



**REPORT ON THE WORKSHOP**  
***FUTURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND  
DEMOCRACY IN ASIA***

**27 JULY 2015, BANGKOK**

## **Future of Human Rights and Democracy in Asia**

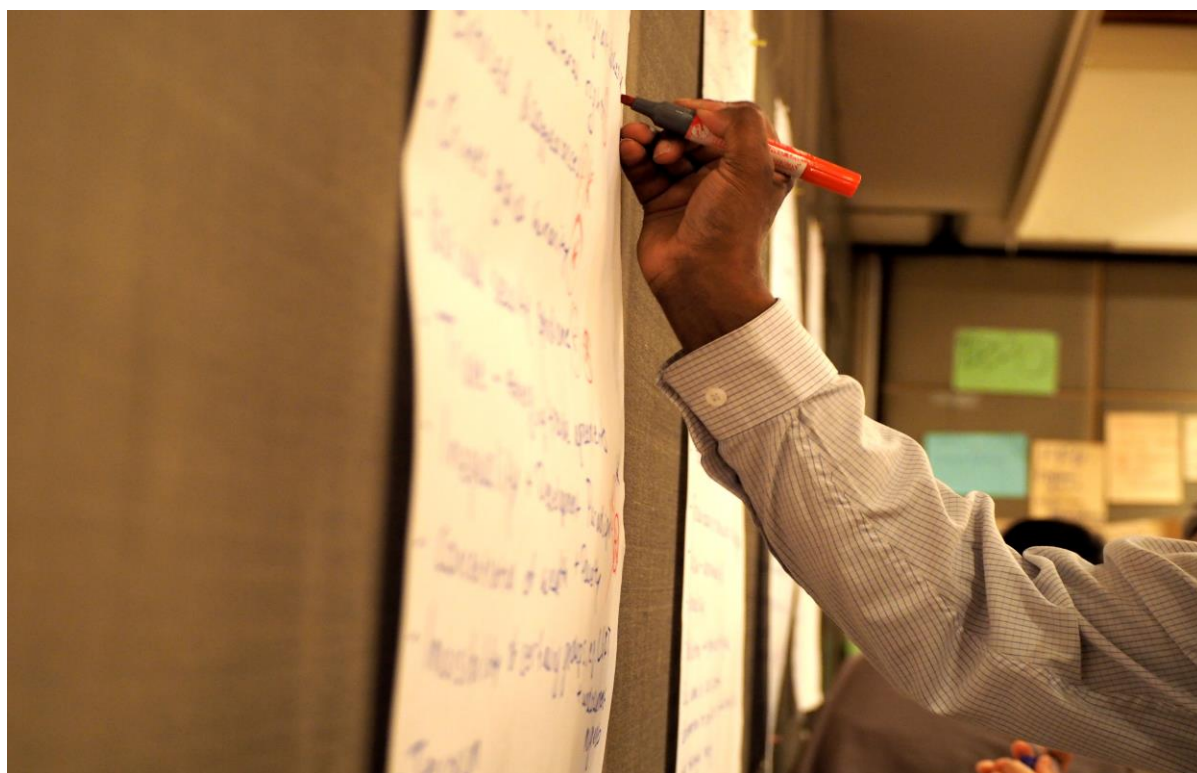
This report summarises the presentations and discussions that took place during the workshop “Future of Human Rights and Democracy in Asia”, held in Bangkok, Thailand on 27 July 2015. The workshop was jointly organised by the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) and the Asia Democracy Network (ADN). It was attended by 30 participants representing 21 organisations – see annex I for a complete list.

The workshop was part of a series of events taking place in the region under the theme “Future of Human Rights and Democracy in Asia” throughout 2015. The first workshop took place on 16 May 2015 in Gwangju, South Korea, as part of the Gwangju Asia Forum.

There were several reasons to want to do this exercise in 2015. FORUM-ASIA was about to celebrate its 25 year anniversary in 2016, something that was to be commemorated during its General Assembly at the beginning of the year. The inputs gathered during the series of events were to be used both to develop an anniversary campaign, but also to review its Five-Year Strategic Plan.

