

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

(Period of Reporting: July 2023 – June 2024)

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## Executive Summary

This annual report covers the AICHR activities from July 2023 to June 2024.

The AICHR activities in the period of July 2023 to June 2024 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 the year, 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-General of ASEAN, respectively.

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 in order to contribute to the ASEAN's Chair agenda of 2024 on "ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience".

AICHR implemented its Five-Year Work Plan (FYWP) of 2021-2025 in line with 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 and poverty eradication in the context of the SDGs, human rights concerns in the post-pandemic situation, misinformation and disinformation, Freedom of Opinion and Expression in ASEAN, business and human rights, human rights index in ASEAN, the rights of victims in the prevention and countering violent extremism, and the prevention of torture, among others.

In realising Article 4.2 of its TOR in developing a regional human rights framework based on the AHRD, AICHR is processing the draft ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. This measure is in line with Article 28 (f) of AHRD on the right to a safe, clean, and sustainable environment.

On the external relations front, the AICHR convened the 1<sup>st</sup> AICHR-UN Dialogue on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland on 27-29 September 2023 and paid an official visit to Switzerland which was held in Geneva and Bern, Switzerland from 30 September to 2 October 2023. On 3 October 2023, ASEAN and the EU held the 5<sup>th</sup> Policy Dialogue on Human Rights in Brussels. The Dialogue was co-chaired by AICHR and the EU, with nearly 30 ASEAN delegates in participation, including AICHR, ACWC, ACW, ACMW,

relevant divisions of the ASEAN Secretariat, and the participation of Timor-Leste as Observer.

## **1. Introduction**

This Annual Report comprises the description of AICHR's activities between July 2023 and July 2024, its lessons learnt, observations and recommendations.

This report is divided into seven parts, starting with the Introduction, followed by the Work of AICHR, which consists of AICHR meetings and activities throughout the specific period of time. The third part focuses on the measurement of Mainstreaming Human Rights across pillars of ASEAN. AICHR's engagement with ASEAN Organs, Bodies, and Entities, including consultative relations with CSOs, and External Partners are addressed in part four. The fifth part shows the participation of Timor-Leste in ASEAN's meetings and activities as an observer. Another important part is the elaboration of the implementation assessment, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the work of AICHR. The final part elaborates on AICHR's deliverables for 2024, the observation and future direction of AICHR.

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 AICHR**

### **2.1 AICHR Meetings**

During the reporting period, AICHR held four meetings.

#### **2.1.1 Special Meeting 1/2023**

AICHR convened its Special Meeting 1/2023 on 8-12 July 2023 in Jakarta, 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. Timor-Leste attended the Meeting as Observer.

The ASEAN Secretariat provided updates on meetings and activities conducted across the three Community pillars and the status of AICHR funds. Further updates include 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, presented by the AICHR Representatives/Alternate Representatives of Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

The Meeting discussed the implementation of AICHR's Priority Programmes/Activities in 2023 with a focus on business and human rights, the environment and climate change, rights of persons with disabilities, children's and women's rights, human rights and poverty

eradication in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD), disinformation, hate speech and human rights, victim-oriented protection to counter radicalisation and violent extremism, and prevention of torture, among others. There were also discussions on AICHR thematic studies, institutional matters, and its external relations.

Several interface meetings were held as part of the Special Meeting 1/2023. The Representatives of AICHR met with relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, including the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW), the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSOD), the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC), and the Representative of the Chair of the ASEAN Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM), which discussed priorities and possible initiatives for alignment of work and integration of human rights across three Community pillars of ASEAN.

AICHR met with the ASEAN Environmental Rights Working Group (AER-WG) to discuss the progress and provide guidance for the AER-WG on the development of a regional framework on environmental rights in ASEAN. AICHR also met with the Child Rights Coalition (CRC Asia) with the participation of children to discuss possible measures to raise awareness, advocacy, promotion and protection of children's rights, as well as the importance of children's engagement in AICHR's activities.

