

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ASEAN INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (AICHR)

(Period of Reporting: July 2022 – July 2023)

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Executive Summary

This annual report covers the AICHR activities from July 2022 to July 2023 and is to be submitted to the 56th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting.

The AICHR activities in the period of July 2022 to July 2023 show the measures of AICHR to strengthen its roles in promoting and protecting human rights through the implementation of its Terms of Reference (TOR) and advancing the realisation of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD).

Throughout twelve months, AICHR has convened two regular meetings and two special meetings, annual interfaces with the ASEAN Foreign Ministers, the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR), and the Secretary-Generals of ASEAN respectively.

To contribute to the ASEAN's Chair agenda of 2023 on *ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth*, AICHR strengthened its role as an overarching body in promoting and protecting human rights in ASEAN by reaching out and engaging ASEAN Sectoral Bodies (ASBs), the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), the United Nations (UN), Young People and maintained its relations with the ASEAN Dialogue Partners.

AICHR continued its efforts to be relevant to the contemporary issues on human rights by generating regional discussion on issues related to human rights with different stakeholders, to include climate change, environmental rights, trafficking in persons especially women and children, freedom of religion and beliefs, the rights of persons with disability, the rights of the child, human rights concerns in the post-pandemic situation, business and human rights, the rights of victims in the prevention and countering violent extremism, and the prevention of torture, among others.

Through its activities, AICHR implemented its Five-Year Work Plan (FYWP) of 2021-2025, the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF), the ASEAN Cross-Sectoral Work Plan on Trafficking in Persons (Bohol Work Plan) 2017-2020, the Work Plan of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2019-2025), and the ASEAN Roadmap on Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2025.

In engaging ASEAN Member States, AICHR hosted an ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue 2022 and visited Bogor city on 2 March 2023 on the invitation of the Government of Indonesia. The Country Learning Visit to Bogor has facilitated the opportunity for AICHR

to consult and be informed by the city government, civil society organisations, religious leaders and farmers on the role of the city in upholding human rights. AICHR also engaged with the general public and young people on the occasion of commemorating the tenth anniversary of the AHRD and the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD.

AICHR has actively contributed to the development of outcome documents of the ASBs related to human rights, namely on the ASEAN Climate Finance Strategy, the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection of Migrant Workers and Family Members in Crisis Situations, the ASEAN Declaration on the Placement and Protection on Migrant Fishers, the ASEAN Guidelines to Implement the Regional Plan of Actions for the Protection of Children from All Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse, and the Bohol Work Plan 2022-2027.

In realising Article 4.2 of its TOR in developing a regional human rights framework based on the AHRD, AICHR has begun the process of drafting the ASEAN Regional Framework on Environmental Rights. This measure is in line with Article 28.f of AHRD on the right to a safe, clean and sustainable environment.

In implementing Article 9.7 of its TOR, AICHR concluded its efforts on self-assessing its work for the last decade by consulting stakeholders which came up with several recommendations on priorities and agenda of AICHR in the next decade, to add to the recommendations from the previous sessions held in 2021.

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the 30th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action (VDPA), AICHR takes stock of its progress, challenges, and limitations in the last thirteen years since its inception. The establishment of AICHR is not only the realisation of VDPA but also the fulfilment of ASEAN's commitment to implement international human rights instruments through the adoption of a number of regional human rights norms and its mainstreamed efforts in regional projects.

1. Introduction

This Annual Report comprises the description of AICHR's activities between July 2022 and July 2023, its lessons learnt, observation and recommendation. In this period of time, AICHR has gradually shifted its activities into an in-person format while maintaining some virtually or in-hybrid arrangement.

2023 is also marked as the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the 30th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action (VDPA). The latter document is significant for the history of AICHR as it linked with the commitment of ASEAN to establish a proper regional human rights mechanism in 1993.

This report is structured into seven sections. Started with the Introduction, it is followed by the explanation on the AICHR meetings and activities that were organised in between August 2022 to July 2023, and the measures to mainstream human rights in ASEAN in section two. The section three addresses the AICHR's engagement with ASEAN organs, bodies, and entities and section four deals with the engagement with civil society organisations (CSOs) with consultative relations with AICHR, ASEAN Member States (AMS), other stakeholders and external relations. While section four is about the AICHR's deliverables from August 2022 to July 2023 and section five describes the participation of Timor-Leste as Observer in the AICHR Meetings. Section six elaborates the assessment, evaluation and monitoring of the work of AICHR. This report also includes observation and future direction as its final section.

This report is submitted to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting as the implementation of Article 6.6 of the AICHR Terms of Reference (TOR).

2. Work of the AICHR

2.1 AICHR Meetings

During the reporting period, AICHR has held four meetings:

2.1.1 Special Meeting 1/2022

AICHR convened its Special Meeting 1/2022 from 30 July to 2 August 2022 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Keo Remy, Representative of Cambodia to AICHR, and was attended by the Representatives/Alternate Representatives of AICHR, and the ASEAN Secretariat.

The Meeting finalised and adopted the AICHR Annual Report 2022, the Statement of AICHR to the 55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM). The Meeting also agreed for the AICHR Chair to submit the recommendations from the Regional Dialogue: Self-Assessment of AICHR Progress After 10 Years to the 55th AMM. The Priority Programmes/Activities of AICHR 2023 was finalised for submission to the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR) and subsequently to the AMM for approval.

The Meeting updated on recent developments on human rights in the region, such as new laws, regulations and initiatives, as well as shared views on issues of mutual interest and concern as presented by several AICHR Representatives. The implementation progress of AICHR's priority programmes and activities was also discussed with a thematic focus on children rights, human rights and the environment, trafficking in persons, business and human rights, the right to safe drinking water and sanitation, and human rights education. The Meeting also discussed on preparation for the 10th Anniversary of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) and the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD, the ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue 2022, and the 4th ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights, which took place in quarter 4 of 2022.

During this Meeting, the Representatives of AICHR held their annual interface meeting with: (i) the Secretary-General of ASEAN, H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi; and (ii) the ASEAN Foreign Ministers during the 55th AMM.

2.1.2 Special Meeting 2/2022

AICHR convened its Special Meeting 2/2022 on 16-17 November 2022 in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Keo Remy, Representative of Cambodia to AICHR, and was attended by Representatives/Alternate Representatives of AICHR, and the ASEAN Secretariat.

