

**The ASEAN Intergovernmental  
Commission on Human Rights (AICHR)  
Annual Report 2018**

**July 2017 – June 2018**

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## 1. Executive Summary

This Annual Report covers the period between July 2017 and June 2018.

The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) convened four AICHR Meetings, and organised a series of activities in line with its annual Priority Programmes/Activities 2017/2018 for the period under review.

On cross-pillar and cross-sectoral cooperation, the Task Force on the Mainstreaming of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community initiated by the AICHR and held in collaboration with the Senior Officials' Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) has continued its deliberation for an ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The AICHR Cross-Sectoral Consultation on the Human Rights-based Instruments related to the Implementation of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Person, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP) was organised as a follow-up to the AICHR-SOMTC consultation held in November 2015 on similar theme.

The fourth youth debate on human rights and a roundtable on the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration were organised in commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN.

Some notable progress in the work of the AICHR include the completion of the second AICHR Thematic Study, namely on Women Affected by Natural Disasters, and conferment of twelve CSOs with Consultative Relationship with the AICHR.

On the external relations front, the AICHR hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights together with the ACWC, the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW), and the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW) in November 2017. In December 2017, the AICHR conducted a study visit to Australia at the invitation of the Australian Human Rights Commission.

## 2. Work of the AICHR (July 2017 – June 2018)

### A. Meetings of the AICHR

The AICHR convened four meetings between July 2017 and June 2018. At these meetings, the AICHR discussed various matters including the implementation of its annual Priority Programmes/Activities, reports of completed activities, cooperation with relevant ASEAN bodies and external partners, engagement with civil society

organisations, and measures to strengthen its institutional capacity and efficiency in discharging its mandates and functions.

- Special Meeting of the AICHR, Manila, the Philippines, 4 to 6 August 2017: The Meeting adopted the concept papers of (i) the AICHR Thematic Study on the Right to Life: Protection of the Rights of Persons Convicted of Death Penalty, (ii) 50 Years of ASEAN & 5 Years of the AHRD: Round-Table Discussion: the AICHR's Role and Work in Fulfilling the Goals and Aspirations of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration 2012 (*ad-referendum*), and (iii) the AICHR Training on Business and Human Rights (*ad-referendum*). The Meeting also adopted the modality of approving AICHR thematic studies (*ad-referendum*), and approved the AICHR: What You Need to Know Video, which was one of AICHR's commemorative activities for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN. The Meeting discussed the applications of CSOs and granted Consultative Relationship status to six (6) CSOs.
- 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AICHR, Bohol, the Philippines, 26 to 27 November 2017: The Meeting adopted the AICHR Priority Programmes/Activities 2018 and the AICHR Retreat modalities. The executive summary of the AICHR Judicial Colloquium on the Sharing of Good Practices Regarding International Human Rights Law, the report of the AICHR-ACWC Training Workshop on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the outcome document of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop on the Development of ASEAN Legal Human Rights Instruments were noted. The Meeting hosted an Award Ceremony for the winners of the ASEAN Youth Video Competition: ASEAN Against Trafficking: "Humans are not for Sale". A handover ceremony of the Chair of the AICHR from Philippines to Singapore was also held.
- 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AICHR, Singapore, 24 to 26 January 2018: The Meeting adopted concept papers to be implemented in 2018, which were: (i) AICHR High Level Dialogue on Managing Freedom of Expression in the Information Age, (ii) AICHR Thematic Study on Juvenile Justice, with particular emphasis on Interrogation Practices for Children in Conflict with the Law (*ad-referendum*), (iii) AICHR Interregional Dialogue: Sharing Good Practices on Business and Human Rights (*ad-referendum*), (iv) AICHR Youth Debate on Human Rights 2018 AICHR Workshop on Enhancing Access to Information on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (*ad-referendum*), (v) 2018 AICHR Regional Dialogue on the Mainstreaming of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community (Accessibility through Universal Design) (*ad-referendum*), and (vi) AICHR Workshop on Enhancing Access to Information on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (*ad-referendum*). The Meeting approved the report of the second thematic study completed by the AICHR, the AICHR Thematic Study on Women Affected by Natural

Disasters. The Meeting also noted the Program Summary of the Study Visit of the AICHR to Australia held in December 2017. Six (6) CSOs were granted Consultative Relationship with the AICHR.