Preparations for the 1<sup>st</sup> AICHR-United Nations (UN) Dialogue on Human Rights, the AICHR Official Visit to Switzerland, and the 5<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-European Union (EU) Policy Dialogue on Human Rights to take place in September-October 2023 were also deliberated.

### **2.1.2 Special Meeting 2/2023**

AICHR convened its Special Meeting 2/2023 on 7-10 November 2023 at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, 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. Timor-Leste attended the Meeting 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 in ASEAN Member States as presented by the AICHR Representatives/Alternate Representatives of Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, and Thailand.

During the Meeting, the implementation of AICHR's Priority Programmes/Activities in 2023 and 2024 with a focus on the rights of women and children, rights of persons with disabilities, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of opinion and expression, disinformation and misinformation, business and human rights, environmental rights and climate change, countering trafficking in persons, and prevention of torture, human rights

index, human rights and policing, ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue, among others, were discussed.

The Meeting also discussed institutional matters, including the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework of the AICHR Five-Year Work Plan (FYWP) 2021-2025, the Rules of Procedure for the AICHR Fund, and the Guidelines on AICHR's External Relations.

AICHR took note of the ASEAN Secretariat's update on the CSOs with Consultative Relationship with AICHR and the communications sent to AICHR in 2023. The Meeting deliberated the midterm review of the implementation of the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025, as well as other matters such as governance of the AICHR Fund and conduct of joint activities.

On external relations, AICHR met with Switzerland and the UN to discuss the results and possible follow-ups from the AICHR Official Visit to Switzerland, and the 1<sup>st</sup> AICHR-UN Dialogue on Human Rights, respectively. AICHR also met with Japan to discuss possible areas of cooperation in 2024.

AICHR held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting with the AER-WG to discuss the progress and provide guidance for the AER-WG in the development of a regional framework on environmental rights in ASEAN.

The Meeting concluded with a handover ceremony from Indonesia as the Chair of AICHR to Lao PDR. The Meeting expressed its appreciation to H.E. Wahyuningrum for excellent arrangements as the 2023 Chair of AICHR and welcomed Lao PDR as the Chair of AICHR in 2024.

### **2.1.3 The 38<sup>th</sup> Meeting of AICHR**

AICHR convened its 38<sup>th</sup> Meeting on 20-23 February 2024 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Ambassador Yong Chanthalangsy, Representative of Lao PDR to AICHR, and was attended by Representatives/Alternate Representatives of AICHR, and the ASEAN Secretariat. Timor-Leste attended the Meeting as Observer.

In his opening remarks, the Chair highlighted the importance of taking stock of the outcomes and achievements in the implementation of ASEAN Community Vision 2025 as well as charting out the future direction of ASEAN under Lao PDR's ASEAN Chairmanship 2024 with the theme "ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience". The Chair called for collective efforts in the strengthening of the ASEAN Community, and the promotion and protection of human rights.

The Meeting proceeded with sharing updates on recent developments on human rights in the region including new laws and regulations, and human rights initiatives by ASEAN Member States as presented by the AICHR Representatives/Alternate Representatives of Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

The Meeting discussed the implementation of AICHR's Priority Programmes/Activities in 2023 and 2024 with a focus on human rights and policing, trafficking in persons, the environment and climate change, rights of persons with disabilities, children's rights, human rights and poverty eradication in the context of the SDGs, misinformation and disinformation, among others.

Institutional matters were also discussed, including the mid-term review of the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025, measures to strengthen the governance of the AICHR Fund and external funds to AICHR, preparation for the development of the AICHR FYWP 2026-2030, and possible input of AICHR to the development of Strategic Plans of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 led by the High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision (HLTF-ACV).

At this Meeting, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting between AICHR and the AER-WG was held to discuss the progress of the drafting of the regional framework on environmental rights in ASEAN.