The Meeting deliberated on progress of the implementation of the AICHR Priority Programmes/Activities of 2022 in the areas of the rights of the child, rights of persons with disabilities, human rights and the environment, business and human rights, trafficking in persons, human rights and public health emergencies, the rights of victims in counter radicalism and violent extremism measures, ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue, among others. The Meeting was updated on recent developments on human rights in the region, such as new laws, regulations and initiatives, as well as shared views on issues of mutual interest and concern as presented by the AICHR Representatives of Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, and the Philippines.

The Meeting discussed institutional matters, including the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework of the Five-Year Work Plan (FYWP) of AICHR 2021-2025, the Rules of Procedure for the AICHR Fund, and the Guidelines on AICHR's External Relations. The Meeting took note of the ASEAN Secretariat's update on the handling of communications to AICHR in 2022.

At this meeting, AICHR met with the UN to explore ways to enhance engagement between AICHR and the UN on human rights, as well as to discuss future cooperation in line with the framework of the FYWP of AICHR 2021-2025 and the Priority Programmes/Activities of AICHR 2023.

The Meeting concluded with a handover ceremony from Cambodia as the Chair of AICHR to Indonesia as the incoming Chair.

2.1.3 The 36th Meeting of AICHR

AICHR convened its 36th Meeting on 28 February–3 March 2023 at the ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Wahyuningrum, Representative of Indonesia to AICHR, and was attended by Representatives/Alternate Representatives of AICHR, and the ASEAN Secretariat. In her opening remarks, the Chair of AICHR highlighted the expected deliverables of Indonesia as the Chair of ASEAN 2023 along with human rights priorities, as well as possible linkage and contribution of AICHR's work to advance human rights promotion and protection efforts in ASEAN.

The Meeting was updated on recent developments on human rights in the region including new laws and regulations at the national level related to human rights, as well as human rights initiatives by AMS as presented by the AICHR Representatives of Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Viet Nam. AICHR was also updated on (i) the handling of communications to AICHR, and (ii) the strategy in the implementation of the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025 and preparation of the mid-term review of AICHR FYWP.

The Meeting noted on AICHR's continuous implementation of its FYWP and annual Priority Programmes/Activities with a focus on business and human rights, children rights, environment, climate change and human rights, rights of persons with disabilities, rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, human rights and policing, measures on the prevention of torture, freedom of expression and opinion, the promotion of gender equality and the rights of women and girls, among others.

In its effort to develop a regional framework on environmental rights, AICHR adopted the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the ASEAN Environmental Rights Working Group (AER-WG). The proposals to hold the AICHR Youth Debate on Human Rights, the ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue 2023, as well as the 5th ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights, and other engagements with stakeholders and external partners in 2023 were also discussed during the Meeting.

Several interface meetings were held as part of the 36th Meeting of AICHR. This included (i) AICHR Meeting with the Secretary-General of ASEAN; (ii) AICHR annual meeting with the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR); (iii) AICHR Interface Meeting with the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC); (iv) AICHR Interface Meeting with the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW); (v) AICHR Meeting with the European Union; and (vi) AICHR Meeting with Australia.

Timor-Leste attended the AICHR Interface Meeting with the CPR as Observer. AICHR has also unanimously agreed to invite Timor-Leste as observer in its forthcoming meetings.

Upon the invitation of the Government of Indonesia for a Country Learning Visit to Indonesia, AICHR visited the City of Bogor on 2 March 2023 and had dialogue with stakeholders on the role of the city to promote and protect human rights.

2.1.4 The 37th Meeting of AICHR

AICHR convened its 37th Meeting on 23-26 May 2023 in Bali, Indonesia. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Wahyuningrum, Representative of Indonesia to AICHR, and was attended by Representatives/Alternate Representatives of AICHR, and the ASEAN Secretariat. The Meeting welcomed the new Representative of the Philippines to AICHR, as well as the participation of Timor-Leste represented by the Chairperson of Provedor for Human Rights and Justice as Observer.

The Meeting was updated on recent developments on human rights in the region, including new laws and regulations at the national level related to human rights, and human rights initiatives by ASEAN Member States as presented by the AICHR Representatives of Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

The Meeting discussed the implementation of AICHR's Priority Programmes/Activities with a focus on business and human rights, the environment and climate change, right to education, rights of persons with disabilities, children's and women's rights, disinformation, hate speech and human rights, victim-oriented protection to counter radicalisation and violent extremism, prevention and countering torture, among others. Preparation for the annual interface between AICHR and ASEAN Foreign Ministers at the 56th AMM was also discussed.

Several interface meetings were held as part of the 37th Meeting of AICHR, which included (i) AICHR Meeting with the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting Responsible for Information (SOMRI); (ii) AICHR Meeting with the ASEAN University - Human Rights Education Network (AUN-HRE); (iii) AICHR Meeting with the Southeast Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum (SEANF); and (iv) AICHR Meeting with the United States. AICHR also held its 4th Interface Meeting with the CSOs with Consultative Relationship with AICHR.

At the Meeting, AICHR also exchanged views and continued to assess the general concept and elements of the proposed "ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Institutionalising ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue" as Indonesia's chairmanship's initiative which was presented by the Director for ASEAN Political-Security Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia.

2.2 AICHR Activities

From the period of July 2022 to July 2023 AICHR has held fifteen activities from the approved Priority Programmes and Activities of AICHR, which include:

2.2.1 AICHR Coordination Meeting to Develop a Regional Framework on Environmental Rights in ASEAN on Modalities of Work, 23 September 2022, videoconference

The Meeting furthered the discussions at the Inception Workshop for Preparation of a Work Plan to Develop a Regional Declaration on Environmental Rights in ASEAN took place on 16 June 2022. Participants deliberated the proposed key elements of the regional framework on environmental rights, and the modalities of work for development of a regional framework that ensure a holistic approach and inclusive representation of ASBs from three Community pillars, i.e., APSC, ASCC and AEC.

The Meeting also underlined the importance of representation by relevant ASBs and entities as well as engagement and consultation with multi-stakeholders throughout the process. International experts on human rights and the environment also provided

evidence-based support on the framework for both procedural and substantive environmental rights, as well as key elements of a framework on environmental rights which ensure gender integration and social inclusion, access to information, access to remedies and participation in decision-making, among others.