At the same, the series of events were to serve as input to a joint initiative to develop an Asian Declaration or Compact for Human Rights and Democracy as a tool to articulate the people's vision and strategies for human rights and democracy movement in Asia. The Declaration or Compact was expected to be adopted in 2018 during the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The event aimed to reflect on human rights and democracy in the past decades and identify emerging trends and issues in socio-political-economic contexts in Asia. Eventually, the event was intended to help to develop a collective vision on human rights and democracy and explore ways to create more synergetic impact of the civil society movement in the future.



## Session 1: Reflecting on the Past



During the first session, “Reflecting on the Past”, the participants were asked to note down particular moments, activities and achievements related to human rights and democracy in Asia over the last 25 years (1990-2015). Based on these inputs, a visual time-line was developed.

After having created the time-line, participants were asked to show their support if they agreed that an event or development suggested by one of their colleagues was indeed of great significance for human rights and democracy in Asia during the

indicated period. One or several asterisks in the below represented time-line highlight that support. No particular distinction was made between broader national, regional or international changes, or developments that were more of significance on an organisational level.

Clearly this time-line is by no means comprehensive or all-encompassing. It is merely a reflection of the ideas and thoughts of the participants of the meeting. However, it provides an initial insight into the history of human rights and democracy in Asia.

Note that a list of abbreviations can be found on page 15.