#### **2.1.4 The 39<sup>th</sup> Meeting of AICHR**

AICHR convened its 39<sup>th</sup> Meeting from 20 to 22 May 2024 at ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Ambassador Yong Chanthalangsy, Representative of Lao PDR to AICHR, and was attended by Representatives/Alternate Representatives of AICHR, and the ASEAN Secretariat. Timor-Leste attended the Meeting as Observer.

The Meeting was updated on recent developments in the region, including new laws and regulations, and human rights initiatives by ASEAN Member States as presented by the AICHR Representatives/Alternate Representatives of Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

The Meeting discussed the implementation of AICHR's Priority Programmes/Activities with a focus on the rights of persons with disabilities, women and children's rights, disinformation and misinformation, human rights and policing in ASEAN, business and human rights, among others. AICHR also discussed measures for strengthening the governance of AICHR programmes and activities and the preparation of the FYWP for the period of 2026-2030 in alignment with the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and its strategic plans. AICHR encouraged close coordination and consultation with the High-Level Task Force on ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision to ensure that alignment.

In preparation for the annual interface between ASEAN Foreign Ministers and AICHR Representatives at the 57<sup>th</sup> AMM in July 2024, the Meeting deliberated the draft Annual Report of AICHR 2024, the Statement of AICHR to the AMM, and the Priority Programmes/Activities of AICHR 2025.

AICHR held its 4<sup>th</sup> interface meeting with the AER-WG, which discussed the progress of drafting a declaration on the right to a safe, clean, [healthy], and sustainable environment. AICHR also held its 1<sup>st</sup> interface with the ASEAN Disability Forum (ADF) to further promote

and protect human rights. In addition, AICHR held its 5<sup>th</sup> Interface with the CSOs with a Consultative Relationship with AICHR to further promote an enabling environment for constructive engagement between AICHR and the accredited CSOs.

During its 39<sup>th</sup> Meeting, AICHR met with Australia, the European Union, Japan, and the United States of America respectively for discussions on cooperation in support of the implementation of the AICHR Five-Year Work Plan (FYWP) 2021-2025 and the Priority Programmes and Activities of AICHR in 2024 and beyond.

## **2.2 AICHR Activities**

In the reporting period of July 2023-June 2024, AICHR conducted ten (10) approved Priority Programmes and Activities of AICHR.

### **2.2.1 Launching of AICHR Trafficking in Persons Training Resources for ASEAN Member States, 21 July 2023, ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat**

AICHR launched two training resources related to countering trafficking in persons, especially women and children on 21 July 2023, which included the “AICHR Training Guide: Community Policing Approach to Counter Trafficking in Persons in ASEAN Member States” and the “AICHR Training Manual: Human Rights, Gender Sensitive and Child-Friendly Approaches to Trafficking in Persons Cases for Frontline Officers”.

The training resources to counter trafficking in persons provided practical tools to enhance multi-stakeholder collaboration in capacity-building initiatives by incorporating the whole-of-government and whole-of-ASEAN-communities approaches in addressing trafficking in persons and taking into consideration the complex nature of the issue.

The publication of the training resources also attributed to the implementation of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, the ASEAN Cross-Sectoral Work Plan on Trafficking in Persons, and the Bohol Trafficking in Persons Work Plan 2017-2020.

### **2.2.2 ASEAN Community Councils Dialogue on Human Rights, 24 August 2023, ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat**

The ASEAN Community Councils Dialogue was held to consult ASEAN Sectoral Bodies on how human rights principles and commitments, as stipulated in the AHRD, could be mainstreamed in the three Community pillars of ASEAN and be used to foster collaboration between AICHR and the ASEAN Sectoral Bodies to advance the implementation of AHRD.

The Dialogue took note of the progress and challenges shared by the ASEAN Sectoral Bodies in realising human rights in their respective mandates and functions. Challenges to the implementation of AHRD include the increasing number of traditional and non-traditional security threats in the region, different cultural sensitivities and local contexts in

different ASEAN Member States regarding human rights, and disparities of compliance on human rights in the region.