2.2.2 AICHR Consultation on Human Rights and Countering Trafficking in Persons in ASEAN, 27-28 September 2022, videoconference

The Consultation provided a platform for sharing experiences and practices among the Task Forces on Anti Trafficking in Persons (TIP) or similar body/unit in AMS, and recommendations for the Bohol Work Plan 2.0 to address TIP. The participants shared experiences, good practices, challenges, and ways forward under four pillars of addressing TIP, including prevention, protection of victims, law enforcement and prosecution of crimes, and regional and international cooperation and coordination. Regional measures to address TIP from ASBs and stakeholders as well as the new trends, approaches, and perspectives on TIP in the region were also updated.

The Consultation was concluded and came up with several agreed key points to advance the measures in countering TIP in ASEAN. It was expected that the consultation could be organised regularly as a communication platform to share information among the national task forces on countering TIP and similar units in AMS. Furthermore, developing initiatives for multilateral and bilateral cooperation, and collaboration to establish a learning hub and networking forum for a community of practitioners to counter TIP in the region could be further explored.

2.2.3 The 3rd Session of the “Regional Dialogue: Self-Assessment of AICHR Progress After 10 Years”, 26 September 2022, videoconference

The Regional Dialogue served as a platform for exchange of views within AICHR as well as with regional stakeholders on structural and operational challenges during the first ten years since its establishment. During the first and second consultative sessions held in 2021, AICHR representatives reflected on the implementation of AICHR’s functions and mandates, and deliberated on areas to be strengthened for AICHR to solidify its position as the ASEAN human rights body. The 3rd session of the Dialogue focused on the evolutionary approach of AICHR and its priorities in discharging AICHR’s protection mandate through presentations and reflections of ‘stakeholders’ on the work of AICHR in the past years and its perceived role in comparison with human rights mechanisms in other regions.

Around 40 representatives from ASBs, CSOs, NHRIs, and relevant bodies actively contributed their views in the sessions. The Dialogue came up with several recommendations on priorities and agenda of AICHR in the next decade, to add to the recommendations from the previous sessions held in 2021, which were consolidated and submitted to the AMM on 9 September 2022.

2.2.4 AICHR Forum on Freedom of Religion and Beliefs in ASEAN 2022, 29-30 September 2022, videoconference

The Forum was a follow-up activity from the previous event in 2019 and the implementation of the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025. It aimed to share practices and experiences of AMS in support of freedom of religion and beliefs, as well as to discuss responses to address the challenges in achieving sustainable development goals and gender equality while respecting and protecting the right of freedom of religion and beliefs in the post-pandemic era. The Forum also discussed concerns and efforts to counter hate speech, safeguarding freedom of religion and beliefs online, connection, limitations, and practices in the nexus between freedom of religion and beliefs and SDGs, as well as gender equality and freedom of religion and beliefs.

Around 50 participants attended the forum from AICHR, ACWC, the ASEAN Committee of Women (ACW), SOMRI, OHCHR, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, CSOs, universities, and ASEAN Studies Centre. The participants discussed and came up with several recommendations to address challenges faced in ensuring the freedom of religion and beliefs in ASEAN as well as its ways-forward.

2.2.5 The 10th Anniversary of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) and the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD, 18 November 2022, Siem Reap, Cambodia and videoconference

The event aimed to raise awareness on the AHRD and the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD and garner inputs from ASBs and relevant stakeholders to mainstream the promotion and protection of human rights across the three community pillars of ASEAN, as well as to create a platform to strengthen regional cooperation through the exchange of views, knowledge, and good practices on the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN.

The event deliberated on several key issues, including overview of achievements, progress, and challenges in the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN. Observations, challenges, and opportunities in mainstreaming human rights through the strengthening of ASEAN cross-pillar and cross-sectoral collaborations were also shared.

2.2.6 ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue 2022, 19 November 2022, Siem Reap, Cambodia and videoconference

Human Rights Dialogues were conducted previously in 2013, 2014 and 2021. In 2022, the ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue was held back-to-back with the 10th Anniversary of the AHRD and the Phnom Penh Statement of the Adoption of the AHRD. The 2022 Dialogue was attended by representatives of ten AMS and some NHRIs in the region, which provided a regional platform to exchange views among AMS and share best practices and experiences in promoting and protecting human rights in their respective countries.

At the Dialogue, participants discussed thematic human rights issues, including freedom of religion and belief, freedom of press and expression, rights of migrant workers, the rights of women including political participation of women and the treatment of women prisoners, labour protection, the rights of children, trafficking in persons, the rights of persons with disabilities, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), business and human rights, measures in addressing COVID-19, poverty eradication, death penalty, human rights education, administration of justice, and climate change.

The progress of countries' ratification to international treaties on human rights, cooperation with the UN and strategies in implementing the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) was also discussed. The Representatives of AICHR reaffirmed the respective countries' commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights and the fundamental freedoms and noted the proposal to continue the Dialogue in the future.

2.2.7 Ad-Hoc Preparatory Session for the ASEAN Environmental Rights Framework and Interim Working Group Meeting, 22-23 November 2022, Bangkok, Thailand

As a continuation from the previous coordination meetings in 2022, this meeting deliberated and agreed on the Terms of Reference of the ASEAN Environmental Rights Working Group (AER-WG) to be established for preparation of the regional framework on environmental rights in ASEAN.

The meeting saw the exchange of views between participants on possible key elements, structure, and status of the proposed regional framework on environmental rights. The meeting emphasised the modalities of work that ensure a holistic approach and recognised the importance of inclusive representation of relevant ASBs and Entities, such

as the engagement and consultation with multi-stakeholders and gender integration throughout the process. Among the highlighted issues were the ASEAN Centrality and consensus in decision-making throughout the drafting process and the negotiations. The meeting also deliberated on the possibility of the ASEAN leaders adopting the instruments by 2024.

2.2.8 Regional Colloquium on ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD): Ten Years On, 13 December 2022, Bangkok, Thailand and videoconference

The event provided a platform for undergraduate students to express their views, enhance their interest and awareness, and analyse the current state of human rights and peace in the region. The implementation of the colloquium contributed to strengthen AMS' commitment to youth engagement in ASEAN Community building.

Prior to the colloquium, AICHR conducted an essay writing competition for undergraduate students, which was held from July to September with the theme "ASEAN Human Rights Declaration: Ten Years On". Over 170 essays were submitted by undergraduate students across Southeast Asia. Following the review process by the expert panel, five winners were selected.

At the colloquium, the winners shared their thoughts in a panel discussion, along with AICHR representatives and human rights experts. The panel deliberated on the impact of the AHRD to the lives of ASEAN citizens during its first ten years of adoption, as well as the ways forward to further raise awareness and improve the protection of human rights in the region.