- 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the AICHR, ASEAN Secretariat, 13-17 May 2018: The Meeting adopted concept paper of the AICHR Capacity Building Workshop on Article 14 of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration and the revised Guidelines on Budget Standardisation for the AICHR's Priority Programmes/Activities. Reports of several AICHR activities were noted, including, (i) 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Dialogue on the Mainstreaming of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community; (ii) AICHR Youth Debate on Human Rights 2017: 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN: Forging Ahead Together Toward a Sustainable Community; (iii) AICHR Regional Dialogue on Mainstreaming of the Right to Education in the ASEAN Community; (iv) AICHR Workshop on Enhanced Access to Education for Children with Disabilities; and (v) AICHR Training on Business and Human Rights. The AICHR held its first meeting with the new Secretary-General of ASEAN, as well as its annual meeting with the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR). The AICHR also held its first meeting with the United Nations and its agencies, and several Dialogue Partners, including Australia, Canada and the United States and discussed potential areas for future cooperation on human rights themes of mutual interest.

## B. Activities of the AICHR

During the past twelve months, the AICHR conducted sixteen activities which covered six of its mandates, namely Mandates 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.6, 4.11 and 4.12. These activities also addressed thirteen out of fifteen action lines under the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint 2025 key element A.2.5 "Promote and protect human rights, fundamental freedoms and social justice to ensure our peoples live with dignity, in peace, harmony and prosperity" thereby contributing to the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. Below are brief descriptions of the activities.

1. AICHR-ACWC Training Workshop on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Singapore, 13 - 14 July 2017: This was the first joint project between the AICHR and ACWC on children's rights. It brought together ASEAN stakeholders working on the implementation and reporting of the CRC to share experiences, learn from international and regional experts, and discuss developments and emerging issues in children's rights.
2. AICHR Youth Debate on Human Rights 2017, Bangkok, Thailand, 4 - 6 September 2017: The fourth youth debate was one of the AICHR's commemorative activities for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEAN. Themed "Forging ahead Together toward a

Sustainable Community”, the debate motions revolved around the complementarity and intersectionality of political stability, economic prosperity, inclusiveness and human rights in ASEAN, as well as the complementarity of Sustainable Development Goals to the ASEAN community building. About 40 university students from the ten ASEAN Member States participated in the event.

3. AICHR Cross Sectoral Consultation on the Human Rights-based Instruments related to the Implementation of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Person, especially Women and Children, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 29 - 30 August 2017: Building from the first AICHR-SOMTC Consultation held in September 2016, this consultation provided an overview of the existing human rights-friendly instruments on the implementation of ACTIP, with regard to preventing, combating perpetrators and supporting TIP victims. It also explored ways of interconnecting national referral systems at the ASEAN level.
4. 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop on the Development of ASEAN Legal Human Rights Instruments, Manila, the Philippines, 13 - 14 September 2017: The workshop continued the dialogue which was initiated in September 2015 on the possible development of ASEAN human rights cooperation frameworks, including legal instruments on human rights and regional non-binding guidelines on human rights. The workshop underlined that the development of legal instruments of human rights in ASEAN should reflect ASEAN’s particular diversity, and be consistent with international human rights standards and commitments accepted by ASEAN Member States.
5. Regional Consultation on the Thematic Study on Legal Aid, Bangkok, Thailand, 11 - 12 October 2017: The regional consultation gathered national and regional researchers, ASEAN sectoral bodies, UN agencies and civil society organisations to share good practices and lessons learnt on legal aid within the ASEAN Member States’ jurisdiction, including on legal aid services for specific groups such as women and children, victims of trafficking and migrant workers.
6. AICHR’s Regional Consultation on the Right to Safe Drinking Water & Sanitation in ASEAN (with emphasis on rural communities), Sabah, Malaysia, 25 - 27 October 2017: The objectives of the consultation were (i) to take stock of the ASEAN Member States’ country situations regarding their approaches to the right to water and sanitation; (ii) to share good practices on the application of international human rights norms and the realisation of SDG 6; (iii) to understand and elaborate on the normative content of Article 28(e) AHRD; and (iv) to address gaps and challenges to the full realisation of the right to water and sanitation in the ASEAN region. More than 50 stakeholders including from government, ASEAN sectoral bodies dealing with

environment, national health officials, national human rights institutions, international organisations as well as civil society organisations gathered and shared country situations, experiences and challenges regarding the provision of safe drinking water and sanitation to rural communities.