### **2.2.3 AICHR Cross-Sectoral Dialogue on the Effective Implementation of ASEAN Commitments on Human Rights of Women and Children, 25 August 2023, ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat**

The objective of the Cross-Sectoral Dialogue was convened to consult the ASEAN Sectoral Bodies on their contributions and the challenges they faced in promoting and protecting the rights of women and children in ASEAN. The Dialogue explored possible mechanisms for inter-sectoral cooperation to strengthen the protection framework for women and children in ASEAN. The Dialogue also discussed the implementation of the agreed recommendations from the 2015 AICHR's Exploratory Strategy Paper on Human Rights Protection Mechanisms for Women and Girls in the Southeast Asian Region.

The Dialogue took note of the enablers and the progress in realising the rights of women and children to fully utilise various instruments that all ASEAN Member States are party to such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Dialogue also took note of the extensive work of the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) and the evolutionary approach of AICHR in promoting and protecting human rights in ASEAN.

### **2.2.4 Launching of the AICHR Study on Human Rights and Migration Management for the Most Vulnerable Groups in ASEAN, 25 August 2023, ASEAN Secretariat**

AICHR launched the report of the "AICHR Study on Human Rights and Migration Management for the Most Vulnerable Groups in ASEAN", which is accessible to the public from the AICHR Website ([www.aichr.org](http://www.aichr.org)).

The Study examined the existing migration management system in ASEAN and its Member States through the lens of human rights and gender, particularly on the state practice – policies, processes to regulation, and enforcement measures – in managing the different forms of migration, existing cooperation mechanisms, and best practices of effective migration management of the most vulnerable migrants in migration. It also highlighted challenges in the region's labour migration management, including the lack of uniformity in ASEAN Member States' labour migration policies which could be an obstacle to enhancing greater synchronised and coordinated actions among ASEAN Member States in ensuring the rights of migrant workers. The launch provided a platform for sharing of findings of the Study and regional consultation among AICHR, ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, CSOs, academies, and international organisations on migration and human rights broadly.



### **2.2.5 ASEAN Dialogue in Realising Southeast Asia as a Torture-Free Region, 28-29 August 2023, ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat and via Videoconference**

The Dialogue served as a platform for sharing practices and initiatives of ASEAN Member States and stakeholders toward the realisation of Southeast Asia as a torture-free region and building capacity of relevant actors, including law enforcement officials and CSOs as part of the contribution. It also aimed at developing recommendations for the implementation of Article 14 of the AHRD, which promotes torture prevention, investigation of torture allegations, prosecution of torture-related offences, and rehabilitation of torture victims.

Participants, who are justice and law enforcement officials, discussed challenges in preventing torture including the different levels of knowledge and understanding about the relevant laws on the prevention of torture, lack of resources for the law enforcers to implement their duty such as the effective use of body cameras, lack of the relevant legislation on the prevention of torture, difficulties in dismissing stigma and changing methods of investigation to exclude conduct of torture, and politicisation of torture prevention efforts.

### **2.2.6 AICHR Consultation on Freedom of Opinion and Expression in ASEAN 2023, 1-2 December 2023, Jakarta, Indonesia**

The Consultation provided a platform for ASEAN Member States, ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, and stakeholders to share practices, experiences, and challenges in addressing the spread of hate speech, fake news, misinformation, and disinformation, including in the post-pandemic era.

The Consultation discussed the challenges, relevant frameworks, and governance of the online dimension of human rights. Thematic issues were deliberated, including gendered disinformation, hate speech, cyber vulnerability, artificial intelligence regulations, civil space and digital transformation, data protection, digital literacy, access inequality, and the right to remedy.

### **2.2.7 2023 AICHR Regional Consultation on Midterm Review and Progress of the Enabling Masterplan 2025, 4-5 December 2023, Bangkok, Thailand**

The AICHR Regional Consultation was organised in collaboration with the ASEAN Disability Forum and the General Election Network for Disability Access and was participated by representatives from government agencies, ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, organisations of persons with disabilities, as well as NHRIs. In support of the Midterm Review of the implementation of the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Enabling Masterplan), the Consultation focused on exchanging views on challenges and progress made in the review of the implementation of the Enabling Masterplan, such as data collection, ASEAN sectoral self-assessments, and preliminary reporting on action point progress under the three ASEAN

Community pillars. It also focused on ensuring that all stakeholders could engage fully and have a clear vision for strengthening Enabling Masterplan implementation.

