

The ASEAN Intergovernmental
Commission on Human Rights
Annual Report 2016

July 2015 – June 2016

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1. Executive Summary

This Annual Report covers the period between July 2015 and June 2016.

The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) convened six AICHR Meetings, which included Special Meetings, and organised a series of activities in line with the annual Priority Programmes/Activities 2015/2016 for the period under review. In 2015, the AICHR convened workshops on ASEAN legal instruments on human rights, environment and climate change, rights of persons with disabilities, and trafficking in persons (TIP). The AICHR also held two regional events involving youths from all ten ASEAN Member States (AMS) to raise awareness of human rights among the young people of the region.

In support of the work of other ASEAN Sectoral Bodies dealing with human rights issues, the AICHR and the Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) co-organised a Workshop on the “Human Rights-based Approach to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children” in November 2015.

On the external relations front, the AICHR, together with the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (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) met with the European Union for the first ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights.

Another notable progress in the work of the AICHR include the operationalization of the Guidelines on AICHR’s Relations with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and the granting of ‘Consultative Relationship’ status to eleven organisations. A new thematic study on women affected by natural disasters has commenced and is due for completion in 2017.

The AICHR has embarked on their second Five-Year Work Plan 2016-2020 with emphasis on a programmatic approach and regularisation of activities, for example, the second phase of the programme on the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities. The beginning of 2016 saw a transition in the AICHR with eight new Representatives to the AICHR - from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, and Viet Nam – assuming office.

In line with the recommendation of the High Level Task Force (HLTF) on Strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat and Reviewing the ASEAN Organs, the unit in the ASEAN Secretariat supporting the AICHR, now renamed as the Human Rights Division, moved from the ASEAN Community and Corporate Affairs Department (CCAD) to the ASEAN Political-Security Community Department (APSC) to provide dedicated support to the AICHR.

2. Outline of AICHR Activities

2.1. AICHR Meetings

Special Meeting of the AICHR, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2 to 5 August 2015: The Meeting adopted concept papers on the 'AICHR-SOMTC Joint Workshop on Human Rights-based Approach to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children', and the 'AICHR Dialogue on the Mainstreaming of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community'. Workshop reports on the 'AICHR's Dialogue with ASEAN Community Councils on the AHRD and the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD', and the 'Workshop on Strengthening AICHR's Protection Mandate by Exploring Mechanisms and Strategies to Protect Women and Girls from Violence (VAWG)' were noted. The Meeting also discussed the initial progress report from the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) on the Regional Study on the Economic Participation of Women in ASEAN.

Special Meeting of the AICHR, Manila, Philippines, 16 and 17 September 2015: The Meeting reviewed the concept paper on the 'AICHR Thematic Study on Women affected by Natural Disasters', which was a revision of the paper on the 'Regional Study on Women in Conflict and Disaster Situations' first presented at the Special Meeting in Kuala Lumpur. Other concept papers discussed were the 'AICHR Thematic Study on the Right to Life' and the 'AICHR Thematic Study on Juvenile Justice System'. There was also a briefing by the AIM and a discussion on the follow up to the 'Regional Study on the Economic Participation of Women in ASEAN'. The Meeting also adopted the Screening Panel Procedures, which outlines the modalities of the Screening Panel in providing recommendations on whether to endorse/recommend an application by CSOs seeking Consultative Relations with the AICHR. The Application Form pertaining to CSOs application for Consultative Relations was also adopted. Both these documents have been uploaded onto the AICHR Website. A meeting with the SOMTC-Leader of the Philippines was also held to discuss the joint AICHR-SOMTC workshop on TIP which would be convened in November 2015.

19th Meeting of the AICHR, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 27 to 29 November 2015: The Meeting adopted two concept papers, namely the 'AICHR Thematic Study on Women Affected by Natural Disasters' and the 'AICHR Workshop on Effective Communication Strategies to Combat Trafficking in Persons'. The Meeting noted the reports on the 'AICHR Programme on Human Rights: Training of the Trainers for Journalists in ASEAN Member States', and the 'AICHR Workshop on the Development of ASEAN Legal Instruments on Human Rights'. The Meeting adopted the Rules of Procedure (RoP) of the AICHR Programme Account which aims to streamline and expedite the project appraisal and approval processes for projects seeking funding from ASEAN Dialogue Partners. Projects that seek funding from Dialogue Partners are solely for human rights promotion, capacity building and education. The Meeting discussed the applications from CSOs and granted Consultative Relationship status to five

organisations. A handing over ceremony of the Chair of AICHR from Malaysia to Lao PDR was also held.

