

# Sixth 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) successfully concluded its Sixth Meeting which was convened from 1-2 April 2013 in Jakarta, Indonesia. The Meeting was updated on 15 projects under the ACWC Work Plan 2012-2016 while 3 new projects were tabled for adoption. Projects that are ongoing this year include the compilation of country of best practices in eliminating violence against women and children which will be published in mid-2013. Public campaign, which was inaugurated last year, will be undertaken in conjunction with the International Day to Stop Violence against Women on 25 November 2013. Acknowledging common issues concerning women and girls in the CEDAW and CRC Concluding Observations, the ACWC planned for a regional workshop to look into those common issues towards effective promotion and protection of the rights of women and children in June 2013 in Da Nang, Viet Nam. As part of children's rights promotion, development of guidelines for non violent approach to child rearing and child caring in various settings has started with annotated bibliographies being compiled.

Acknowledging that prevention and elimination of violence against women and children is its core, the ACWC drafted the ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children. After several reviews since 2011, the final draft of the Declaration was accepted at this Meeting and was aimed to be adopted by the ASEAN Leaders this year. The Declaration aims to reflect ASEAN's collective efforts to, among others, strengthen legal and policy frameworks and institutional capacity to combat violence against women and children, and assist victims through protection, services, rehabilitation, recovery and reintegration of victims.

Recognising the importance of collaboration for efficiency and better impact of projects in its Work Plan, the ACWC identified potential common areas and projects in the work plans of other ASEAN sectoral bodies. The ACWC will explore collaboration with those ASEAN sectoral bodies. The ACWC will also engage civil society in the implementation of its projects by tapping on their expertise. For this purpose, the Meeting discussed workable mechanisms of civil society engagement in the implementation of the ACWC Work Plan.

On 3 April 2013, the ACWC Representatives prepared the ground work towards the establishment of a network of social service providers helping women and children victims of violence. It was considered that the network would spearhead, among others, trainings, exchange programmes and scholarships for social service agencies, awards to recognise outstanding social workers in the region, case studies of successful rehabilitation and reintegration of victims.

The Seventh ACWC Meeting was scheduled for later part of 2013 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.