### Timeline 1990-2015

<b>1990</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First multi-party elections in Burma since 1960, after twenty-eight years of military rule</li> <li>- First multi-party elections in Mongolia</li> <li>- Increase ratification of international human rights norms</li> <li>- People’s movements for democracy and freedom incorporated human rights as guiding principles (*)</li> </ul>
<b>1991</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FORUM-ASIA founded in Manila (**)</li> <li>- 1<sup>st</sup> Master program on human rights was introduced at Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand</li> <li>- First free and fair elections in Bangladesh</li> <li>- Establishment of multiparty parliament and democratic elections in Nepal</li> <li>- Aung San Suu Kyi, Burmese opposition politician and pro-democracy leader, won the Nobel Peace Prize</li> </ul>
<b>1992</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) Government appointed – first time UN take over the administration of an independent state</li> </ul>
<b>1993</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishment of the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)</li> <li>- UN guidelines on National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) developed</li> <li>- Bangkok Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) Declaration on Human Rights issued</li> <li>- World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna (*)</li> <li>- National Commission on Human Rights of Indonesia (Komnas HAM) established</li> </ul>
<b>1994</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working Group for an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Human Rights Mechanism set up</li> </ul>
<b>1995</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) ratified by all ASEAN Countries</li> <li>- 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women held in Beijing (***)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FORUM-ASIA Consultation on “Democracy Development and Human Rights” held</li> <li>- FORUM-ASIA’s first mission to Burma</li> <li>- World Trade Organisation (WTO) established</li> <li>- International NGO Focus on the Global South established</li> <li>- Multinational corporations (MNC) and International Finance Institutions (IFIs) identified as responsible and involved in human rights abuses</li> </ul>
<b>1996</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First People’s SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation), an initiative of peoples movements, organisations, trade unions, academics and individuals to influence governments and SAARC to address concerns of South Asians people, organized</li> <li>- The Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma (ALTSEAN Burma), a network of organisations and individuals working to support human rights and democracy in Burma, established in Bangkok</li> </ul>
<b>1997</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) founded</li> <li>- First Thai Constitution, ‘People’s Constitution’ adopted, which led to a full civilian government in 1998</li> <li>- Asian financial crises – its effects and subsequent governments’ responses defined much of the region’s economic policies (**)</li> </ul>
<b>1998</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International Criminal Court (ICC) Rome Statute adopted (**)</li> <li>- Election in Cambodia/ First Election Mission of FORUM-ASIA</li> <li>- 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights</li> <li>- Asian Human Rights Charter declared in Gwangju, South Korea</li> <li>- Start of democratic transition period in Indonesia after resignation of President Suharto (Reformasi) (*)</li> </ul>
<b>1999</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- East Timor voted for independence from Indonesia (**)</li> </ul>
<b>2000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ASEAN People’s Assembly (APA) launched – a regional civil society forum initiated by the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) network</li> <li>- ICC campaign launched in Asia-Pacific</li> <li>- Strengthening of the anti-globalisation movement (**)</li> <li>- Irom Sharmila, Indian rights activist, commences fast demanding the repeal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA). Her fast is still ongoing</li> <li>- Increase in participation by the public in protest against human rights violations</li> </ul>
<b>2001</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishment of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK)</li> <li>- Formal constitution of the National Human Right Commission of Thailand (NHRCT) (**)</li> <li>- 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States, and the subsequent national security discourse</li> </ul>
<b>2002</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “License to Rape” report by Shan Women’s Action Network</li> <li>- ICC came into force once 60 States became parties</li> <li>- Mass killings and inter-communal violence in the western Indian state of Gujarat (Gujarat Carnage)</li> </ul>
<b>2003</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asian Social Forum (ASF) held in India by members of the global justice movement</li> </ul>
<b>2004</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Murder of Indonesian human rights defender Munir Said Thalib and disappearance of Thai human rights defender Somchai Neelapaijit</li> <li>- Increased popularity of Social Media platforms (*)</li> <li>- Free and fair elections in Malaysia (**)</li> </ul>
<b>2005</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC) held in Malaysia</li> <li>- End of a decades of armed conflict in Aceh, Indonesia, after the conclusion of a peace process (**)</li> </ul>
<b>2006</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Solidarity for Asian People’s Advocacy (SAPA) working group on ASEAN set up (*)</li> <li>- ACSC held in Philippines</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Abolishment of the monarchy in Nepal</li> <li>- Creation of United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process (****)</li> <li>- Coup in Thailand abolished the people's constitution</li> </ul>
<b>2007</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Democratic process of Trade/ Investment Agreement included in the Thai Constitution</li> <li>- (Article 190) (**)</li> <li>- ACSC held in Singapore</li> <li>- ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers drafted</li> <li>- United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People adopted (**)</li> <li>- FORUM-ASIA Geneva Office established (**)</li> <li>- Efforts towards a Regional Initiative for a South Asian Human Rights Mechanism (RI-SAHRM) initiated</li> </ul>
<b>2008</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FORUM-ASIA Jakarta Office established</li> <li>- First democratic election in the Maldives</li> </ul>
<b>2009</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishment of ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights AICHR (***)</li> <li>- APF (ASEAN People's FORUM) added to the (ACSC)</li> <li>- FORUM-ASIA EC Member Pattani Razeek murdered in Sri Lanka</li> <li>- Consolidation of the global discourse on the intersection between human rights and environment (**)</li> </ul>
<b>2010</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishment of ACWC (ASEAN Commission on Women and Children) (**)</li> <li>- Start of trend of shrinking space for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in South Asia</li> <li>- Political reforms in Burma (2010-2012), including the release of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, general amnesties and establishment of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) in 2011 (**)</li> </ul>
<b>2011</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undemocratic changes in the constitution of Bangladesh (**)</li> </ul>
<b>2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) proclaimed and criticised by human rights groups</li> <li>- Disappearance of social activist Sombath Somphone in Laos (**)</li> <li>- Increase in trend of shrinking public space and criminalisation of dissent in Asia</li> </ul>
<b>2013</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Violent crackdown on protests and demonstrations in Bangkok</li> <li>- Bangladeshi human rights organisation Odhakar under severe persecution, while there are hundreds cases of enforced disappearances in Bangladesh (****)</li> </ul>
<b>2014</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishment of BRICs Bank</li> <li>- ASEAN SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression) Caucus established – a network of diverse human rights activists that aims for the inclusion of SOGIE in the ASEAN Human Rights Mechanisms</li> <li>- Mass mobilisation in Cambodia calling for political and socio-economic changes (**)</li> <li>- Military coup in Thailand</li> <li>- Holding of unilateral elections in Thailand, January 2014 + boycott of all opposition parties which paved the way for authoritarian rule</li> </ul>
<b>2015</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vietnam ratifies United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)</li> <li>- Vietnamese independent CSO's join ACSC/APF + CEDAW</li> <li>- FORUM-ASIA Kathmandu office established</li> <li>- United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 21) in Paris (***)</li> <li>- Migrant crisis in the Andaman Sea, especially affecting Rohingya people (****)</li> <li>- Peaceful elections in Sri Lanka, leading to change of regime (**)</li> <li>- Binding treaty on business and human rights, to regulate the activities of transnational corporations (in process), developed</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Constitution adopted, declaring Nepal oriented towards socialism and state policy of progressive realisation</li> <li>- The Animal Cell Technology Industrial Platform (ACTIP) developed</li> <li>- ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) (**)</li> <li>- Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) trade agreement in Asia</li> <li>- Processed</li> <li>- Trend of more international NGO's focussing on Asia, as well as establishment of more NGOs working on specific human rights issues</li> <li>- Trend of increasing number of human rights defenders (HRDs) in Asia under threat</li> </ul>
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Following the drafting of the time-line, the participants entered a discussion on the results of the exercise.