20th Meeting of the AICHR, Vientiane, Lao PDR, 4 and 5 February 2016: It was the first meeting in 2016 under the chairmanship of Lao PDR. The Meeting adopted concept papers to be implemented in 2016, which were (i) 'The AICHR Seminar on Promoting CSR and Human Rights in ASEAN', (ii) 'The AICHR Regional Forum on Media and Human Rights', (iii) 'The AICHR Youth Debate on Human Rights: "Realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals in the Context of ASEAN Human Rights Declaration', and (iv) 'The 2nd AICHR Regional Dialogue on the Mainstreaming of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community'. The AICHR agreed to submit the concept paper on the 'AICHR Annual Consultation on Human Rights-based Approach in the Implementation of ACTIP¹ and APA²', to the SOMTC for their inputs and agreement. The Meeting also noted the reports on the 'AICHR-SOMTC Joint Workshop on Human Rights-based Approach to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children', 'The AICHR Youth Debates on Human Rights', and the 'Regional Dialogue on the Mainstreaming on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community'.

21st Meeting of the AICHR, ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta, Indonesia, 5 to 9 April 2016: The Meeting adopted four concept papers to be implemented in 2016, (i) 'AICHR - SOMTC Consultation on Human Rights-based Approach to the Implementation of ACTIP and APA', (ii) 'Thematic Study on Legal Aid', (iii) 'Regional Workshop on Strengthening National Plans of Action on Trafficking in Persons to Ensure Effective Implementation of the ACTIP and APA', and (iv) 'Training Programme on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities'.

The AICHR conducted bilateral meetings with the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to ASEAN, and the Secretary-General of ASEAN, H.E. Le Luong Minh. The AICHR also met with H.E. Nina Hachigian, the U.S. Ambassador to ASEAN, together with representatives of US AID and ASEAN-U.S. PROGRESS, and H.E. Francisco Fontan Pardo, the EU Ambassador to ASEAN. The Meeting adopted Priority Programmes/Activities of the AICHR 2017, which will be submitted to the AMM in July 2016 for their endorsement. The Meeting granted Consultative Relations with the AICHR to six organisations.

Special Meeting of the AICHR, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 2 to 3 July 2016: The AICHR deliberated on the preparation of its Interface Meeting with the ASEAN Foreign Ministers on 23 July 2016, in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The AICHR also met with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to explore potential collaboration on human

¹ Asean Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP)

² ASEAN Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (APA)

rights activities. The AICHR discussed their implementation activities on their Priority Programmes/Activities.

2.2. Implementation Priority Programmes/Activities of the AICHR 2015 – 2016

The AICHR, as a vehicle for progressive social development and justice and entrusted with the mandate to give full realization to human dignity and the attainment of a higher quality of life in ASEAN, prepares their annual Priority Programmes/Activities based on their Five Year Work Plan. Their activities aim at promoting and protecting human rights in ASEAN, thereby contributing to the ASEAN Community and beyond.

- *The AICHR Programme on Human Rights: Training of the Trainers for Journalists in ASEAN Member States, Bangkok, Thailand, 25 – 29 July 2015:* This is the first training programme of the AICHR that is focused on journalists. The training objective was to establish a mutual understanding on the roles of journalists in the area of human rights issues in ASEAN. It also functioned as a platform to promote networks among journalists in the region. The Programme emphasised fundamental information, background and structural governance of human rights at the international and regional levels. Topics that were covered in the Programme included international human rights mechanisms, ASEAN and regional human rights mechanisms, and rights of women, children and migrant workers. Included in the training programme was a one-day field trip during which participants were invited to visit three institutions in Bangkok. At the Central Women Correctional Institution, they had the opportunity to observe the treatment and issues pertaining to women, pregnant women and elderly women. At the Thai PBS which is a public broadcast agency of Thailand, they discussed various issues on the roles and challenges of public journalists. At the third venue, the Royal Thai Police Education Bureau, participants were introduced to the way in which the concept of human rights was mainstreamed into education and training for police officers.
- *The 2nd AICHR Youth Debates on Human Rights, Singapore, 5 – 6 September 2015:* The objectives of the event were (i) to enhance interest and awareness about the AICHR and human rights among ASEAN youths, (ii) to provide opportunities for young ASEAN people to understand the unique cultures and diversity within ASEAN through peer-to-peer interactions, (iii) to provide young ASEAN youths with a platform to express their views on human rights, and interact with experts/academics within the field, (iv) to nurture critical thinking and other relevant skills such as public speaking and leadership, and (v) to encourage empathy, solidarity, and camaraderie among the youths in the region. Thirty-four participants who were university students from the ten ASEAN countries took part in the debate. The event saw more than one hundred students from local universities, polytechnics and junior colleges participating as members of the audience. The programme was divided into two segments. On the first day, students participated in a debate master class where they honed their presentation skills before the debates. This was