2.2.9 Regional Consultation to Address Human Rights Protection Challenges in ASEAN for Better Recovery, 16 December 2022, videoconference

The consultation was held jointly between AICHR and SEANF with the support of Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It provided an avenue to exchange views and identify ways forward in addressing the challenges in the protection of human rights in post-pandemic ASEAN. Key human rights issues to be addressed in the post-pandemic context were highlighted, which include the right to privacy and the right to liberty and security, freedom of expression and protection from hate speech, freedom of movement, the right to internet access and protection from online harassment.

During the consultation, participants and panellists deliberated on how to make full use of existing human rights frameworks in addressing the challenges that prevent the full enjoyment of human rights at the national and regional levels, how to ensure human rights

protection and equality for all, and underlined the need to rethinking of strategies for human rights protection in the digitalised ASEAN Community in the post-pandemic era.

The consultation noted a number of recommendations from participants which included taking necessary measures to restore public trust and relations through constructive dialogue between the state and the public; ensuring access to justice and revision of the legal restrictions imposed during the pandemic; enhancing the collaboration between AICHR and SEANF to provide technical assistance and advice to address human rights challenges in the post-pandemic era; improving conditions in prisons and detention centres; and encouraging a reliable and credible media and ensure media freedom and independence.

This consultation is the implementation of the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025 and the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF).

2.2.10 AICHR Regional Consultation on Achieving Disability Inclusive Recovery, 8 March 2023, videoconference

The activity served as a platform for consultation among the AICHR and ASBs, persons with disabilities (PWDs), CSOs, NHRIs, and relevant stakeholders to track the implementation progress of the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Enabling Masterplan).

The consultation was briefed on the implementation progress of Enabling Masterplan in the areas of capacity-building to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities across three pillars, the support from ASEAN Member States to identify entry points, alignment and complementation of Enabling Masterplan focusing on gender equality, and the work being done to address the root causes of social injustice and discrimination.

The panel discussion focused on the ongoing midterm monitoring and evaluation of the Enabling Masterplan, and highlighted disability intersectionality and the achievements on mainstreaming the intersectionality of disability and gender with disability and sustainable cities. The participants emphasised on the need to continue with a convergent approach in mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities, which is a cross-cutting issue, through strategic programmes by ASBs and entities across the three Community pillars.

Representatives from organisations of persons with disabilities in the region also collectively presented concerns and recommendations. The representatives also raised concerns of PWDs, who experience intersectional barriers, on their inclusion and rights. As the 2030 Agenda calls for the empowerment of persons with disabilities, particularly

women and children, the need for acceleration of efforts to ensure disability inclusivity was underlined.

This consultation is the implementation of the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025 and the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF).

2.2.11 AICHR Regional Consultation on Business and Human Rights, Environment and Climate Change, 29-30 May 2023, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The Consultation was to support ASEAN's endeavour in strengthening the regional policy framework and collaboration to achieve sustainable recovery, while simultaneously protecting human rights and the environment. The Consultation brought together nearly 80 key stakeholders, including representatives of AICHR, the ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN sectoral bodies, the European Union (EU), NHRIs, CSOs, private sector, academia, policy researchers, and the United Nations (UN).

The Consultation focused on ASEAN Member States' efforts to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), as well as ASEAN response to the emerging mandatory regime on human rights due diligence implied by the European Commission's Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDDD). The sharing of experiences and good practices and candid exchange of views at the Consultation facilitated a greater understanding of corporate sustainability due diligence requirements and encouraged collaboration between Southeast Asian and European companies to meet the requirements and ensure compliance, which would contribute to sustainable development and protection of the environment and human rights.

2.2.12 AICHR Regional Dialogue: Sharing Good Practices on the Business and Human Rights in ASEAN, 1 June 2023, videoconference

Attended by more than 90 participants from across the region, the Regional Dialogue served as a platform to raise awareness on the implementation of UNGPs with a focus on the state, business and labour dimensions of the UNGPs. The Regional Dialogue also facilitated consultation among AICHR, ASBs, NHRIs, as well as other stakeholders on measures and good practices to promote compliance on human rights due diligence, social dimensions of business benchmarking, as well as discussions on the intersections of human rights due diligence with protection of the rights of migrant workers, and the right to development and workers' rights in the supply chains.

Participants were updated on the global progress and major trends in upholding business and human rights principles, which include the movement towards a mandatory regime on human rights due diligence, greater integration of environmental sustainability in the guiding principles, widened scope from supply chain to value chain in addressing adverse impacts of businesses, proliferation of National Action Plan (NAP) on business and human rights, and emergence of a globally binding instrument on business and human rights.

2.2.13 AICHR Consultation on Victims-Oriented Protection to Prevent and Counter Radicalism and Violent Extremism in ASEAN, 9-10 June 2023, Bali, Indonesia

Attended by 90 participants from AICHR, ASBs, witness and victims protection agencies in ASEAN Member States, NHRIs, CSOs, victims' associations, the Consultation focused on sharing information, experiences, good practices, as well as challenges and opportunities to ensure the rights of victims of terrorism in preventing and countering radicalism and violent extremism (PCRVE). Participants discussed the development and the implementation of victim-centric approaches to counter violent extremism, the measures to ensure access to justice for victims of terrorism, and the role of victims' associations and community policing approaches in preventing violent extremism.

The participants provided several recommendations to effectively involve victims and their associations to foster collaboration in addressing the root-causes of radicalism and violent extremism and in providing support to victims. The role of NHRIs in supporting victims through victim-centric strategies was also discussed, including on: (i) facilitating dialogues, (ii) monitoring human rights situation, (iii) reporting violations and referring cases to relevant government agencies, (iv) making recommendations to legislators and decision-makers, and (v) improving protection and enforcement of human rights.

The Consultation contributes to the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (2019-2025), the Bali Work Plan, and the AICHR Five-Year Work Plan 2021-2025.

2.2.14 ASEAN Dialogue on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 22-23 June 2023, Metro Manila, Philippines

The Dialogue was organised by AICHR in coordination with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Child Rights Coalition Asia (CRC Asia), and attended by representatives of AICHR, ACWC, National Human Rights Institutions, civil society,

private sector, academia, as well as Member of the CRC Committee, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children.