A few participants highlighted the **increase in the targeting of CSOs in South Asia**, especially in Bangladesh and India. It was noted that these organisations are targeted not only by Governments but also by powerful elites, aiming to generate mistrust in CSOs among the general public.

The concern for an increasing number of displaced people being labelled as **economic migrants**, as opposed to being recognized as refugees, was also raised, in particular the **Rohingya people**, as well as internally displaced groups in Sri Lanka were mentioned.

The participants also agreed on the necessity to further include **economic, social and cultural rights** into the human rights discourse. In particular **land grabbing** was flagged as a major human rights issue in Asia.

Lastly, it was pointed out that the issue of the **death penalty** continues to be dramatically relevant for certain Southeast Asian countries, notably Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. The participants noted that CSOs should intensify their efforts in campaigning against the death penalty, which is increasingly becoming a powerful political tool for certain Southeast Asian governments to stifle dissent.

## Session 2: Lessons Learnt and Best Practices



During this session the participants formed five groups and were asked to identify particular cases or examples of activities, projects or campaigns that contributed to the realisation of the moments of significance identified in the previous session. In addition to the basic details of these examples, the groups were also asked to formulate lessons learnt based on their reflections of what made those projects have that impact.

The objective of this session was not only to try to identify concrete examples of how the human

rights and democracy movement in Asia has been able to make an impact, but also to formulate specific lessons learnt that should inform strategizing and planning for the future.

**Group 1** discussed two cases that were of great significance for human rights and democracy in Asia in the last decades;

- **the CSOs engagement in the establishment of the ASEAN human rights mechanism;** and
- **the maximized usage of UN mechanisms, such as UN Treaty Bodies, UPR, General Assembly and Human Rights Council,** for a greater promotion and protection of human rights at national and international level.

Based on these two cases, Group 1 identified several lessons learnt, being:

- the need for CSOs to be consistent and persistent in their advocacy efforts;
- the importance to ensure that civil society engagement is recognized both at the national and regional level; and
- the recognition that more constructive advocacy efforts from CSOs can help to connect the local to the international.

**Group 2** highlighted the importance and significance of the **ASEAN People's Forum (APF)**. The APF is an annual event that brings CSOs from ASEAN Member States together to discuss pressing socio-political issues. The APF is held as a parallel meeting to the ASEAN Summit of Heads of State.

Group 2 remarked how the value of the APF cannot be ignored anymore by the ASEAN governments. It has been able to bring together different sectors of ASEAN civil society and has presented legitimate and evidence-based advocacy plans.

After several editions, while the APF now has an established structure, it continues to face critical challenges. In particular, the need for CSOs to prevent the attempts by some ASEAN governments to step into the CSOs dialogue with government-backed CSOs (GONGO).

**Group 3** shared the achievements and lessons learnt of the campaign for the **Bangkok Declaration on Free and Fair Elections**. The Declaration was endorsed in December 2012, aiming to identify the most significant and widespread barriers to free and fair elections in Asia, and to address them by involving all relevant national, regional and international stakeholders. Group 3 identified as the main lesson learnt the need for stronger cooperation between Election Management Bodies (EMBs) and CSOs.