followed by a site visit to the Toa Payoh Housing Estate and a guided tour of Singapore's newly-opened Community Rehabilitation Centre. The debates were convened on the second day. There were five debate sessions and the student participants debated on topics revolving around good governance, the AHRD, the role of youth vis-à-vis human rights, and the death penalty.

- *The AICHR Workshop on the Development of ASEAN Legal Instruments on Human Rights, Manila, Philippines, 14 – 15 September 2015:* The objectives of the Workshop included (i) to serve as an initial endeavour to take stock of human rights promotion and protection work, challenges, and best practices among AICHR, ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, and government bodies, and (ii) to bring together relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies to exchange best practices, consider national and regional challenges, and make recommendations on the possible ways to move toward the development of legal instruments on human rights in the region. The Workshop consisted of panel discussions and breakout sessions. In the breakout sessions, participants discussed topics pertaining to human rights promotion and protection within their respective fields. They also focused on identifying human rights issues that need legal instruments in the medium to long term. Some of the common areas of human rights issues highlighted by the participants included the rights of indigenous peoples, women's economic empowerment, and LGBT rights. The Workshop also deliberated on the way forward on strengthening cooperation and developing legal instruments on human rights in ASEAN. Some of the points highlighted by the participants were (i) the need to build human rights institutions where the AICHR could serve as its coordinating agency, (ii) to establish monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and (iii) strengthening National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) to provide necessary support towards regional human rights initiatives.
- *AICHR Workshop on the Implementation of Human Rights Obligations Relating to the Environment and Climate Change, Mandalay, Myanmar, 26 – 27 September 2015:* The Workshop was a follow up to the Workshop on Human Rights, Environment and Climate Change conducted in September 2014. The objectives of the Workshop were to develop a deeper understanding on the human rights obligations relating to the environment in the ASEAN context, and explore how a regional response may be initiated with the involvement of relevant stakeholders. The workshop was conducted over a period of two days discussing topics revolving the current state on human rights obligations vis-à-vis the environment and climate change, environmental impact assessment tools for ASEAN, legal frameworks, the protection of women, children and other vulnerable groups, and a possible framework for ASEAN. It was attended by distinguished speakers, relevant ASEAN bodies/ working groups on environment, NHRIs, academia/think tanks, judiciary, civil society organisations and others. The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment,

Mr John Knox, highlighted key aspects of human rights and the environment and emphasised the need to strike a balance between environmental protection and economic development. Some of the topics that were highlighted during the Workshop included the gap between legalization and implementation/enforcement, the need to focus on the marginalized and vulnerable groups, and the necessity to have a fuller grasp of the expertise that ASEAN countries can share and contribute to a possible regional framework.