7. AICHR Workshop on Rights-Based Approach to Regional Management Strategy for an Effective Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Yangon, Myanmar, 29 - 30 October 2017: The workshop is a follow-up to two previous workshop organised by the AICHR on human rights, environment and climate change. The workshop saw the sharing of national and regional good practices and policies on EIA and the challenges in their implementation, including the experience of transboundary EIA assessment as overseen by the Mekong River Commission, and good practices of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) in Korea and by the Asian Development Bank for its projects. The workshop also highlighted the importance of public participation, the right to information and access to justice throughout the process of EIA to be an effective tool in promoting and safeguarding environment and human rights.
8. AICHR Regional Dialogue on Mainstreaming of the Right to Education in the ASEAN Community, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 10 - 12 November 2017: The Dialogue aimed at: (i) raising awareness of the right to education as a cross-cutting issue in ASEAN; (ii) garnering inputs from ASEAN sectoral bodies and stakeholders to mainstream the right to education across the three community pillars of ASEAN; and (iii) creating a platform to strengthen regional cooperation on education and human rights. It discussed ways and means to mainstream the right to education across the three Community Pillars of ASEAN and exchanged views on possible approaches to enhance access to and quality of different levels of education.
9. AICHR Training Programme on Business and Human Rights, Bangkok, Thailand, 13 - 16 November 2017: This activity is part of the AICHR's continuous efforts to conduct training on relevant human rights issues in ASEAN. The 2017 training focused on the linkages between business and human rights, in particular on the development and implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011) which highlight obligations of states to protect and business enterprises to respect human rights. The training brought together relevant stakeholders in the region including from government, businesses and the judiciaries.
10. 50 Years of ASEAN and 5 Years of ASEAN Human Rights Declaration Roundtable Discussion: The AICHR's Role and Work in Fulfilling the Goals and Aspirations of AHRD 2012, Bohol, Philippines, 28 November 2017: The roundtable discussion aimed to (i) provide a platform for dialogue on the needs, opportunities and gaps in

implementing the AHRD; (ii) raise awareness among ASEAN stakeholders on the goals and aspirations of the AHRD; (iii) make recommendations for greater human rights cooperation among relevant stakeholders in the region; and (iv) identify the AICHR's role in fulfilling the goals and aspirations of the AHRD. It gathered the participation of ASEAN officials working on the issues of labour, migrant workers, women and children, health development, education, and information and media. The AICHR interfaced for the first time with CSOs with Consultative Relationship with the AICHR at this Roundtable Discussion.

11. AICHR Regional Workshop on Enhanced Access to Education for Children with Disabilities, Da Nang, Viet Nam, 13 - 14 December 2017: The workshop was co-organised by the AICHR and Senior Officials Meeting on Education (SOM-ED). It aimed at: (i) reviewing current needs and issues in meeting the education needs of children with disabilities within the ASEAN region in order to establish a common understanding among ASEAN countries; (ii) raising awareness of education for children with disabilities as a cross-cutting issue in ASEAN; (iii) sharing experiences and best practices within and beyond ASEAN on regional governance to enhance access to education for children with disabilities; and (iv) making recommendations on how to promote cooperation among relevant ASEAN bodies and stakeholders in promoting access to education for children with disabilities.
12. 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Task Force on the Mainstreaming of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community, Da Nang, Viet Nam, 15 - 16 December 2017: The Task Force had an interface with a representative from the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and exchanged views on the zero draft of the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Meeting agreed on the structure of the first draft of the Masterplan which would emphasise on goals-setting, aspiration and shared efforts by all pillars of ASEAN towards an inclusive community by 2025. The Meeting also noted that the Masterplan should reinforce the ongoing efforts by ASEAN under the framework of the Bali Declaration on the Enhancement of the Role and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community and the Mobilisation Framework of the ASEAN Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2011-2020).
13. 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Task Force on the Mainstreaming of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community, Jakarta, Indonesia, 5 - 6 February 2018: The Meeting deliberated on the first draft of the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Meeting had an interface with a representative from the ASEAN Disability Forum and discussed the challenges faced by persons with disabilities and ways forward to achieve an inclusive society.