**Group 4** highlighted the activities of the **alliance of ASEAN parliamentarians**, which was instrumental in pushing Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Burma to respond to the migrant crisis in the Andaman Sea. Group 4 remarked on the need for CSOs to be aware that while they can put an issue on the agenda of Governments, it is difficult control or define how that issue is taken forward by policy and decision makers.

The concern was also raised that to ensure a greater protection of human rights, the mere establishment of mechanisms or institutions is not enough if not combined with effective and positive implementation. As a final suggestion, Group 4 encouraged CSOs to not dissipate energy on too many different issues, but to focus on specific ones to achieve concrete and positive results.



**Group 5**, presented the main activities and campaigns of the **Asian Coalition for the International Criminal Court (ACICC)**. The AICC was initiated by FORUM-ASIA and has since then carried out a range of different advocacy activities. Based on these, Group 5 identified as the main lessons learnt:

- the importance of regional solidarity;
- the benefit of linking international mechanisms to local issues;
- the importance of engaging with lawyers, judges, prosecutors, Members of Parliament(MPs), and political opposition;
- the need to highlight gender justice and the role of women's groups; and
- the need to attempt to involve all members of society.

Based on the five presentations, the participants identified the following lessons learnt that seemed to come up in several examples. These were that:

- The establishment of networks facilitates advocacy efforts of CSOs, generating greater coordination and collaboration;
- It is important to ensure cross-sectorial collaboration when conducting specific campaigns and to provide space to consolidate the views of different segments of society;
- International law and its relevant treaties and conventions can support advocacy activities and its demands, and should therefore be seen as a strategic tool;
- Persistency and consistency are crucial when campaigning for specific objectives (e.g. AICHR);
- All sectors and stakeholders should be involved when conducting advocacy campaigns;
- CSOs should take into account the complexity of the relations between corporations and governments;
- In any given process, CSOs should try to identify all relevant stakeholders;
- CSOs should try to do not restrict the scope of their advocacy activities but to work on all levels global, national and local.

### **Session 3: Looking into the Future**



During the third session of the meeting the participants were asked to identify key issues, challenges, opportunities and stakeholders for the future of human rights and democracy in Asia. Once listed, the participants were asked to prioritize and vote (\*) for the issues, challenges, opportunities and stakeholders they thought were the most crucial. They were allowed to vote for a maximum of four issues, while they had to prioritize only two challenges, two opportunities and two institutions.



The following overview lists both the initial long list of issues, challenges, opportunities and stakeholders that were mentioned initially, but also those that were prioritized by the participants. As before this list is by no means exhaustive. More so, many of the issues are overlapping and inter-linked, making it impossible and even undesirable to include some or expel others. However, it can and will still serve as an initial indication of what should be prioritized in the coming years when it comes to human rights and democracy.

#### **Issues:**

- Environmental justice (\*\*\*\*\*)
- Impunity (\*\*\*\*\*)
- Business and Human Rights (role of corporations) (\*\*\*\*\*)
- Human trafficking: refugees and asylum seekers, and migrant workers (\*\*\*\*\*)
- Rights of workers & migrant workers (\*\*\*)
- Disappearances, crimes against humanity and erosion of democratic values (\*\*\*\*)
- Economic and Cultural Rights (\*\*\*\*)
- National security syndrome
- Trade (emerging trade agreements (\*\*\*\*)
- Inequality + development paradigm (\*)
- Concentration of wealth + poverty (\*\*)
- Invisibility of certain groups, such as LGBT and undocumented migrants (\*\*\*)
- Terrorism & militarisation
- Globalisation (\*)
- Indigenous community marginalised (\*\*)
- National Identity
- Self-Determination
- War and armed conflict (\*\*\*\*\*)
- Polarisation of society (\*)
- Geopolitical changes
- Peace building (\*\*)
- Electoral processes
- Transparent and accountable governance (\*\*)
- Political reconciliation
- Gender based violence (\*\*\*)
- Representation of women and minorities (\*\*)

- Right to affordable medicine
- Challenge of human rights principles (often done through tribunals and corporations, can undermine the decisions of lawmakers) (\*\*\*\*)
- Right to Information

