

Seventh 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 Seventh Meeting convened on 22-24 July 2013 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Meeting was participated by ASEAN Member States (AMS) and the main event was the finalisation of the draft Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (VAW) and Elimination of Violence Against Children (VAC). The said Declaration addresses the concern of VAW and VAC as obstacles to achieving equality, peace and development, and reflects the collective efforts of ASEAN to intensify and strengthen policy, legal frameworks and institutional capacity to counter VAW and VAC. The ACWC reaffirmed its commitment to remove such obstacles in the context of strengthening regional cooperation, collaboration, and coordination endeavored to eliminate VAW and VAC. Goals and commitments made related to such were reaffirmed and key measures, such as building adequate resourced national welfare systems, protection, recovery and rehabilitation of victims, promotion of legislation against VAW and VAC, protection of the right of women and children, were highlighted. The Declaration further enhanced the coverage of vulnerabilities and emerging forms of abuse confronted by women and children such as conflict, migration, disaster, emergency situation, climate change, human trafficking, labor, cyber based abuses, persons with disabilities, statelessness and belonging to ethnic and/or indigenous groups were to be addressed.

The Meeting recognised the contributions of AMS, sectoral bodies and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in providing relevant inputs in enriching the Declaration period. The Meeting further accentuated the need for intensified collaboration and partnership among AMS, CSOs, governments, and relevant institutions, both local and international, to effectively eliminate VAW and VAC. The Declaration will be presented to the 23rd ASEAN Summit in October 2013 for adoption.

Other matter taken up was the progress of implementation of projects and activities led by AMS under the ACWC Work Plan 2012-2016. A total of ten proposals for funding by EU under the READI Facility were taken up and plans were firmed up to proceed with implementation. Likewise country coordinators appraised AMS of respective initiatives to promote rights of women and children, justice for women victims, strengthening

economic rights of women, impact of climate change, standards on service delivery for children with disabilities, review mechanism in managing and treatment of trafficked women and children, promotion of best practices in eliminating VAW and VAC, economic empowerment of women, and key action points to campaign, legislate, document and strengthen efforts to stop VAW and VAC. Supports extended by external parties from the EU, USA, and New Zealand were recognized and follow up activities with said parties were discussed in pushing forward the ACWC's efforts in eliminating VAW and VAC.

The Meeting culminated with a visit to the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development of Malaysia and the TASKA Nur, Child Care Center.

The eighth ACWC meeting was scheduled in early 2014 at the ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta, Indonesia.

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