- *The AICHR Regional Workshop on the Role of Youth in Promoting Human Rights in ASEAN: Making Rights a Reality, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 30 – 31 October 2015:* The Workshop was participated by 123 youth participants from ASEAN Member States including those from the Committee of ASEAN Youth Cooperation (CAYC) and various Malaysia youth associations. It aimed to provide ASEAN youth with knowledge and understanding of ASEAN, human rights mechanisms, and issues in the region. It also offered an empowering and inclusive avenue for youths to share their views on a peer-to-peer basis. The Workshop was divided into three components, namely (i) educational session, (ii) interactive session, and (iii) group discussions. Topics that were covered in the Workshop included those pertaining to ASEAN human rights mechanisms, the role of youth in the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN, TIP, business and human rights, and reproductive health and human rights.
- *The AICHR – SOMTC Joint Workshop on “Human Rights-based Approach to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children”, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 5 – 6 November 2015:* The Joint Workshop brought together more than seventy participants from the AICHR, SOMTC, various relevant ASEAN bodies/sectoral bodies, ASEAN Secretariat, relevant government agencies of AMS, NHRIs, regional CSOs, and specialised agencies of the United Nations. Discussions during plenary sessions touched upon human rights perspective on regional initiatives, priorities, as well as policies in combatting TIPs; application of rights-based approaches towards the prevention of and protection from TIPs; and highlighted the issue of vulnerability of the people affected by disaster that could become victims of TIPs. There were also discussions on issues of TIPs in situations of natural, as well as man-made disasters. Following the Joint Workshop, a special closed discussion session between the AICHR, SOMTC, and relevant ASEAN organs/bodies/sectoral bodies was held. It aimed to synthesize their efforts in the prevention, protection, and cooperation in addressing the issue of TIPs.
- *The AICHR Regional Dialogue on the Mainstreaming of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Bangkok, Thailand, 1 – 3 December 2015:* The Dialogue aimed to raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and find common regional approaches and strategies towards mainstreaming these rights both

at the ASEAN and national levels. It highlighted the structural challenges on mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities across the three pillars of ASEAN. It also discussed good practices, lessons learned in mainstreaming the promotion and protection of the rights persons with disabilities, and national responses. Expert speakers from AMS and overseas including Japan shared national experiences in promoting an inclusive and productive society for persons with disabilities. A key aspect of the Dialogue was the discussion of the increasing interest in the development of a regional plan of action for the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities across the three pillars of the ASEAN Community in light of strengthened integration in the region. Participants provided suggestions to improve the programme, which included (i) having more delegates from the ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Political and Security Community, and (ii) having more journalists participate in the dialogue.

- Workshop on Transition between the AICHR Representatives 2013-2015 and AICHR Representatives 2016-2018, Vientiane, Lao PDR, 3 February 2016: The objectives of the Workshop were (a) to facilitate a smooth transition of the work undertaken up until 2015 and to ensure positive continuity of the institutional arrangements of the AICHR, (b) to sustain and to progress on the achievements of the AICHR, (c) to facilitate information sharing and discussions on challenges and emerging issues pertaining human rights in ASEAN. The Workshop consisted of three sessions, which covered discussions on (i) key documents of the AICHR such as the TOR of the AICHR, the AHRD, and the Phnom Penh Statement, (ii) challenges, issues carried forward, and emerging issues, and (iii) an overview of some of the AICHR's main projects including the status of implementation of the AICHR's Five Year Work Plan and its Annual Priority Programmes.
- The AICHR Regional Forum on Media and Human Rights in ASEAN, Malaysia, 16-17 May 2016:

The objectives of the Forum were, among others, for the AICHR to engage with the media, to inform its on-going work and to share good practices among media practitioners. The Forum paid particular focus to human rights issues involving four selected groups: women and children, people with disabilities, persons living with HIV and migrant workers. The two-day Forum was divided into four sessions: (i) Bridging the Gaps between Human Rights & the Role of Media; (ii) Ethics and Professionalism in Reporting: Embracing Human Rights; (iii) New Media in Promoting Human Rights: Opportunities and Challenges; and (iv) Media Reporting on the Rights of Women and Children, People with Disabilities, Persons Living with HIV and Migrant Workers. After taking stock of the discussions, an 'Outcome Document' containing a summary of observations and recommendations was drafted to be tabled to the AICHR. The

recommendations included conducting continuous training and capacity-building for media practitioners, and drafting and publishing guidelines of good practices on media reporting and an explanatory note on Article 23 of the AHRD.

- *The AICHR Workshop on Effective Communication Strategies to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Nha Trang, Viet Nam, 23 – 24 June 2016:*

The aims of the two-day Workshop included (i) to share experiences and good practices on effective communication measures/strategies against human trafficking, (ii) to identify challenges and difficulties in communication process and mass media programs, (iii) to share good practices in developing national communication strategy on awareness raising, and in incorporating the prevention aspect in education, information and communication plan, and (iv) to exchange ideas on how other stakeholders, including the private sector, can play a role in developing communication strategies to prevent TIP.