#### **Challenges:**

- Shrinking space for civil society (\*\*\*\*\*)
- Globalisation
- National Security policies (\*\*)
- Criminalisation of dissent (\*\*\*)
- Manipulation of identity (\*\*\*\*)
- Religious and cultural identity against human rights, also used by elites and political leaders
- Increasing competition for natural resources (\*\*\*\*)
- Decline in funding (\*)
- Lack of implementation/acting on ratified international standards, e.g. ICC (\*)
- Persistence invisibility of certain sector; LGBT, undocumented migrants (\*\*\*)
- Income disparity and inequality (\*\*)
- Complete breakdown of criminal justice administration system (\*\*)
- Resistant discrimination (\*\*)
- Nationalism (\*)
- Polarisation (\*\*\*)
- Crackdown on CSOs, especially in South Asia and when funded by foreign donors (\*\*\*\*)
- Control through funding, by manipulation of registration laws (\*)
- Global actors which do not abide by the national laws



### Opportunities:

- Increase of people's participation (\*\*\*\*\*)
- More diverse civil society (\*\*)
- Asian based in international institutions
- IT, social media and communications tools (\*\*\*\*)
- Increase of human rights knowledge (\*\*\*\*\*)
- Advantage of having many human rights institutions, books, and academics (\*\*\*)
- Some governments are more careful about the international reactions, there could be more space now for civil society
- Increasing number of states have ratified treaties, and thus leaving it to the international forum (\*\*\*\*\*)
- People's solidarity (\*\*\*\*\*)
- Nonviolent approach (\*)
- International justice mechanisms (\*\*\*\*)
- Entry points through recognised rights
- Allies among media (\*\*)
- Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG) (\*\*)
- Human Rights Based Approach by UN (HRBA) (\*)
- Human security movement (\*)
- Women empowerment (\*)



### **Stakeholders:**

- ASEAN- Beyond AICHR (\*\*\*)
- SAARC (\*\*)
- Asian Development Bank
- Corporations (\*\*\*\*\*)
- BRIC Bank + AIIB (\*\*)
- Governments (\*\*\*\*)
- Religious institutions (\*\*)
- UN human rights mechanism (\*\*\*\*\*)
- Academics and universities (\*\*\*\*)
- Open Governments Partnership (OGP)
- Community of Democracy (COD) (\*\*)
- ASEAN regional forum (\*)
- Freedom online coalition: government and CSO to promote freedom online
- Bali Democracy Forum (BDF)

### **Session 4: Role of Civil Society**

Based on the prioritisation exercise in the previous session, the group focussed the final session of the day on the six main issues that received the most votes.

These were:

- Economic and cultural rights/trade/inequality/business/development
- Environmental justice
- Refugees/migrants/asylum seekers

- The challenging/undermining of human rights mechanism
- War and armed conflict
- Impunity



Based on the above mentioned six priority issues, the participants were divided into groups and asked to specify what the role and strategies of CSOs could be to address them. Participants were free to join the group of the issue they found most relevant, resulting in a further prioritisation.

**Group 1** presented strategies to make **multinational corporations** accountable to society, addressing the issue of **economic and cultural rights** and their link with **trade, inequality, business** and **development**. The strategies

presented by this group aimed to ensure the respect of national and international laws and treaties by governments and corporations. In order to achieve this, Group 1 suggested a wide range of activities, including:

- awareness raising campaigns on the violations of human rights committed by corporations;
- supporting relevant UN treaties and guidelines;
- filing of cases against corporations that have committed human rights violations on the national, regional and international level;
- rejecting the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS); and
- encouraging the development and implementation of effective domestic legislation.

In relation to the issue of **environmental justice**, **Group 2** strategized on how to halt environmental degradation, which, among other things, is leading to forced migration. The strategies the group presented mainly focused on:

- coalition-building and awareness raising campaigns at the grass-root level;
- facilitated by an education system where environmental studies are part of the national curriculum.

**Group 3** focused on the difficulties faced by **migrants, refugees and asylum seekers**. While the group noted that migrants, refugees and asylum seekers require different strategies for given their different status, needs and rights, Group 3 recognised the common need to monitor the situation in camps and centres, where human rights violations are more likely to happen. The importance of public awareness was also emphasized, particularly in those cases where local communities are involved with human trafficking activities.