The participants underscored 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 ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and Entities across the three Community pillars.

### **2.2.8 ASEAN Forum on Human Rights at Sea: Ensuring Decent Work for Migrant Fishers, 14-15 December 2023, Jakarta, Indonesia**

The Forum was held in commemoration of the International Day of Migrants and in partnership with the Indonesia Ocean Justice Initiative, the International Organization for Migration, and the International Justice Mission. The Forum provided a platform for dialogue among relevant actors on the protection of migrant fishers and raised recommendations for the development of the Guidelines on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Placement and Protection of Migrant Fishers. Intersectional issues of human rights at sea, vulnerabilities of migrant fishers and the challenges they face, and interventions to assist migrant fishers and migrant families in navigating the migration cycles were also discussed.

### **2.2.9 AICHR Consultation on Human Rights Index, 29-30 April 2024, Tangerang, Indonesia**

The consultation was attended by more than 95 participants representing AICHR, the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), NHRIs, ASBs, the ASEAN Member States, Universities and Civil Society Organisations who joined the event online and in-person.

The consultation provided a platform for dialogue among relevant stakeholders to discuss and consider a regional human rights index in ASEAN, by mapping and documenting good practices, sustainable strategies, and challenges as experienced by the existing human rights indexes. Participants discussed various experiences, lessons learned and methodology for developing a human rights index, as well as sharing experiences in tracking the state's compliance with global human rights standards.

## **2.3 ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue**

The 5<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue was convened on 6 November 2023 at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia. The Dialogue was attended by representatives of ASEAN Member States, AICHR, the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR), NHRIs from some ASEAN Member States, the ASEAN Secretariat, and invited stakeholders including CSOs having consultative relationships with AICHR.

The Delegates exchanged best practices to promote and protect human rights. The Delegates also shared experiences on the accession and implementation of the

international human rights conventions by the ASEAN Member States including reporting requirements and follow-ups on recommendations, as well as their participation in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. In commemoration of the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the AHRD on 18 November 2023 and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on 10 December 2023, the Delegates reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights in the region in line with the AHRD and UDHR.

Thematic discussions during the Dialogue covered the issues of freedom of religion and belief, protection of journalists, the rights of migrant workers, the rights of women, children, and persons with disabilities, gender balance and equality, business and human rights, human rights past abuses, death penalty, the environment and climate change, online sexual violence against children, disinformation and misinformation, basic principles for the treatment of prisoners, access to justice, prevention of torture, and sustainable development goals, among others. The Dialogue stimulated constructive discussion, deliberation and exercise of mutual respect and understanding. Stakeholders such as NHRIs and CSOs were engaged and shared their views and recommendations towards improving cooperation and enhancing capacity to better promote and protect human rights.

The 5<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue was held after the adoption of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue during the 43<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Summit in September 2023. The Dialogue was chaired by AICHR Indonesia as the Chair of AICHR in 2023 and supported by the ASEAN Secretariat.

## **2.4 Development of a Regional Framework on Environmental Rights**

Following the establishment of the ASEAN Environmental Rights Working Group, the Modalities of Operations for the AER-WG was adopted on 21 November 2022 and the Terms of Reference of the AER-WG was adopted by the 36<sup>th</sup> Meeting of AICHR held on 28 February-3 March 2023. AICHR held four interface meetings with the AER-WG to discuss progress and provide guidance for the AER-WG on the development of a regional framework on environmental rights in ASEAN. These meetings were scheduled in the AICHR meetings, namely: the 1<sup>st</sup> AICHR meeting with the AER-WG on 9 July 2023; the 2<sup>nd</sup> AICHR meeting with the AER-WG on 9 November 2023; the 3<sup>rd</sup> AICHR meeting with the AER-WG on 23 February 2024, and the 4<sup>th</sup> AICHR meeting with the AER-WG on 22 May 2024.

