

Southeast Asia Women's Caucus on ASEAN Bulletin

April 2011

Welcome to the 2nd edition of the Women's Caucus Bulletin! This is a quarterly bulletin to keep you informed of all the national and regional activities and events that the Women's Caucus has been involved in.



First Women's Caucus Interface Meeting with ACWC a Success!

Signaling our increased capacity and cemented position as the key women's group engaging with ASEAN, the Women's Caucus met with nine ACWC representatives on 18 February, 2011 to discuss specific measures for increased women's participation with the new body. The Women's Caucus also raised the important issues of CSO engagement, ACWC alignment, Rules and Procedures (RoP), work plans and the ASEAN Declaration on Human Rights (ADHR).

During this important first dialogue, the Women's Caucus called for:

- The ACWC's support in ensuring meaningful and substantive and representation of women in all processes of ACWC
- CSO's participation to be an institutionalised process, including it being in an agenda item of all ACWC formal meetings
- The participation of CSOs to be a part of all formal processes of ACWC and not left to the discretion of the ACWC
- The engagement of ACWC to be with all CSOs and not limited to just those accredited and listed under Annex 2 of the ASEAN Charter.

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During the meeting, the ACWC representatives provided brief updates of their discussions during their first meeting on 16 – 18 February, 2011. This included logistics, capacity building, alignment and RoP, amongst others. We also learned that they have appointed Madam Kanda Vajrabhaya (Women’s Rights Representative, Thailand) and Mr. Ahmad Taufan Damanik (Children’s Rights Representative, Indonesia) as the Chair and Vice Chair of ACWC, respectively.

The ACWC expressed their appreciation on the submissions made by the Women’s Caucus including the Compilation and Analysis on the NGO Alternative Reports, the Women’s Caucus’ Position Paper on ACWC’s RoP and the Women’s Caucus’ Recommendations on ACWC’s Work Plan.

The ACWC Commissioners were also provided with the Women’s Caucus Bulletin, campaign scarves and our February 18th Statement as well as a statement from the Child Rights Coalition – Asia (CRC-Asia).

“The Women’s Caucus’ submissions were used as references during our first ACWC Meeting and we look forward to more support from CSOs in the future.”

–Rita Serena Kolibonso. ACWC Women’s Rights Representative, Indonesia

The nine representatives of the ACWC included:

Kanda Vajrabhaya

ACWC Chair Women’s Rights, Thailand

Ahmad Taufan Damanik

ACWC Vice Chair, Children’s Rights, Indonesia

Aline Wong

Women’s Rights, Singapore

Rita Serena Kolibonso

Women’s Rights, Indonesia

Saisuree Chutikul

Children’s Rights, Thailand

Aurora Javate De Dios

Women’s Rights, Philippines

Datin Paduka Hajah Intan bte Haji

Modh Massim

Women’s Rights, Brunei Darussalam

Datuk Dr. Chiam Heng Keng

Children’s Rights, Malaysia

Alicia R. Bala

Children’s Rights, Philippines

Datin Paduka Hajah Intan bte Haji

Modh Massim

Women’s Rights, Brunei Darussalam

The Women’s Caucus was represented by, Rena (Indonesia), Jelen (Philippines), Usa (Thailand), Atashendartini (Indonesia) and the officers from the Secretariat, Wathshlah and Dalina.

The Women’s Caucus also provided space for other CSOs/networks to take part in the event including Forum Asia, KontraS, Human Rights Working Group, Indonesia (HRWG), Komnas Perempuan, Migrant Care and Sahabat Anak dan Perempuan.

The meeting was hosted and organized by the Ministry of Women empowerment and Child Protection, Indonesia.



Women’s Caucus’ Working Group Meeting on ACWC’s Rules of Procedure and Work Plan

On 16th -18th March, 2011, the Women’s Caucus Working Group on ACWC’s Rules of Procedures (RoP) met in Jakarta to develop our position paper on ACWC’s RoP and our recommendations on the ACWC’s work plan. Both of the documents were submitted to the ACWC via email and hand-delivered to the ACWC representatives in the morning of the 17th February.

The position paper on ROP urges the ACWC to:

- commit to Women Caucus’ guiding principles,
- establish consultations and dialogues with the women’s groups
- to share information with general public
- to strengthen its protection mandates, to establish complaint mechanisms, to monitor the situation of women’s human rights and to strengthen the advocacy role

The working group meeting was held at the same time as the first ACWC meeting and provided excellent preparation for the Interface meeting the following day.

The working group consisted of Rena (Indonesia), Jelen (Philippines), Usa (Thailand) with the support from the Secretariat (Wathshlah and Dalina). Kalyanamitra kindly provided their office space as our meeting venue.