The Dialogue facilitated a greater understanding of ASEAN Member States on the realisation and implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It fostered the sharing of experiences, challenges, good practices, and ways forward to address emerging child rights concerns in ASEAN, especially children's rights in relation to the digital environment. The Dialogue focused on the CRC General Comments No. 25, guiding principles, and opportunities for the realisation of children's rights and their protection in the digital environment from a broad range of legislative, policy and regulatory measures. The Dialogue concluded by acknowledging the need to build institutional capacities and technical expertise on General Comment No. 25 and the need for a multi-sectoral collaboration in its implementation.

2.2.15 AICHR Consultation on Human Rights Referral Systems for Gender-Based Violence and Trafficking in Persons in ASEAN, 26-28 June 2023, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

The Consultation was organised by AICHR with the support from the International Organization on Migrants (IOM), and was participated by representatives of AICHR, ACWC, ACMW, government officials, NHRIs, CSOs, International Labour Organization, and the ASEAN Secretariat.

The Consultation provided a platform for practitioners, service providers, and CSOs in AMS to discuss and share good practices, challenges and possible cooperation on National Referral Mechanisms (NRMs) for human rights, and addressing issues of TIP, violence against women, gender-based violence (GBV), violence against children, migrant workers, among others. The Consultation also explored possible cooperation among practitioners with multidisciplinary approaches to realise regional referral mechanisms.

Highlights on ASEAN and AMS contribution to enhance the efforts in countering and combating trafficking in persons in ASEAN were also presented, along with some recommendations which aimed to advance a human rights and gender-based system in countering GBV and TIP in the region.

3. Mainstreaming Human Rights across Pillars of ASEAN

In compliance with the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, there have been efforts on mainstreaming human rights issues through the three community pillars of ASEAN. However, there is a need to further strengthen a cross-pillar and cross-sectoral collaboration.

Accordingly, in the last twelve months, AICHR has actively participated in the development of outcome documents of the ASBs based on invitation, particularly in integrating human rights as the principles, means and an end of the programming and approaches in their work plans, such as the development of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF), the ASEAN Cross-Sectoral Work Plan on Trafficking in Person (Bohol Work Plan) 2017-2020, the Work Plan of the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremis (2019-2025), and the ASEAN Roadmap on Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2025.

AICHR has also contributed to the development of the ASEAN Climate Finance Strategy, ASEAN Declaration on the Protection of Migrant Workers and Family Members in Crisis Situations, ASEAN Declaration on the Placement and Protection on Migrant Fishers, ASEAN Guidelines to Implement the Regional Plan of Actions for the Protection of Children from All Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse, and the Bohol Work Plan 2022-2027.

4. AICHR Engagement

4.1 Engagement with ASEAN Organs, Bodies and Entities

During the period of reporting, AICHR had constructive engagements and dialogues with the following ASEAN organs, bodies and entities under three Community Pillars:

4.1.1 ASEAN Political-Security Pillar

4.1.1.1 ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM)

On 2 August 2022, AICHR Representatives had an interface with the ASEAN Foreign Ministers during the 55th AMM in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. At this interface meeting, AICHR submitted the Annual Report of AICHR 2022, which outlines main accomplishments and developments of AICHR from August 2021 to July 2022, including on the thematic areas of prevention of torture, right to health, rights of the child, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, promotion of business and human rights, countering radicalism and violent extremism, and combatting trafficking in persons.

AICHR's contribution to the implementation of the ASEAN regional frameworks and instruments, such as the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF), the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Bohol Trafficking in Person Work Plan were also highlighted.

In his closing remarks, the Chair of AMM highlighted several key points of the interface meeting, which include (i) the AMM noted the Annual Report of AICHR 2022; (ii) implored AICHR to build on its achievements and continue leading the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN; (iii) took note of the views and recommendations conveyed by the AICHR Representatives during the meeting; (iv) applauded Indonesia for spearheading the ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue; (v) encouraged AICHR to continue engaging on important issues of ASEAN; and (vi) expressed support to AICHR in its endeavours towards building an inclusive ASEAN Community in the years ahead.

4.1.1.2 Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR)

AICHR held its annual interface meeting with CPR on 3 March 2023 with Timor-Leste's participation as observer. The Meeting focused on strengthening the cooperation and collaboration between AICHR and CPR on the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN. The Meeting also discussed possible joint AICHR-CPR activities and engagements in 2023 in the areas of digitalisation, SDGs and human rights, human rights and policing, the rights of women in prisons, religious harmony, rights of persons with disabilities, engagement with the youth on digital rights, and countering hate speech.

4.1.1.3 ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC)

AICHR met with SOMTC on 10 July 2023. The Meeting was updated on respective work plans of AICHR and SOMTC and priorities for further cooperation in 2023 and beyond, which include the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025, the ASEAN Plan of Action to Prevent and Counter the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (PCRVE) 2018-2025, and the ASEAN Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons (TIP), Especially Women and Children (Bohol Work Plan) and its successor work plan.

AICHR and SOMTC acknowledged that TIP remains a major concern in ASEAN and the multi-faceted issues of TIP require a strong cross-pillar and cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration. AICHR and SOMTC welcomed the *ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Combating Trafficking in Persons Caused by the Abuse of Technology*, and pledged to further strengthen cooperation and coordination against TIP caused by abuse of technology, as well as to set a minimum standard on protection of victim at the regional

level to avoid re-victimisation, re-traumatisation, and continuing exploitation. Issues on economic crimes such as money laundering were also discussed.

AICHR and SOMTC exchanged views, experiences and good practices on the linkage between human rights, TIP and PCRVE in ASEAN and reaffirmed their commitment toward strengthening cross-pillar cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration on human rights.

4.1.2 ASEAN Socio-Cultural Pillar

4.1.2.1 ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC)

AICHR held its 3rd Interface Meeting with ACWC on 1 March 2023 to update and discuss priorities and key areas of cooperation and collaboration as well as ensuring synergy and coherence and alignment in the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN across relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies dealing with human rights.

The Meeting discussed key areas of potential cooperation and collaboration, including the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security (ASEAN RPA on WPS) and the ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework (AGMSF) in ensuring the rights of the most vulnerable women and children, including women prisoners and women in contact with the justice system. The protection of women's rights in the workplace, the implications of climate change to children's rights, and the preparation for the ASEAN Dialogue on the ASEAN Dialogue on UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 2023 were also deliberated. AICHR and ACWC issued a Joint Press Release on their Interface Meeting.

4.1.2.2 ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW)

AICHR held its 1st Interface Meeting with ACMW on 1 March 2023 to update and discuss priorities and key areas of cooperation and collaboration as well as ensuring synergy and coherence and alignment in the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN across relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies dealing with human rights.

