

Press Release of the 13th ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) Meeting

SINGAPORE, 5 October 2016 -The Thirteenth Meeting of the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) was convened on 3-5 October 2016 in Singapore. Three Representatives for women's rights and three Representatives for children's rights were welcomed as new Representatives from six Member States to succeed the previous ones who have completed their term of office. New ACWC Representatives are H.E. Hajah Misnah binti Haji Bolhassan from Brunei Darussalam, H.E. Doeuk Han from Cambodia, and H.E. Dr. Rose Lena Lazemi from Malaysia for women's rights, and H.E. Yuyum Fhahni Paryani from Indonesia, H.E. Dr. San San Aye from Myanmar, and H.E. Wanchai Roujanavong from Thailand for children's rights. The Meeting was convened under the leadership of the new chairperson Mdm. Lily Dorianty Purba, ACWC Indonesia representative for women's rights.

Important outcomes were achieved in the Meeting, including among others the finalisation of the ACWC Work Plan for 2016-2020. The new five-year Work Plan builds on the accomplishments and follow-ups from the previous Work Plan and includes new initiatives that are in line with the Regional Plans of Action on Elimination of Violence Against Women and Elimination of Violence Against Children. The ACWC adopted 16 thematic areas of its projects and activities for implementation in the next 5 years, notably: (i) strengthening institutional capacity of ACWC, (ii) elimination of violence against women and children, (iii) the right of children to participate in all affairs that affect them, (iv) trafficking in women and children, (v) promotion and protection of the rights of women and children with disabilities, (vi) Child Protection System: Comprehensive / Integrative Approach for Children in Need for Special Protection (e.g. victims of abuse and neglect, trafficking, child labour, children affected by statelessness, undocumented migrant children, HIV/AIDS, natural disaster, conflicts, and children in juvenile justice system / children in conflict with the law); (vii) the right to early childhood and quality education, (viii) promoting implementation of international, ASEAN and other instruments related to the rights of women and children, (ix) gender equality in education (textbook, curriculum, equal access), (x) social impact of climate change on women and children, (xi) strengthening economic rights of women with regards to feminization of poverty, women's rights to land and property, (xii) adolescent physical and mental health, (xiii) gender perspective in policies, strategies and programmes for migrant workers, (xiv) gender mainstreaming, (xv) women participation in politics and decision making, governance and democracy, and (xvi) early marriage.

The Meeting noted three publications that had been completed by ACWC, namely: the Gender Sensitive Guideline for Handling of Women Victims of Trafficking in Persons, the ASEAN Guidelines for A Non-Violent Approach to Nurture, Care and Development of Children in All Settings, and the Regional Review on Laws, Policies and Practices within ASEAN relating to the Identification, Management and Treatment of Victims of Trafficking, especially Women and Children. The Regional Review was launched on 28 September 2016 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The ACWC held open sessions with UNICEF EAPRO, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, Ateneo Human Rights Center and UNHCR. The open sessions provided an opportunity for these bodies to share efforts that are in support of or complementary with the ACWC priorities and explored possible areas of cooperation in line with the Work Plan 2016-2020.

The ACWC also met with the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) on 5 October 2016 during their 3rd ACWC-ACW Consultation Meeting. The ACWC and ACW has been conducting this joint meeting since 2014 in order to follow up joint collaborative projects as well as better synergise on initiatives that are complementary in nature. The ACWC-ACW Consultation Meeting finalised concrete initiatives that will be jointly implemented by the two bodies from 2016-2020 including joint initiatives on mainstreaming gender across all pillars in the ASEAN Community and development of a regional guideline for data collection on violence against women. The ACWC and ACW agreed to set up ad-hoc joint joint working groups to move ahead with the two initiatives. Other joint initiatives on gender and climate change and promotion of non-gender stereotyping in school curriculum were reviewed.

The ACWC and ACW supported the Philippines' initiative to develop a declaration on the gender-responsive implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for adoption by the ASEAN Summit in 2017.

The 14th Meeting of the ACWC will be held on 28 February to 2 March 2017 in Jakarta.