The Task Force also met with the Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for Community and Corporate Affairs and exchanged views on ASEAN Secretariat's role and efforts in the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities.

14. First Coordination Meeting for the Thematic Study on the Right to Education: Promotion of Access to Tertiary Education in ASEAN, Vientiane, Lao PDR, 9 April 2018: The 1<sup>st</sup> Coordination Meeting gathered National Focal Points, Regional Consultant and Study Team Members to discuss and deliberate on the modality and framework for national reports of the Thematic Study on the Right to Education with the aim to identify challenges faced in the areas of access to tertiary education in ASEAN and share lessons and good practices of ASEAN Member States in promoting access to tertiary education in order to contribute to the realisation of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, especially Article 31 on the Right to Education. The Meeting also adopted the timeline of the Thematic Study which is expected to be completed by the end of 2018.
15. AICHR High Level Dialogue on Managing Freedom of Expression in the Information Age, Medan, Indonesia, 11 to 12 April 2018: The High Level Dialogue, co-organised by AICHR Indonesia and AICHR Malaysia, gathered AICHR Representatives, ASEAN officials, academia, media practitioners and civil society actors to discuss issues related to freedom of expression in the digital age. The Dialogue included several panel presentations from various ASEAN sectoral bodies (SOMRI, SOMY and AICHR), UN agencies (UN OHCHR, UNESCO) as well as academia and CSOs that examined freedom of expression from their institutional and professional perspectives. It also comprised a working session with media professionals and a public dialogue with invited CSOs. The Dialogue identified the benefits, pitfalls and useful lessons learned in managing freedom of expression from various AMS' country experiences, and put forward recommendations to facilitate freedom of expression in the region.
16. 6<sup>th</sup> Task Force Meeting on the Mainstreaming of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community, 16-17 April 2018, Jakarta, Indonesia: The Meeting deliberated on the draft ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Masterplan) which outlines key action points to advance the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities in the three ASEAN Community pillars as well as ensure their inclusion in the political, social and cultural environments in the implementation of the three ASEAN Community Blueprints. The Task Force held bilateral consultations with the Deputies Secretary-General of ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) and ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) which highlighted the critical importance of substantively engaging relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies in the implementation of the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan, as well as in

effectively addressing the challenges to ensuring accessibility and enhancing participation of persons with disabilities in all settings.

### **C. Relations with ASEAN Organs and Sectoral Bodies**

During this period the AICHR had constructive engagements with the following ASEAN organs and sectoral bodies.

#### **1. ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM)**

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting had its sixth Interface with the AICHR during the 50<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) on 4 August 2017 in Manila, the Philippines. The Chair of the AMM commended the AICHR's active engagement with civil society organisations through the granting of Consultative Relationship with the AICHR, and encouraged the AICHR to mainstream human rights-based approach across all pillars of ASEAN. The Chair of the AICHR presented the AICHR Annual Report 2017 which outlined the AICHR's activities, achievements, and main developments including the AICHR's activities to commemorate ASEAN's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and its cooperation with various ASEAN sectoral bodies to mainstream human rights across all three pillars of ASEAN.

#### **2. Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR)**

On 14 May 2018 the AICHR met with the CPR, the Meeting was co-chaired by Chair of the AICHR and Chair of the CPR. The AICHR updated the CPR about their work, areas of priority and explored possibility of a joint CPR-AICHR activity in 2018/19. The AICHR and CPR exchanged views on several matters of interest, specifically, engagement with CSOs, and the implementation of AICHR activities in the promotion and protection of human rights in line with its TORs.