AICHR and ACMW discussed potential areas of cooperation and collaboration, including the possible participation of ACMW in the AER-WG to develop the ASEAN Regional Framework on Environmental Rights; and the development of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection of Migrant Workers in Crisis Situations, and the ASEAN Declaration on the

Protection of Migrant Workers in Fishing Vessels respectively. AICHR and ACMW issued a Joint Press Release on their Interface Meeting.

4.1.2.3 ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting Responsible for Information (SOMRI)

AICHR held its 2nd Interface Meeting with SOMRI on 24 May 2023 to update on their mandates and functions, thematic priorities and initiatives pertaining to human rights, information and media under the AICHR's Five-Year Work Plan 2021-2025, and the ASEAN Strategic Plan for Information and Media 2016-2025 respectively.

AICHR and SOMRI discussed areas of possible coordination and collaboration to counter disinformation and misinformation, and to protect young people and the rights of vulnerable groups, e.g., women, children and persons with disabilities, in the context of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) developments. AICHR and SOMRI issued a Joint Press Release on their Interface Meeting.

4.1.2.4 ASEAN University Network – Human Rights Education (AUN-HRE)

AICHR met with AUN-HRE on 24 May 2023 to exchange information on thematic priorities and initiatives pertaining to promotion and education for peace, human rights under their respective work plans. The Meeting was also to share updates on the mandate and functions of AICHR and AUN-HRE, as well as their thematic priorities and initiatives pertaining to promotion and education for peace, human rights and ASEAN Community building under the AICHR's Five-Year Work Plan 2021-2025, and the AUN-HRE's priority activities in 2023-2024 respectively.

AICHR and AUN-HRE shared experiences in the promotion of human rights education, and discussed areas for further collaboration and strengthening regional cooperation on human rights and peace in higher education towards advancing human rights and sustaining peace in Southeast Asia. Continued collaboration on youth engagement, as well as potential activities to formulate strategy and plan of action on human rights and peace education, and training of trainers on human rights and peace were discussed.

AICHR supports the AUN-HRE project on regional essay competition 2023 with the theme of human rights, environment and climate change. AICHR and AUN-HRE issued a Joint Press Release on their Interface Meeting.

4.1.2.5 ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD)

AICHR held its interface meeting with SOMSWD on 10 July 2023. AICHR and SOMSWD discussed measures to further cooperation between the two bodies on the rights of persons with disabilities, the rights of the child, the rights of older persons, the rights of vulnerable groups in ASEAN, and poverty eradication for enhanced social welfare and development.

The Meeting was updated on AICHR planned activities in 2023-2024, which include the Regional Consultation on the Follow-up of the Mid-term Review and Progress of the Enabling Masterplan, and the AICHR Workshop on Poverty Eradication and Economic, Social, Cultural Rights in the context of AHRD and SDGs.

SOMSWD informed of the planned activities in 2023, namely the Mid-term Review of the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2021-2025, Roll-out of the ASEAN Regional Action Plan to Implement the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing: Empowering Older Persons in ASEAN, ASEAN ICT Forum 2023 in line with the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action for the Protection of Children from All Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse in ASEAN (ASEAN RPA on COEA), Implementation and monitoring of the Road Map to Implement the Ha Noi Declaration on Strengthening Social Work Towards a Responsive and Cohesive ASEAN Community, particularly for social workers in the field of justice system.

AICHR and SOMSWD reaffirmed their commitment toward strengthening cross-pillar and cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration in the promotion and protection of human rights. Further, the two bodies were determined to foster strong partnerships with governments, civil society, private sector, and all relevant stakeholders in their advocacy and efforts in building ASEAN an inclusive, sustainable, harmonious, and socially responsible community that promotes high quality of life, equitable access to opportunities for all, and promotes and protects human rights.

4.1.2.6 ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW)

AICHR and ACW held their 2nd Interface Meeting on 10 July 2023, which discussed possible areas of cooperation to support the implementation of the ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework 2021-2025, and the implementation of ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security.

Relatedly, issues related to gender integration and protection of women's rights, such as those in relation to business and human rights, the promotion of environmental rights and climate action, as well as the promotion of gender equality and protection of women and girls in the context of digital transformation, among others, were highlighted for further cooperation.

AICHR and ACW agreed to further intensify cooperation through effective implementation of initiatives on gender mainstreaming, and the WPS in ASEAN agenda. The two bodies also reaffirmed commitment and collective efforts in enhancing alignment of work towards the promotion and protection of human rights, gender equality and women empowerment in ASEAN.

4.1.3 ASEAN Economic Community

4.1.3.1 ASEAN Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM)

On 10 July 2023, AICHR met with the representative of Chair of SEOM and Representative of Indonesia to SEOM. The Meeting shared updates on thematic priorities and initiatives of AICHR and SEOM pertaining to human rights and all aspects of ASEAN economic cooperation towards the realisation of a resilient, inclusive, people-oriented and people-centered ASEAN, as well as a highly integrated and cohesive ASEAN Economic Community.

Noting the significant progress in keeping the markets open for trade and investment through the implementation of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF), AICHR and the Representative of the Chair of SEOM shared the views to any possible joint work towards a durable post-pandemic recovery, with a focus on the ACRF broad strategies around health systems, human security, economic integration, inclusive digital transformation, and sustainability.

The Meeting explored possible collaboration between AICHR and SEOM with all stakeholders to address emerging challenges arising from the pandemic to sustain economic development with consideration for protection of labour rights, migrant workers' rights, as well as to enhance business practices with environmental, social and corporate governance standards, and further discussed initiatives and areas for future engagement, such as the development of the ASEAN regional framework on environmental rights, and possible cross-sectoral consultations on human rights, gender, investment, and trade in ASEAN.

Furthermore, the parties shared the view on the need to discuss further on business and human rights and are open to cooperation to create a resilient and inclusive business environment that safeguards human rights, protects the environment, and fosters sustainable development in the region.

4.1.4 Secretary-General of ASEAN

AICHR held two interface meetings with the Secretary-General of ASEAN during this reporting period, which were on 2 August 2022 and 3 March 2023 respectively.

On 2 August 2022, AICHR Representatives of the term of 2022-2024 held their first annual interface meeting with the former Secretary-General of ASEAN, H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. At this interface meeting, the Secretary-General of ASEAN shared an update on the progress of implementation of the Five-Point Consensus (FPC), in particular on the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people in need in Myanmar.