- *The 2nd AICHR Regional Dialogue on the Mainstreaming of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 29 June – 1 July 2016:*

The 2nd Regional Dialogue builds upon the results of the 1st Regional Dialogue in 2015, and focused on topics of health, education and employment policies of persons with disabilities. The 2nd Regional Dialogue provided a platform to garner inputs from various stakeholders on the development of a regional plan of action on mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities in ASEAN. Several ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and Disabled People's Organisations from all 10 ASEAN Member States participated actively and contributed in sharing their experiences, challenges and recommendations. The 2nd Regional Dialogue set the strategic direction on the way forward for ASEAN's collective efforts to reduce barriers for persons with disabilities to be an integral part of the ASEAN Community;

A list of activities of the AICHR from June 2016 until 2017 appears in ANNEX 1.

3. The AICHR's Interactions with:

3.1. ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM)

During the 48th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting (AMM), in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the AMM met with the AICHR on 3rd August 2015. The AMM highlighted the importance of the interface with the AICHR in the journey of creating an inclusive and rules-based ASEAN community that protects human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the ASEAN Charter, the AHRD and the Phnom Penh Statement.

The AMM commended the AICHR's work in finalizing the second AICHR Five-Year Work Plan 2016 – 2020 (FYWP) and Priority Programmes of the AICHR 2016. They welcomed the AICHR's initiatives and efforts to broaden the coverage of its programmes, to expand AICHR's engagement with Dialogue Partners, and to enhance relations with CSOs. The AICHR discussed the need to review the TOR of the AICHR in order to have a clearer view on which activities the AICHR could embark. The AMM urged the AICHR to continue its effective coordination and meaningful cooperation with relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies to fully implement the AHRD, recognising the cross-cutting nature of human rights.

3.2. Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to ASEAN

On 8 April 2016, the AICHR met with the CPR to discuss cross pillar coordination and possible joint cooperation. The Meeting underscored the importance of close cooperation between the AICHR and the CPR, in the light of the cross cutting nature of human rights. The Meeting agreed to undertake joint activities to be conducted in 2016 focused on the issue of trafficking in persons and in 2017, on the rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community.

3.3. Secretary-General of ASEAN

The meeting between the AICHR and the Secretary-General of ASEAN was held on 9 April 2016. The Secretary-General of ASEAN noted AICHR's initiatives to mainstream human rights into the three community pillars of ASEAN. He highlighted the importance of stronger coordination and synergy within the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) and across the three community pillars both at the regional and national levels to address the cross-cutting area of human rights cooperation. The AICHR expressed its hope that the ASEAN Secretariat would mainstream gender equality in their work processes as well as promote the rights of persons with disabilities by ensuring accessibility in their premises and opportunity in their employment.

3.4. External Parties - Dialogue Partners

ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights, Brussels, Belgium, 19 – 23 October 2015: ASEAN and the EU held the first Policy Dialogue on Human Rights in Brussels, which was attended by the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), the ASEAN Commission on the promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW), and the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of Migrant Workers (ACMW). The Dialogue stemmed from the agreement made between the EU and ASEAN Ministers at the 20th EU-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting held in Brussels on 23 July 2014. It also built on the study visits to the EU undertaken by the AICHR and ACWC in 2011 and 2013 as well as visits by the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, to Jakarta in 2013

and 2014. The Dialogue facilitated open and constructive exchanges on themes of common interest, including recent human rights developments in the EU and in ASEAN, the rights of migrants, the rights of women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons. It also covered interaction with civil society, corporate social responsibility as well as economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development. The ASEAN Delegation met with Members of the European Parliament, the Brussels-based Human Rights and Democracy NGO network, and CSR Europe. Site visits to Belgian institutions dealing with migrants, persons with disabilities and equal opportunities also took place.

The AICHR – US AID and ASEAN U.S. PROGRESS Meeting, 7 April 2016, Jakarta, Indonesia: The AICHR met for the first time with the U.S. Ambassador to ASEAN, H.E. Nina Hachigian, who was accompanied by the representatives of US AID and ASEAN-U.S. PROGRESS. Ambassador Hachigian encouraged the AICHR to continue with its efforts to advance the mandates of the AICHR to raise the profile of human rights in ASEAN. She expressed her hope for enhanced collaboration between the AICHR and the U.S. The AICHR expressed their appreciation to the U.S. for its support and cooperation.

