

ASEAN: Collaborate with civil society to eradicate violence against women and children

(Jakarta, 26 September 2018) – The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) calls on the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) to ensure inclusive and meaningful engagement with civil society in protecting and promoting women's and children's rights, based on the recommendations from the multi-stakeholders dialogue¹ in August 2018. Key recommendations as a result of the dialogue were sent to ACWC on 24 September 2018.

The dialogue deliberated the roles and responsibilities of the ACWC and civil society in tackling violence against women and children in Southeast Asia, through joint advocacy, campaigns, capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation.

With the participation of 30 civil society organisations and the ACWC representatives from Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines, the dialogue also conveyed its messages to ASEAN Member States on the possibility of creating a baseline and trend analysis of the situation of violence against women and children in the region. Civil society in particular has a strategic role to advocate to their respective Government for mainstreaming standardised case documentation methodology, and to demonstrate how data can be used to formulate progressive policies. One suggested strategy for the ACWC to implement its mandate is to utilize the Sustainable Development Goals framework, which is a more established platform within the ASEAN Member States.

As a result of the dialogue, civil society organisations called on the ACWC to foster its engagement with civil society to promote and protect human rights in the region, including through conducting a regional campaign to raise awareness on violence against women and children. They also urged the ACWC to establish a monitoring mechanism on cases of violence against women and children in alignment with ASEAN's commitment and the Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 16. Civil society organisations further more requested the ACWC to take a holistic approach to implementing the recommendations documented in the ACWC Annual Planning in 2016.

FORUM-ASIA reiterates the important role of civil society organisations to continuously strengthen the mandate of the ACWC to promote and protect the rights of women and children, through working in partnership with civil society, relevant ASEAN bodies such as the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN Senior Official Meetings, and other stakeholders.

FORUM-ASIA is committed to supporting an inclusive and meaningful stakeholders engagement mechanism with the ACWC in the future.

¹<https://www.forum-asia.org/?p=26982>

About FORUM-ASIA:

FORUM-ASIA is a regional human rights group with 58 member organisations in 19 countries across Asia. FORUM-ASIA has offices in Bangkok, Jakarta, Geneva and Kathmandu. FORUM-ASIA addresses key areas of human rights violations in the region, including freedoms of expression, assembly and association, human rights defenders, and democratisation.

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