty (CVD) : according to Anti-Dumping and Countervailing of Foreign Products Act, B.E. 2542 (1999), if there is any dumped import or subsidized export to Thailand that causes injury to domestic industry, concerned agency would apply measure to those countries that dumped import or subsidized export to Thailand for the period of 5 years and this measure could be extended for 5 years (once applied).

Answer to the second question

In case that the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) affected Thai citizen, the Thai government would appoint a Sub-Committee to take charge of FTA negotiation. This Sub-Committee would specifically appointed to provide remedies to the affected people. President of the Thailand Trade Representatives would be the chair of this Sub-Committee and other members of this Sub-Committee would be from Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Minister of Labour as well as private sectors and experts. The Sub-Committee shall have the powers and duties to study and assess negative impact, consider measure for remedy for people who have negative impact as well as integrate all measures for remedy from various agencies.

Currently there are 2 main measures for trade remedy which are (1) Adaptation enhancement project for manufacturing sector and service sector that affected by liberalization (the Ministry of Commerce) and (2) Foundation for agricultural restructuring for enhancement of national competitiveness (the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives). The affected people could also attend projects under Master Plan for Increasing Efficiency and Productivity of Manufacturing Sector B.E. 2551-2555 (2008-2012) (Ministry of Industry).

Moreover, the government (the Department of Foreign Trade, the Ministry of Commerce) also provide adaptation enhancement project for manufacturing sector and service sector that affected by liberalization or foundation of Free Trade Agreement.

Answer to the third question

As for the plan of the Thai government on human resource development, the Ministry of Education (Government) has appointed committee in national level for driving educational collaboration in ASEAN for the aim of being ASEAN Community in 2015. The Minister of Education would be the chair of this committee and other members of this committee would be from concerned agencies. The Committee shall have the powers and duties to determine development on human resources and acknowledge several sectors in order that they are ready to be part of ASEAN Community. The ministry has developed ASEAN program as well as established 54 libraries and ASEAN Centers in schools which are under Office of the Basic Education Commission, the Ministry of Education. As for the higher education level, the Higher Education Commission also has a strategic plan for higher education in Thailand for preparing to be part of ASEAN Community in 2015.

Moreover, the Department of Skill Development also gives priority to this matter. The department with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has hold seminars for officers and private sector.