#### **3. Secretary-General of ASEAN**

On 14 May 2018 the AICHR held its first Meeting with H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi as the Secretary-General of ASEAN. H.E. Dato Lim underlined the importance of ensuring ownership within ASEAN and upholding ASEAN's core principles in all areas of work, including the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN in accordance with the AICHR mandate and its Terms of Reference. He also commended the AICHR's efforts to strengthen collaboration with ASEAN Sectoral Bodies in selected thematic areas, notably on mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities. The AICHR briefed SG Dato Lim on the implementation of AICHR's activities on a range of issues, including right to health, business and human rights, rights of the child, and water sanitation.

#### **4. ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC)**

On 27 March 2018, the AICHR had an interface with ACWC during the 16<sup>th</sup> ACWC Meeting. The Interface provided a platform to deepen the collaboration and partnership between the AICHR and ACWC. During this reporting period, the AICHR and ACWC had organised their first joint activity, namely the AICHR-ACWC Training Workshop on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (see B. Activities of the AICHR).

#### **D. External Relations**

##### **1. 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights**

As a follow up from the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights held in October 2015, the AICHR hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights on 29 November 2017 in Bohol, the Philippines. The Dialogue was attended by an EU Delegation led by the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, and Representatives/Alternate Representatives of ACWC and the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW). Both ASEAN and EU agreed to continue their cooperation and identified specific areas where both parties would work more closely together, including trafficking in persons, business and human rights as well as women's and children's rights and the rights of migrant workers.

##### **2. The AICHR's Study Visit to Australia**

Building on the Interface between the AICHR and Australia in May 2017, the AICHR was invited to a study visit on 4-7 December 2017 by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The visit aimed to foster relations between the AICHR and AHRC through information and knowledge exchanges. During the visit, the AICHR met with the Australian Foreign Minister and had an interface with the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) Commissioners. AICHR also arranged to have discussions with national human rights institutions in Asia and the Pacific, civil society groups, as well as legal organisations on human rights. Several information, issues and themes on human rights and fundamental freedoms between the two regions were shared, including gender equality, the rights of people with disabilities, migration, people smuggling and trafficking in persons, also the rights of indigenous people. The development and progress of infrastructure, institution, legislation, mechanisms to promote and protect the said human rights and fundamental freedoms by each region were also shared.

## E. AICHR's Consultative Relations with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

The AICHR adopted the Guidelines on the AICHR's Relations with CSOs on 11 February 2015 which enables the AICHR to have a meaningful and constructive engagement and interaction with the CSOs with Consultative Relationship to further enhance cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in ASEAN. On 28 November 2017 the AICHR had an interface with fourteen (14) CSOs with Consultative Relationship with the AICHR. This interface set the stage for better communication, coordination and engagement between CSOs and the AICHR. During the interface, the CSOs provided recommendations to the AICHR, including for the AICHR to institutionalise its interface with CSOs and to consider joint projects with CSOs that have a Consultative Relationship with the AICHR. The AICHR also has engaged CSOs with Consultative Relationship in its activities, either as speakers or participants, such as at AICHR Cross-Sectoral Consultation on the Human Rights-based Instruments related to the Implementation of ACTIP and AICHR High Level Dialogue on Managing Freedom of Expression in the Information Age.

To date, twenty-eight (28) CSOs have been granted Consultative Relationship with the AICHR. The list of CSOs with Consultative Relationship with the AICHR appears as **Annex A**.

## F. Institutional Matters

### 1. Rules of Procedures for the AICHR Fund (ROP)

The AICHR has been discussing revisions to the ROP in view of strengthening accountability and good governance in the utilisation of the AICHR Fund. The proposed revisions include measures to be undertaken by the AICHR Representatives and the ASEAN Secretariat on management of disbursed AICHR Fund as well as monitoring and reporting on utilisation of the Fund.

### 2. Improving AICHR's efficiency in its work

The AICHR has, subject to its Terms of Reference, discussed possible areas to improve its efficiency, including:

- Frequency and length of the AICHR's meetings;
- Procedure to approve concept notes and sharing with relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies;

- An enhanced role for the AICHR Assistants; and
- Responding to external parties' correspondence and requests for meeting with the AICHR.