He highlighted five areas of policy direction for AICHR's consideration: (i) recovery efforts should go hand-in-hand with the respect for the people and the environment, including efforts to ensure better prevention of adverse human rights impacts of business practices and operations; (ii) ASEAN should act ahead of the far-reaching effects of digital technology and its immense new challenges in protecting human rights; (iii) ASEAN should continue to advance sustainable development through human rights; (iv) policy framework and actions should steer towards more inclusive and environmentally sustainable growth; and (v) ASEAN should leverage support to regional cooperation and integration as well as promote multilateralism.

Furthermore, progress in the implementation of the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025 and the integration of human rights in moving forwards with the recovery programmes to address the impact of the pandemic were also discussed.

On 3 March 2023, AICHR Representatives held their annual interface meeting with the Secretary-General of ASEAN, H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, who assumed the office in January 2023. AICHR and the Secretary-General of ASEAN shared views and deliberated on AICHR's work for the advancement of human rights cooperation and dialogue in ASEAN, including the progress of the High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision (HLTF-ACV), the situation in the region and the cross-sectoral cross-pillar collaboration.

At this interface meeting, the Secretary-General of ASEAN highlighted five areas of policy direction for AICHR's consideration: (i) existing human rights obligations should be integrated into economic policy discussions in order to build an economy that benefits everyone, in line with the objectives of advancing SDGs; (ii) ASEAN should do more on climate change by actively supporting basic human rights, particularly on access to a safe, clean, and sustainable environment; (iii) policy making should be grounded in meaningful and inclusive participation, social dialogue, transparency and accountability; (iv) ASEAN should advocate for actions that strengthen social protection, and address inequality and

discrimination in different forms as well as other root causes of conflicts, violence, social and environmental crises; and (v) ASEAN should strengthen the institutional capacity of AICHR, its national secretariats, as well as its regional secretariat and mechanism.

4.2 Engagement with CSOs with Consultative Relationship with AICHR

4.2.1 The Screening Panel for CSOs Application

At the Special Meeting 2/2022 of AICHR, the ASEAN Secretariat updated AICHR on the CSOs with consultative relationship with AICHR, which included new information on the CSOs' contact detail and address, their governing board, and membership, as well as their annual report, research, and key policy papers pertaining to human rights in the region.

At the 36th Meeting of AICHR, Representatives of Malaysia, Thailand, and Viet Nam were appointed as new members of the Screening Panel for CSOs with consultative relationship with AICHR in the year 2023. During this period of reporting, AICHR did not receive any new applications from CSOs for consultative relationship with AICHR.

4.2.2 Interface Meeting with CSOs with Consultative Relationship with AICHR

On 26 May 2023, AICHR held its 4th Interface Meeting with the CSOs with Consultative Relationship with AICHR. The Interface Meeting provided a venue for raising critical issues and challenges on human rights in the region, as well as for sharing ideas and recommendations to AICHR for further work in the promotion and protection of human rights in the region in contribution to building an inclusive, sustainable, and rights-based ASEAN Community.

Discussions were focused on engagement of the CSOs in the implementation of the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025, and the annual priority programmes and activities of AICHR, with specific recommendations on the rights of vulnerable groups, including women, children, and persons with disabilities, among others.

The Interface Meeting further promoted an enabling environment for meaningful and constructive engagement and interaction between AICHR and the accredited CSOs for the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN.

4.2.3 Engagement with ASEAN Member States

On the invitation of the Government of Indonesia, AICHR conducted a Country Learning Visit to Bogor city on 2 March 2023. The Country Learning Visit aims to provide better understanding among the AICHR Representatives on AMS approach and position on the issues on human rights and to hold a dialogue between AICHR and relevant stakeholders on the role of the city to contribute to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.

AICHR was briefed by the government of Indonesia regarding one of the Chair 2023's proposed deliverables, namely the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue.

4.2.4 Engagement with Other Stakeholders

4.2.5 Southeast Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum (SEANF)

On 24 May 2023, AICHR met with the representatives of SEANF to share updates on the priorities and activities of AICHR and SEANF in 2023, and discuss areas of further cooperation to advance human rights in the region.

The Meeting highlighted the complementarities between the work of AICHR and SEANF in relation to the cross-border and transnational issues that could impact human rights of the peoples of ASEAN, such as trafficking in person, environment and climate change, among others.

On possible areas of future cooperation, a number of thematic issues were mentioned, including prevention of torture and enforced disappearance, climate change, environmental rights, migration, statelessness, and business and human rights. Specifically, AICHR and SEANF have agreed on their second joint activity on the measures to prevent torture and enforced disappearance to be conducted in 2023.

4.2.6 Young People and Children

On 9 July 2023, AICHR held its 1st Interface Meeting with the Child Rights Coalition Asia (CRC Asia) with the participation of children, which discussed how children and the child rights sector could contribute to the promotion of the full implementation of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD), including Article 28 (f) on the right to safe, clean, and sustainable environment, as well as how children could be engaged in the various programs and activities of the AICHR in line with AICHR mandates 4.8 and 4.9.

Children aged from 11 to 17 years old with different gender, ethnicity and nationality from eight AMS, joined the adult representatives of CRC Asia in the interface meeting. The

Meeting shared concerns and discussed possible measures to raise awareness and advocacy on children's rights.

The Meeting provided safe and constructive space for children to share their views about the environment, education, security, social welfare and mental health of children which affect children and the enjoyment of their rights. Children expressed their interest to engage more with AICHR programmes and activities, and made recommendations on the areas of environment, climate change, and the protection of child's rights in the region.

4.2.7 Engagement with External Relations

4.2.7.1 The 4th ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights

The 4th ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights was held on 24-26 October 2022 at the ASEAN Secretariat. The Dialogue was attended by an EU Delegation led by the EU Special Representative for Human Rights and the Ambassador of EU to ASEAN, and Representatives and Alternate Representatives of AICHR, Chairs and Representatives of ACWC, the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW), ACMW, and the ASEAN Secretariat. Representatives of NHRIs and CSOs also attended.

The Dialogue saw substantive discussions on child rights, access to justice and young people participation in development, business and human rights, environmental rights and climate change, rights of persons with disabilities in post COVID-19, freedom of expression, freedom of religion and countering hate speech and disinformation, women's rights and mainstreaming gender equality, rights of migrant workers, trafficking in persons, and countering violence extremism from the perspectives of human rights.