Expert Group Meeting on Effective Alignment Among Human Rights Mechanisms to Secure Human Rights for All: Lessons for ASEAN

On 6-7 December, 2010, the Women's Caucus was invited by the Indonesia National Commission on Violence Against Women to attend the Expert Meeting Group on Effective Alignment Among Human Rights Mechanisms to Secure Human Rights for All, held in Jakarta. The objectives of the meeting were to 1) build a strategic understanding of best practices and lesson learned on alignment among different human rights bodies and systems at the national, regional and international levels. 2) to provide the tool to build discussion within ASEAN in order to achieve the higher standard of human rights and to align with the existing human rights systems around the world. The meeting brought together experts from around the world to share their knowledge about alignment practices among the Human Rights mechanism at different levels. Among all the experts, Eleanor and Nana were invited to share their expertise and also responsible for drafting the outcome document after the two-day discussion. The Women's Caucus were able to engage with AICHR and ACWC, created a dialogue between them and developed a set of recommendations aiming to ensure alignment/coherence between the two bodies and independence of the ACWC.

Discussion on the Human Rights Implication of the ASEAN Community Blueprints

On 22nd to 23rd February, Joms from Gabriela represented the Women's Caucus in the Discussion on the Human Rights Implication of the ASEAN Community Blueprints held in Luang Prabang. The dialogue aimed to discuss and assess the human rights impact and implications of the three ASEAN Community Blueprints for its Political-Security, Economic and Socio-Cultural Pillars. At this meeting, CSOs had the opportunity to engage directly with the government representatives. With the representation of the Women's Caucus at the meeting, we ensured that the women's human rights framework and issues are reflected throughout the discussion. After this meeting, Joms will be contributing to WC's work on the blueprints analysis later on this year.



Newly appointed Chair and Vice Chair of the ACWC, Madam Kanda Vajrabhaya (wearing the Women's Caucus scarf) and Mr. Ahmad Taufan Damanik.

Meeting with the ASEAN Secretariat

On the 9th of December, 2010, Nining (Indonesia) and Dalina met with Mega Irena, from the ASEAN Secretariat, who provided useful updates on the ACWC and ASEAN Women's Committee. Dalina also met with the Human Rights Resource Centre for ASEAN to introduce the Women's Caucus and to exchange information about each other's work.

IWRAP Asia Pacific met with ACWC, 27 January, 2011, Geneva

On 24-28 January, 2011, ACWC representatives conducted a study tour to Geneva to meet with the CRC and CEDAW Committee as well as observe the reviews and also to meet the Council of Europe. On 27th January, 2011, Wathshlah, representing the IWRAP AP and the Women's Caucus met with the ACWC representatives to discuss the work of the Women's Caucus and IWRAP Asia Pacific's work on CEDAW, using this opportunity to also seek possible commitments on the engagement in Southeast Asia.

Forum on ASEAN and Disabilities

The Forum on ASEAN and Disabilities was held on the 1st to the 3rd of December 2010 in Jakarta. Enita Multina from Kalyanamitra attended the event on behalf of the Women's Caucus. She participated in the meeting, workshops on "Inclusive Social Development" and "Women and Children and Disabilities" and the plenary Session on "Creating People-Centered Disability Policy in the ASEAN+3 Countries".

During the workshops, Enita contributed to the recommendations that were made to governments on human rights and disability rights. After the forum, Ms. Enita also sent a letter to the Indonesian comedy TV show (Tran 7) that makes jokes out of differently-abled people and expressed her disappointment to such action.

Enita's attendance and participation at the event also enabled the Women's Caucus to strengthen their network and collaboration with other civil society organisations, particularly disabled peoples' organisations, to work on ASEAN human rights mechanism.

"What I learned about that is everyone has right to education and work in spite of all the shortcomings that exist within their physical or mental integrity. But the common problem to this is the schools are located in the city so the people who live in rural area cannot access. Sometimes the stigma for the people with disability is still bad, they shunned because the neighbour think that they have been cursed. Besides education, job also a matter for people with disabilities because the company don't want to employ them. The company think that they will retard the company performance ...

What I learned about that is lots of children and women with disabilities faces multiple discrimination and become a victim of crimes."

-Enita Multina

Advocacy at the National Level

Indonesia

In 8-10 December 2010, Kalyanamitra, Human Rights Working Group and Pattiro conducted a national workshop to develop an NGO advocacy capacity to promote and protect human rights by using human rights mechanisms. The workshop was attended by CSOs from various sectors where they were introduced to ASEAN and its human rights mechanisms (AICHR, ACWC, ACMW). At the end of the meeting, the CSOs developed common advocacy strategy and strengthen its network to be ready for when Indonesia becomes the chair of ASEAN in 2011. Dalina spoke about the Women's Caucus at the meeting.

All Countries

The Women's Caucus Workshop on Advocacy Skills and Developing Strategies are underway in eleven countries – Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Burma/Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and Timor Leste. The workshops will provide a forum for women's groups from ASEAN countries to increase their knowledge on ASEAN and strengthen their advocacy skills to enhance meaningful and constructive engagement with ASEAN. The workshops aim to build the capacity of the Women's Caucus to engage with ASEAN to prioritise women's human rights issues and concerns.