4. Implementation of Guidelines on AICHR's Relations with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

The Guidelines on AICHR's Relations with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) aims to establish an enabling environment for meaningful and constructive engagement and interaction between the AICHR and CSOs. It is also to further strengthen ASEAN cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the ASEAN Charter, the AHRD and the Phnom Penh Statement, and international human rights instruments to which ASEAN Member States are parties, and to contribute to the building of a people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community.

At their 19th Meeting, in November 2015, the AICHR agreed to confer five (5) CSOs 'consultative relationship' with the AICHR: Child Rights Coalition Asia; MARUAH (Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism, Singapore); Persatuan Penyandang Disabilitas Indonesia; Save the Children Philippines; and the Vietnam Peace and Development Foundation.

At the AICHR's 21st Meeting in April 2016, six (6) CSOs were granted 'consultative relationship' with the AICHR: ASEAN Service Employees Trade Union Council (ASETUC), Center for Reintegration of Ex-Prisoners into Society, Human Rights and Development Foundation, Institute for Strategic and Development Studies, Pusat KOMAS and the Singapore Council of Women's Organisations.

5. Dissemination and Implementation of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) and the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of AHRD

As part of the ASEAN Community Building efforts to raise awareness on human rights in the region, the AICHR continues to disseminate and implement the AHRD and the Phnom Penh Statement. The publications are disseminated to other relevant stakeholders at workshops and activities conducted by the AICHR. Both publications are also available on the AICHR website (aichr.org).

6. Public Information & Outreach Activities

The AICHR publishes press releases on their meetings and regional activities on its website (aichr.org). The website also has key documents of the AICHR such as the AHRD, the TOR of the AICHR, and the Guidelines on AICHR's Relations with Civil Society Organisations available for the public. A number of Representatives of the AICHR also manage their respective national AICHR websites - <http://www.aichr.or.id/> (AICHR Indonesia), <http://aichr.kln.gov.my/> (AICHR Malaysia), <http://www.myanmar-aichr.org/> (AICHR Myanmar), and <http://www.aichr.or.th/> (AICHR Thailand) and post news of their national activities.

7. Observations and Challenges

7.1. Appointment of Eight New Representatives

In terms of its membership, the third term of the AICHR (2016-2018) brings a more drastic change than the second term (2013-2015), with the appointment of eight new representatives and the Representatives of Lao PDR and Thailand being the two remaining representatives appointed to serve for their second term. However, this substantial development was already identified in the previous Annual Report and anticipated by the previous AICHR representatives, the 'second termers' who initiated and adopted before their departure a Transition Workshop between outgoing and incoming representatives of the AICHR with a view to sharing information and working methodologies as well as challenges and possible ways forward for the new AICHR. The workshop was successfully organised in February 2016 prior to the first Meeting of the new AICHR representatives. A salient point that was addressed during the Transition Workshop is the importance of trust among the representatives which is a prerequisite for the success of their collective effort and activities and which had been fostered through consultation, coordination and consensus. Therefore, while the third term of the AICHR commences with a significant challenge, it is to be hoped that the new members will bring positive impacts to the programme of work of the AICHR as trust is effectively forged among the ten Representatives through the aid of foresight of the second termers.

7.2. Programmatic Approach to AICHR Activities

The AICHR has continued to place importance on a programmatic approach to its activities to increase the effectiveness of their results. Implemented activities will be utilised to improve future programmatic approaches through a process of monitoring and evaluation. By establishing a programmatic approach, the AICHR aims to secure larger-scale and sustained impact on human rights in the region through integrating objectives into regional strategies and plans. A programmatic approach to its activities contributes to the AICHR's commitment to move toward a more result and goal oriented approach to promote and protect human rights in ASEAN. This is especially true as human rights issues are not standalone issues, but ones that are cross-cutting and need long-term approaches to achieve the intended goals. An example on this point is the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities for which the AICHR has planned to organise three annual Regional Dialogues with relevant stakeholders that will finalise in 2017. The key objectives are to raise the awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities that transcend provision of social welfare and have bearings in political and economic arenas, to create a stronger network of practitioners and stakeholders on the issue and to develop a common standard and approach to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are effectively mainstreamed in all three pillars of the ASEAN Community. Another example is the initiatives on the rights of women in various fields on which the Philippines has taken a lead, including the elimination of violence against women, the rights of women in disaster situations and the rights of women as entrepreneurs. Coupled with the workshop that the Philippines has organised on the development of legal instrument on human rights, these programmatic endeavours may result in the development of a regional standard on human rights, in addition to the subject of human trafficking and terrorism on which ASEAN has already adopted legal instruments.

