

 Mon, 20th July 2009 - PHUKET: Asean has proposed to name its human rights body the Asean Inter-Governmental Commission of Human Rights, paving the way for leaders of the grouping to launch it when they meet in October.

However, ministers will have further discussions on the draft of the commission's terms of reference at their retreat today before reaching a final decision on it.

Thai Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya said the terms of reference would be reviewed in the next five years to enhance the body's role.

We have also agreed that we will appoint a representative from each Asean country to the body who will serve for a three-year period, he told a press conference yesterday.

The draft terms of reference reflects the maximum consensus among us. It is important to make the human rights body credible and also take into account the real situation in member countries.

It is the beginning of an evolving process. It is a living document that will provide a platform for furthering Asean's efforts in the promotion and protection of human rights, he said.

Foreign Minister Datuk Anifah Aman told Malaysian media that the ministers deliberated at length on the wording on the five-year review to further strengthen the body.

He also stressed that the commission would not be mere window dressing.