Thailand/Burma

On 6-10 March 2011, APWLD facilitated a workshop on "Putting Migrant Women Workers in ASEAN" in the Women's Exchange (WE) Conference, an annual event organized by Migrant Assistant Foundation Programme (MAP). The objective was to provide capacity building opportunities for women migrant workers from Burma, activist groups in Chiang Mai and those who live around the borders of Burma, with information on ASEAN and its human rights mechanisms. During the workshop, APWLD uses interactive teaching and facilitating methods (group discussion, tour of ASEAN, role play, etc) to discuss the issues faced by migrant workers in Thailand, to build the concept of human rights and to inform and update participants on ASEAN and its human rights mechanisms. The sessions were translated into Burmese by Toe Toe, the Burmese Women's Caucus focal point from the Women's League of Burma.



Women's Caucus members strategising before the ACWC interface meeting

Upcoming Events

ASEAN People's Forum 7

ASEAN People's Forum (APF7) will be held on 3 – 5 May 2011 in Jakarta, Indonesia. This year, the Women's Caucus is planning to co-organise the workshops on 1) Women's Rights and Gender Equality; 2) Implementing the Rights of the Migrant Workers; and 3) Armed Conflict and Militarization. To maximize the time, the Women's Caucus Strategy Meeting will also be held on 2 May 2011 in Jakarta to:

- Review the Women's Caucus Architecture Paper which will allow us to strengthen our internal structure;
- Share updates on activities undertaken at the national and regional levels. Country representatives will be asked to prepare and present on their national activities and plans since September 2011. This will include a report on their country's national workshops on advocacy skills and developing strategies;
- Review the Women's Caucus collective action plan; and
- Plan and strategise our participation in the APF7.

Women's Caucus Regional Workshop on Influencing the ASEAN Declaration on Human Rights

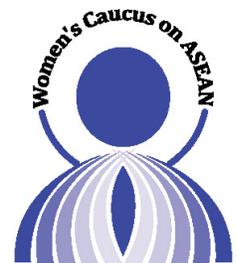
Realising the importance of integrating women's human rights perspectives into the ADHR and its drafting process, the Women's Caucus plans to organise a regional workshop sometimes in June or July, 2011 to develop a Southeast Asia Women's Caucus proposal on ADHR. The workshop will ensure that the inputs of women's groups into the drafting process come from the ground and are coherent. A Women's Caucus Working Group on ADHR has been set up to initiate the drafting of the Women's Caucus proposal on the ADHR and lead the discussion and advocacy around the process of AICHR's drafting of the ADHR. Eleanor (Philippines), Honey (Malaysia) and Braema (Singapore) were appointed to be in the working group.

Schedule of ASEAN National Workshops on ASEAN Advocacy

Burma: 18-20 April, 2011	Thailand: 27-28 April, 2011
Cambodia: 28-29 April, 2011	Timor Leste: 14-15 April, 2011
Malaysia: 9 April, 2011	Vietnam: 21-22 April, 2011

Women's Caucus Logo

We are also pleased to present the following options for the Women's Caucus logos.



Please contact Dalina at the APWLD Secretariat to offer your feedback as soon as possible.

Women's Caucus Materials

The following Women's Caucus materials are currently being developed:

- Banner
- DVD Cover
- Pamphlet
- ASEAN Reader



Nga (Vietnam) gave an interview for Forum Asia's video on ASEAN



Dalina recording the Thai Language version of the Women's Caucus Informational Video. Both the Thai, Tetum and a new, slower English versions are available. Please contact Dalina for a copy.



Jelen (Philippines) speaking with Aurora Javate De Dios, ACWC, Women's Rights, Philippines



Nining (Indonesia) met with the ASEAN Secretariat



Hoy, the Women's Caucus focal point from Cambodia, spoke at CTN-TV to present on the initiatives of the Women's Caucus and the ACWC on the issue of the rights of women and children

About the SEA Women's Caucus on ASEAN

The Women's Caucus represents an extensive network of women's human rights groups from 11 different countries in Southeast Asia.

Since 2008 we have been bringing together women from the Southeast Asia region and providing a platform for them to share information, build expertise, support collective advocacy and provide a strong, coherent voice to women.

The Women's Caucus strategically and positively engages with ASEAN to influence its processes, decisions, instruments, policies and structures in order to achieve the full realisation of women's human rights in Southeast Asia. The Women's Caucus also collaborates with the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and civil society networks.

The Women's Caucus has identified 5 key priority issues for women in Southeast Asia including, migration, violence against women, economic rights, political participation and discrimination in laws, policies and practices.

For more information on events and other activities planned by the Women's Caucus or to contribute to this bulletin with stories and photos, please contact Dalina (dalina@apwld.org) and Huong (huong@apwld.org).

The SEA Women's Caucus on ASEAN is generously supported by:



Canadian International Development Agency

Women's Caucus on ASEAN

Co-convended by APWLD and IWRAP Asia Pacific
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