7.3. Regularisation and Institutionalisation of Activities

The AICHR has regularised and institutionalised a number of its activities in order to deepen the content of the activity and to expand awareness of regional human rights mechanism and issues across the ASEAN region with a view to developing common approaches and positions on human rights matters for ASEAN. There are some illustrative examples. Firstly, the AICHR youth debate on human rights that was first organised by the Philippines in 2013 has become an annual activity, having been subsequently organised by Singapore in 2015 and will be organised by Malaysia in 2016. In 2017, Thailand will organise the event in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN. It is to be expected that Member States will take turn to host the Youth Debate to further stimulate networking of ASEAN youth and enhance their understanding and advocacy on human rights. On Corporate Social Responsibility that is featured in the first thematic study of the AICHR, Singapore is taking the lead in organising a follow up activity that may lead to formulation of a regional agenda and policy on the issue. On environment, climate change and human rights, Myanmar has for two consecutive years convened two regional workshops and will organise jointly with Thailand the third workshop on the issue in late 2016.

7.4. External Relations

Following up from the first ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights, , which marked a significant step in the ASEAN-EU partnership, the AICHR remains positive on expanding its relations with other international and regional organisations to execute more effectively its role as the overarching institution on human rights in ASEAN.

7.5. Enhanced Relations with Other ASEAN Bodies

As stipulated in the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025 (A.2.5. xiv), the AICHR is committed to strengthen its interactions through coordination and consultation among relevant ASEAN Organs and Bodies with a view to enhancing the implementation of the AHRD, ASEAN Instruments related to human rights such as the recent ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, the Bali Declaration on the Enhancement of the Role and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community, and other international human rights instruments to which ASEAN Member States are parties. Already the AICHR has embarked on the periodic interaction with the SOMTC to combat human trafficking. In 2016, it will establish an interaction with other bodies, including SOMRI on the issue of communications and SOMSWD on the issue of the rights of persons with disabilities. The AICHR, ACWC and SOMSWD have agreed to regularise their interactions by meeting annually to further enhance synergy, avoid duplication of activities and ensure budget efficiency.

7.6. Enhanced Relations with Civil Society Organisations

Since the adoption of the Guidelines on the Relations between the AICHR and Civil Society Organisations in February 2015, the AICHR has completed two cycles of deliberation endorsing CSOs with the status of Consultative Relations. The AICHR will continue to institutionalise meaningful engagement with CSOs as intended by the TOR.

7.7 Directions for the AICHR

7.7.1 Strengthening Cross-Sectoral and Cross-Pillar Coordination

As the ASEAN Community enters its historic commencement on 31 December 2015 that will see increasing level of economic integration as well as political, social and cultural cooperation among the ten Member States, the AICHR as the overarching human rights institution in ASEAN will continue its efforts to mainstream human rights across the ASEAN Community Pillars and enhance its engagement and alignment with relevant ASEAN Bodies. Joint projects with relevant ASEAN Bodies will be planned and organised with a view to promoting good relationship and coordination, and enhancing effectiveness and impacts of the activities. In this regards, the AICHR will collaborate with the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the ASEAN Community Councils to mainstream human rights in the three pillars of ASEAN.

7.7.2 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to Enhance Effectiveness and Impact of AICHR Activities

With the programmatic approach in planning AICHR's activities becoming an established practice, there is a rising need to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of the programmes and their impact. Such a monitoring and evaluation mechanism will allow activities of the AICHR to be effectively built upon previous achievements and thereby promote its institutional capacity. This can be achieved through capacity building training for the assistants of the AICHR and, subsequently, through the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation framework. Internalisation and incorporation of monitoring and evaluation of an activity at the moment of its inception will also render more effective and focused the utilisation of the human and financial resources of the AICHR. Such monitoring and evaluation mechanism will be consistent with the monitoring mechanism of the APSC Blueprint 2025.