ASEAN and EU reiterated their commitment to collaborate and explore opportunities for strengthening ASEAN-EU regional cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights, which would be formalised in 2023 to cover the initiatives related to sharing knowledge and best practices, as well as building partnership through ASEAN-EU engagements at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. Follow-up action and post-dialogue engagement was also explored, such as the possible joint seminar on addressing misinformation and hate speech.

4.2.7.2 United Nations (UN)

On 16 November 2022, AICHR met with the UN in Siem Reap, Cambodia to explore ways to enhance engagement between AICHR and the UN on human rights, as well as to discuss future cooperation in line with the framework of the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025 and

the Priority Programmes/Activities of AICHR 2023, which include business and human rights, child's rights, rights of persons with disabilities, environmental rights, rights of accused person in criminal cases, freedom of religion and belief, migration, and human trafficking, among others. The AICHR and UN have planned to hold the AICHR-UN Dialogue on Human Rights in the fourth quarter of 2023.

On 18-19 October 2022, AICHR participated in the biannual Workshop on Enhancing Cooperation between Regional and International Mechanisms for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights organised by OHCHR in Geneva, Switzerland.

4.2.7.3 European Union (EU)

On 28 February 2023, AICHR met with the EU at the ASEAN Secretariat to discuss cooperation programmes and activities in line with the framework of the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025 and the work plan of AICHR in 2023. Main discussions included (i) follow-up activities from the 4th ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights, (ii) the preparation for the 5th ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights to be held in 2023, and (ii) the resources for potential support to AICHR in fostering human rights in ASEAN through the EU Democracy and Human Rights programme. The 5th ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights has been tentatively scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2023.

4.2.7.4 Australia

On 3 March 2023, AICHR met with Australia to discuss cooperation programmes and activities in line with the framework of the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025 and the work plan of AICHR in 2023. AICHR was informed of Australia's priorities in support to human rights in ASEAN, including the "Support to Human Rights Dialogues and Activities in ASEAN" project for the period of 2019-2023 and the potential support under the "Australia for ASEAN Futures Initiative".

4.2.7.5 United States

On 24 May 2023, AICHR met with the United States (U.S.) to discuss cooperation activities in line with the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025 and the work plan of AICHR in 2023. The U.S. through its PROSPECT programme expressed support to the implementation of two AICHR activities in 2023, namely: (i) Multisectoral Consultation on Victims-Oriented Protection to Counter Radicalism and Violent Extremism to be held in 2023, and (ii) Multi-stakeholder Workshop on Referral Systems for Victims of Violence and Trafficking in Persons in ASEAN scheduled for 26-28 June 2023.

5. Participation of Timor-Leste at AICHR Meetings and Activities

Following the adoption of the *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Observer Status Granted to Timor-Leste* at the 32nd ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC) Meeting on 3 February 2023, AICHR has invited Timor-Leste to its meeting, starting from the 37th Meeting of AICHR held in May 2023. Before the 37th Meeting of AICHR, representatives of Timor-Leste were also invited and attended the Interface Meeting between AICHR and CPR on 3 March 2023.

Before attending AICHR meetings as Observer, Timor-Leste has been invited to participate in AICHR programmes and activities in line with the *Guidelines for Timor-Leste's Participation in ASEAN Activities for Capacity Building Purposes* adopted in 2021. Thus far, representatives of Timor-Leste have attended two AICHR activities on human rights in combating trafficking in persons, and sustainable cities and communities respectively.

6. Implementation Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

6.1 Self-assessment of AICHR Progress

Guided by the ASEAN Charter, AHRD and the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD, ASEAN Community Vision 2025, and its TOR, AICHR has established some important roles in human rights promotion and protection in ASEAN, such as educator, enabler, standard setter, mobilizer, generator, and convener of regional engagement and discussion on human rights in the region in the last 13 years.

Furthermore, through the implementation of its Five-Year Work Plan 2021 – 2025, AICHR aims to achieve the following three result areas:

- AICHR as an example modality for coordinating human rights rules-based cooperation and activities;
- Regular dialogue on human rights with ASEAN Member States and relevant stakeholders to build confidence in sharing information across member states; and
- ASEAN Member States fulfilling international commitments in line with the principles of the ASEAN Charter.

As shown in the report, these last twelve months, the activities of AICHR have contributed to the three result areas, particularly in establishing regular dialogue on human rights with AMS and relevant stakeholders. Through the efforts of organising activities and

mainstreaming human rights initiatives, AICHR contributed to its targeted result related to the modality for coordinating human rights cooperation.

Furthermore, the implemented activities have emphasised on the realisation of AICHR's mandates in relation to standard-setting on human rights, policy support to ASBs and AMS, as well as on developing human rights approaches and engagement with stakeholders.

Pertaining to the review of the TOR, AICHR noted that the 52nd ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting (AMM) in 2019 has tasked the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) to establish a Panel of Experts to discuss the suggestion to review the Terms of Reference of AICHR.

6.2 Mid-Term Review of Five-Year Work Plan 2021-2025

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the FYWP 2021-2025 has commenced, aiming for an MTR report to be submitted to AICHR by the end of 2023.

7. Observations and Future Directions

In the last thirteen years, AICHR has put efforts in realising its mandate and functions as stated in its TOR. AICHR has also generated regional discussions on human rights, provided spaces to discuss human rights in ASEAN and promoted human rights issues in the region. AICHR has become the leading mechanism on human rights in Southeast Asia and ASEAN.

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the 30th Anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action (VDPA), AICHR takes stock of its progress, challenges, and limitations in the last thirteen years since its inception. The establishment of AICHR is not only the realisation of VDPA but also the fulfilment of ASEAN's commitment to implement international human rights instruments through the adoption of a number of regional human rights norms and its mainstreamed efforts in regional projects. Nevertheless, these progresses are not without challenges.

The future challenges on human rights will be more complex and the ability of AICHR to adapt and respond to the issue is needed. For instance, while digital transformation brings a lot of advantages to the life of people, it also comes with its dark sides, which include the use of technology in trafficking in persons, online bullying and harassment, hate speech online, cyber-crimes, and disinformation, to name of few.

While AICHR can strengthen the existing efforts, AICHR should also look for different perspectives in upholding human rights for the new decade. More importantly, AICHR should be perceived as relevant to be part of the dynamic ASEAN Community. It is very important that AICHR strengthens its role in developing human rights approaches in ASEAN.