

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

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The ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) concluded its Fifth Meeting convened on 2-5 July 2012 at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia. The ACWC deliberated on the operationalisation of its Work Plan 2012-2016. The concept papers of 12 projects and activities were discussed at the Meeting for implementation in 2012-2014. The basis for prioritizing the projects includes the relevance, the impact, and meaningful contribution to the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children in the region.

These planned projects include the publication of ASEAN best practices in eliminating violence against women and violence against children in ASEAN Member States; development of a regional network of social services agencies aiming at empowering victims of violence against women and violence against children in ASEAN; promoting convergence in the implementation of cross-cutting issues in the CEDAW and CRC Concluding Observations; public campaign to stop violence against women through activities commemorating the International Day on Anti-VAW; activities to strengthen economic rights of women, particularly to land and property, with regard to feminisation of poverty; development of an ASEAN progress report on women's advancement and gender equality; activities to create an enabling environment for children to participate in decision making process; development of standards for quality early childhood care development and education and child development index; setting performance standard on ASEAN integrative child protection system; convening a consultative meeting on cultural and religious practices impacting the rights of children; setting performance standards on service delivery for children with disabilities; and activity on non-violent approach in child rearing and positive disciplining.

Acknowledging the importance of cooperation, coordination and consultations with other relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies in carrying out the Work Plan 2012-2016, the Commission plans to meet the ASEAN Ministers responsible for women's affairs at their Inaugural Meeting scheduled for October 2012 in Lao PDR.

On 4 July 2012, the Commission also convened a dialogue with child representatives from ASEAN Member States. The children highlighted the outcomes of the 2nd ASEAN Children's Forum held in June 2012, Singapore as well as articulated the views and aspirations concerning their lives. They also reminded the Commission of their tagline: "Don't speak about us without us!" said one of the child representatives. The Commission also dialogued with 39 national and regional civil society organisations (CSOs) on 4 July 2012. CSOs provided feedback to the Commissions' draft declaration on Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children as well as shared their views on several issues related to the rights of women and children, in particular.

Recognising the imperative of cooperation with ASEAN Dialogue Partners, relevant UN Agencies and other international and regional organisations that are likeminded, the Commission identified the possible areas and projects that would elicit cooperation with them. The Commission discussed with H.E. David Carden, the U.S. Ambassador to ASEAN, the potential collaborative projects/activities with the various U.S. government agencies, Inter-American Commission of Women, civil society and academia as a follow-up to the Commission's study visit to Washington D.C. and New York on 18-25 April 2012.

On 5 July 2012, the Commission undertook a study visit to "Rumah Perlindungan Trauma Center" and "Rumah Perlindungan Sosial Anak" which are shelters in Jakarta that give emergency resources, assistance, and protection to victims/survivors of violence against women and violence against children. The study visit aimed at learning from the experiences of those shelters in handling cases and, at the same time, pledging morale support to those shelters that are working on the ground for uplifting the rights of women and children.

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