7.7.3 Establishing a Framework to Conduct Thematic Studies and Their Follow-up Activities

The difficulty in searching for suitable talents as national focal points for thematic studies of the AICHR has delayed progress. The AICHR needs to come up with a standardised framework on conducting thematic studies and their follow-up activities. The framework may include appointment of experts to assist in the formulation of the baseline study, selection of candidates as national focal points, feasibility of the study, tools to measure the possible impact of the study (if applicable) and its relevance to the advancement of the ASEAN Community.

7.7.4 Expanding Relations with External Partners

As the region's human rights mechanism, it is essential that the AICHR continues its efforts to build rapport with relevant partners including the EU, the US, Japan, Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism, international and regional organisations (e.g. the UN), and others, bearing in mind ASEAN's principles of centrality, unity, equality and parity. Through bi-lateral and multi-lateral relationships with other actors, the AICHR will strengthen its position as a regional human rights mechanism. As the AICHR expands its network, it will be able to tap into a wider resource pool to boost its credibility and capacity in implementing activities to mainstream human rights in the ASEAN Community. Furthermore, the AICHR should enhance and further increase its representation at the international and regional level at important events such as the UN meetings on human rights, which will foster recognition of ASEAN and its efforts on the promotion and protection of human rights.

ANNEX 1**Meetings and Activities of the AICHR from July 2016 to December 2016**

1.	Special Meeting of the AICHR, Chiang Mai, Thailand	2-3 July 2016
2.	Special Meeting of the AICHR, Vientiane, Lao PDR	22 July 2016
3.	Interface Meeting with the AMM, Vientiane, Lao PDR	23 July 2016
4.	AICHR-SOMTC Consultation on Human Rights-based Approach to the Implementation of ACTIP and APA, Jakarta, Indonesia	September 2016
5.	Special Meeting of the AICHR, Ha Noi, Viet Nam	To be confirmed
6.	AICHR Youth Debate on Human Rights 2016: “Realising the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Context of ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD)”, Malaysia	22-23 September 2016
7.	AICHR Training Programme on the Right of Persons with Disabilities, Bangkok, Thailand	11-14 October 2016
8.	AICHR Seminar “Promoting CSR and Human Rights in ASEAN”, Singapore	3-4 November 2016
9.	22 nd Meeting of the AICHR, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR	23-25 November 2016
10.	Follow-up Workshop on Human Rights, Environment and Climate Change, Myanmar	November 2016
11.	AICHR Regional Workshop on Strengthening National Plans of Actions on Trafficking in Persons to Ensure Effective Implementation of the ACTIP and APA, Cambodia	December 2016

Proposed Priority Programmes/Activities of the AICHR 2017

1.	3rd AICHR Regional Dialogue on Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community, Thailand
2.	Follow-up to the 3rd Workshop on Human Rights , Environment & Climate Change, Myanmar/Thailand
3.	Follow-up Consultation Workshop on the Development of the Legal Instruments on Human Rights, Philippines
4.	Regional Workshop on the Implementation of ASEAN Instruments related to Trafficking in Persons, Indonesia
5.	Workshop to promote awareness on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Singapore
6.	Dialogue on Human Rights-based Approach to Education in the ASEAN Community, Cambodia
7.	Organise a regional debate on Human Rights in ASEAN to be participated by students in ASEAN Member States, Thailand
8.	AICHR Workshop on Enhanced Access to Education for Children with Disabilities, Viet Nam/Thailand
9.	Regional Workshop on Achieving Sustainable Development Goals of Universal Health Coverage, Indonesia

10.	Regional Workshop on “Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals”, Viet Nam
11.	Regional Consultation on the Right to Water (with particular emphasis on rural and indigenous communities), Malaysia
12.	AICHR Regional Dialogue on Mainstreaming of the Right to Food in the ASEAN Community: Right to Adequate Food and Food Sovereignty, Cambodia
13.	AICHR Thematic Study on Protecting the Rights of Women in Natural Disaster Situations, Philippines
14.	AICHR Thematic Study on Right to Life, Thailand
15.	Consultation Workshop on Women in Natural Disaster Situations, Philippines
16.	Consultation Workshop on Legal Aid, Thailand
17.	AICHR Judicial Colloquium on the Sharing of Good Practices regarding International Human Rights Law and Human Rights Cases in Domestic Courts.