

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

Jakarta, 15-16 June 2011



The ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) was inaugurated on 7 April 2010 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, in the occasion of the 16th ASEAN Summit. The establishment of the ACWC is aimed at, among others, promoting the well-being, development and participation of women and children in ASEAN. One of the mandates of the Commission is to develop policies, programmes, and innovative strategies to promote and protect the rights of women and children to complement the building of the ASEAN Community.

"The establishment of the ACWC was historical and a proclamation to the world that ASEAN is truly committed to improve the life of women and children in ASEAN. The ACWC will turn the expectation into reality", said Mrs. Kanda Vajrabhaya, Chair of the ACWC.

Subsequent to its inauguration, the ACWC had convened two meetings following the appointment of two Representatives of each ASEAN Member State. The First and Second Meetings were held on 16-18 February 2011 and 15-16 June 2011, respectively, in Jakarta.

Twenty Representatives have been appointed by ASEAN Member States to the Commission. The Representatives for women's right are: Datin Paduka Hajah Intan bte Haji Mohd Kassim (Brunei Darussalam), Mdm. Long Sophally (Cambodia), Mdm. Rita Serena Kolibonso (Indonesia), Mdm. Siamphone Sirattanakoul (Lao PDR), Dato' Dr. Noorul Ainur Mohd. Nur (Malaysia), Prof. Dr. Khin Mar Tun (Myanmar), Prof. Aurora Javate-De Dios (the Philippines), Dr. Aline Wong (Singapore), Mdm. Kanda Vajrabhaya (Thailand), and Mdm. Cao Thi Thanh Thuy (Viet Nam).

The Representatives for children's rights are: Datin Hajah Adina Othman (Brunei Darussalam), Mdm. Khiev Bory (Cambodia), Mr. Prasong Vongkhamchanh (Lao PDR), Mr. Ahmad Taufan Damanik (Indonesia), Prof. Datuk Dr. Chiam Heng Keng (Malaysia), Mdm. Rupal Mya (Myanmar), Mdm. Alicia R. Bala (The Philippines), Mr. Koh Choon Hui (Singapore), Dr. Saisuree Chutikul (Thailand), and Mr. Dang Hoa Nam (Viet Nam).

Mdm. Kanda Vajrabhaya and Mr. Ahmad Taufan Damanik were elected as the ACWC Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, during its First Meeting.

At present, the ACWC has identified the thematic areas to help itself in prioritising the focus and attention of the ACWC to the myriad of urgent regional issues facing the lives of women and children in the region. The Commission's 5-year work plan is currently being crafted. Additionally, the Rules of Procedures for the Commission has been finalised.

The thematic areas concerning women's rights are: elimination of violence against women, multiple forms of discrimination against vulnerable women, gender-equality and quality education, trafficking in

women, early-age marriage and reproductive health, women's participation in politics and decision making, governance and democracy, women living with and affected by HIV and AIDS, social impact of climate change on women, women in natural disasters, strengthening economic rights of women with regard to feminization of poverty, women's rights to land and property, women and discrimination based on nationality, citizenship, and administrative and policy measures on family matters.

Likewise, the thematic areas concerning children's rights are: elimination of violence against children, multiple forms of discrimination against vulnerable children including children in need of special protection, the right to quality education, incl. Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), trafficking in children, adolescent physical and mental health, children living with and affected by HIV and AIDS, children affected by war or armed conflict and in situation of disasters, social impact of climate change on children, the right of children to participate in all affairs that affect them.

During its study visit to Geneva in January 2011, the ACWC was engaged in discussions on critical substantive issues of gender equality and the rights of children in ASEAN with, among others, the Committees on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The visit was jointly organised by the UN Women, UNICEF and OHCHR.

Separately, the ACWC had also engaged in dialogues with UN agencies, notably UN Women, UNICEF, and UNODC on various issues concerning the rights of women and children.

A consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR) was convened on 16 June 2011 to update each other on their work progress. The issue of possible mechanisms for the Commission's engagement with civil society was also discussed.