### **3. Guidelines on Budget Standardisation for the AICHR's Priority Programmes/Activities**

The AICHR has revised its Guidelines on Budget Standardisation, issued in 2013, to amend a number of outdated budget items, aiming to further enhance the effectiveness of operationalisation and implementation of AICHR priority programmes and activities.

#### **3. Observations and Future Directions**

##### **A. Strengthening the AICHR as an Institution**

The AICHR has taken several actions to strengthen its institutional capacity and improve its efficiency. The ASEAN Secretariat has also played an important role in monitoring the progress and implementation of the AICHR's agenda, overseeing the management of the AICHR's funds, and providing institutional support for the AICHR. Further efforts to streamline its work, as well as to further clarify and standardise its work procedures, will contribute to enhancing the AICHR's effectiveness.

The AICHR has also strengthened cross-sectoral and cross-pillar cooperation and coordination with several other ASEAN sectoral bodies, such as Senior Officials Meeting Responsible on Information (SOMRI), Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (SOMRDPE), Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development (SOMHD), ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment (ASOEN), ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting (ASLOM), Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crimes (SOMTC), and Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM), through joint activities, meetings and interfaces; and inviting them to participate in and contribute actively to AICHR's activities and agenda. This will help to advance the AICHR's work in mainstreaming human rights in all three pillars of ASEAN.

##### **B. Funding for AICHR Activities**

The AICHR has improved on the utilisation of its budget, by strengthening accountability and good governance, improving budget management processes, and enhancing its external relations. The AICHR will continue to lead and uphold ASEAN centrality of its human rights agenda and activities, pursuant to the Terms of Reference of the AICHR and the ASEAN Charter.

### **C. Building on Past Activities and Discussions**

The AICHR has built up a knowledge base and partnership through regular activities and discussions on human rights issues such as business and human, environment, climate change, water and sanitation, persons with disabilities, trafficking in persons—and, education, peace, media and the rule of law. Moving forward, it will continue to enhance and deepen discussions and engagement on these issues.

The AICHR has engaged the youth with activities such as the AICHR Youth Debate on Human Rights and the ASEAN Youth Video Competition. The AICHR Youth Debate on Human Rights, first organised by the Philippines in 2013, then by Singapore in 2015, Malaysia in 2016, and Thailand in 2017, and planned for Cambodia in 2018, has become a regular AICHR activity with the aim of engaging ASEAN youth and students on human rights discussions in the region.

At the same time, the AICHR will continue to explore emerging and important areas pertaining to human rights. Discussions such as on managing freedom of expression in the information age, support ASEAN's goals to increase its resilience and innovation in the light of technological advances.

### **D. Leveraging the AICHR's Consultative Relations with CSOs**

The increasing number of applications from CSOs for Consultative Relationship with the AICHR is testament to the increasing impact of the AICHR's work and the interest of civil society to engage the AICHR. The areas of human rights covered by CSOs with Consultative Relationship includes the rights of children and women, the rights of persons with disabilities, indigenous people and migrant workers, labour rights, the right to development, the right to peace, among other themes. It also reflects the interest of CSOs to support the AHRD, the work of the AICHR, the principles and purposes of the ASEAN, and the ASEAN Community.

The AICHR has strengthened its relations with accredited CSOs over the past few years, such as by organising an interface in November 2017 as part of the Roundtable Discussion on the AHRD. The AICHR will leverage its relations with accredited CSOs, in accordance with the Guidelines on the AICHR's Relations with CSOs, by frequent communications, enhancing involvement of accredited CSOs in its activities and interfacing regularly with accredited CSOs, to enhance the value of the consultative

relationship to both the AICHR and accredited CSOs towards contributing to the ASEAN Community building process.

#### **E. Enhancing Outreach**

The AICHR has kept up its public outreach through the AICHR website, ASEAN's social media channels, and relevant AICHR publications. The AICHR is of the view that it should continue the practice of sharing its Annual Report on the AICHR website, to ensure wider knowledge of its work. Efforts to reach out to ASEAN's citizens, especially the youth, should continue and be enhanced, to ensure that ASEAN's citizens are informed and educated on human rights in the region.