**Group 4** analysed the potential future impact of civil society on **wars and internal armed conflicts** in Asia. Suggested strategies mainly aimed at addressing the root causes of violence and armed conflict, highlighting the importance of justice and welfare. The specific role of CSOs in voicing the grievances of victims was also mentioned, as well as the need to record human rights abuses and to mainstream international human rights standards to local communities.

Finally, **Group 5** presented strategies aimed at protecting and increasing the civil society space in different **human rights mechanisms**, which are often undermined and challenged by repressive regimes and corporations. After identifying different types of human rights mechanisms, Group 5 proposed to conduct awareness raising campaigns at the grass-root level, and to make efforts to keep these mechanisms accountable through tracking, monitoring and regular communications. It was noted that networks and coalitions would facilitate these activities, and that despite some systematic flaws, CSOs should continue their engagement with human rights mechanisms and their related institutions.

The above mentioned strategies should be seen as potential starting points for more detailed analysis and elaboration of the priority issues identified by the participants. While many valid points and interesting suggestions were made, the workshop was part of a series of events, and so its results will be combined with what was produced by other groups to be able to come to eventual outputs.

## Final Comments and Closing Remarks



In her final reflections, Evelyn Balais-Serrano, Executive Director of FORUM-ASIA, highlighted the importance of the last session, which should be seen as a potential starting point for the participants to continue a process of formulating effective strategies. In particular, Evelyn remarked the need for CSOs to be critical when doing planning exercises to make sure that our energies and resources are used effectively and strategically.

Anselmo Lee, Co-convenor of the Asia Democracy Network, highlighted the importance of being strategic in addressing the different priority issues, and to ensure a connection between development and human rights. In this sense, Anselmo exhorted the participants to look at the Sustainable Development Goals, which include environment, democracy and human rights elements.

Henri Tiphagne, Chairperson of FORUM-ASIA and Executive Director of People's Watch, gave his closing remarks by thanking the participants and organisers, and highlighted the importance for the whole human rights movement to reflect on the past to be able to look into the future. In order to tackle all the issues identified during the workshop, Henri remarked the crucial role that will need to be played by the people on the ground, whose spirit of struggle will always be at the core of the strategies of the whole human rights movement.





## Acronyms

Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma (ALTSEAN Burma)

Animal Cell Technology Industrial Platform (ACTIP)

APF (ASEAN People's FORUM)

Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)

ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC)

ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC)

ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)

ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD)

ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS)

ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR)

ASEAN People's Assembly (APA)

ASEAN Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression (SOGIE) Caucus

Asia Democracy Network (ADN)

Asian Coalition for the International Criminal Court (ACICC)

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)

Asian Social Forum (ASF)

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Bali Democracy Forum (BDF)

Brazil, India, Russia, China (BRIC)

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Community of Democracy (COD)

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Government Organised Non-Governmental Organisation (GONGO)

Human rights based approach (HRBA)

Human rights defenders (HRDs)

International Criminal Court (ICC)

International finance institutions (IFIs)

Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS)

Members of Parliament (MPs)

Multinational corporations (MNC)

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC)

National Commission on Human Rights of Indonesia (Komnas HAM)

National Human Right Commission of Thailand (NHRCT)

National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK)

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Open Governments Partnership (OGP)

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

Regional Initiative for a South Asian Human Rights Mechanism (RI-SAHRM)

Solidarity for Asian Peoples Advocacy (SAPA)

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)

United Nations (UN)

United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 21)

United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or

Punishment (CAT)

United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

World Trade Organisation (WTO)

## **Annex I**

The following organisations/institutions attended the workshop “Future of Human Rights and Democracy in Asia”:

1. ActionAid Thailand
2. Asia Democracy Network (ADN)
3. Asia Foundation
4. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
5. Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)
6. Asian Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR)
7. Boat People SOS
8. Focus on the Global South
9. Greenpeace Southeast Asia
10. Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC)
11. KontraS
12. Mahidol University
13. Odhikar
14. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
15. People’s Empowerment Foundation (PEF)
16. People’s Watch India
17. South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR)
18. Southeast Asian Committee for Advocacy (SEACA)
19. Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA)
20. Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP)
21. Think Centre