In line with the TOR of the AER-WG, the AER-WG has worked to develop a declaration on the right to a safe, clean, [healthy,], and sustainable environment to be submitted to AICHR for further discussion.

The AER-WG held five meetings in the reporting period, namely:

- The 1<sup>st</sup> AER-WG Meeting on 21-22 August 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand;
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> AER-WG Meeting on 21-22 November 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand;

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> AER-WG Meeting on 27-28 February 2024 in Manila, the Philippines; and
- The 4<sup>th</sup> AER-WG Meeting on 6-8 May 2024 at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> AER-WG Meeting on 1-3 July 2024 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

### **3. Mainstreaming Human Rights across Pillars of ASEAN**

AICHR's goal is to continue to further promote and strengthen cross-sectoral and cross-pillar cooperation by mainstreaming human rights issues across the three ASEAN community pillars in accordance with the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

AICHR has actively contributed to the development of outcome documents of the ASBs based on invitation, especially the integrating of human rights guiding principles, means and an end of the programming and approaches in their work plans, such as the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) Work Plan 2021-2025, the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Children (ASEAN RPA on EVAC), the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Women (ASEAN RPA on EVAW), the Bali Declaration on the Enhancement of the Role and Participation of the Person with Disabilities in ASEAN Community, the development of 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 Extremis (2019-2025), and the ASEAN Roadmap on Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2025.

## **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 Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM)**

On 11 July 2023, AICHR Representatives had their annual interface with the ASEAN Foreign Ministers during the 56<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting (AMM), with the participation of Timor-Leste as Observer. At the interface, AICHR submitted the 2023 Annual Report of AICHR to the AMM, which outlined the main accomplishments and developments of AICHR in the reporting period from July 2022 to July 2023 and emphasised the realisation of AICHR's mandates concerning standard-setting on human rights, policy support to ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and the ASEAN Member States, as well as on developing human rights strategies and engagement with stakeholders on various thematic issues on human rights. AICHR's engagement with ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and Entities, as well as other stakeholders including CSOs, NHRIs, young people, and children in mainstreaming human rights and integrating human rights in the development and implementation of regional work plans, were also highlighted.

Underlining the need to strengthen the ability of AICHR to remain relevant to the ASEAN Community, and to adapt and respond to future challenges on human rights, the AICHR Statement to the AMM suggested that AICHR examine different approaches to upholding human rights in ASEAN for the new decade. AICHR, therefore, sought the AMM's advice, guidance, and support for AICHR to strengthen its capacity and fulfil its promotion and protection mandates in the region.

During the Interface, the Foreign Ministers commended AICHR's work and accomplishments in the promotion and protection of human rights in the region. AICHR was encouraged to continue its active role in mainstreaming human rights across all Community pillars and sectors, as well as in the implementation of regional frameworks on cross-pillar and cross-sectoral areas. The Interface saw a candid exchange of views and opinions, as well as the sharing of comments and suggestions to AICHR in discharging its mandate and functions.

In her closing remarks, the Chair of the AMM underscored that AICHR must continue (i) to promote human rights values within the regional context considering the balance between rights and responsibilities; (ii) to address human rights issues across the three Community pillars in line with the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025; (iii) to explore home-grown initiatives in strengthening national human rights institutions while promoting the role of national and local stakeholders; and (iv) engagement and collaboration with all stakeholders are also crucial in ensuring inclusive partnership for humanity for ASEAN and beyond.

#### **4.1.2 Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR)**

AICHR held its annual interface meeting with the CPR on 30 May 2024 via videoconference with Timor-Leste's participation as Observer. The Meeting was updated on AICHR and CPR's work and priorities in line with their respective mandates and focused on exchanging ideas and suggestions to enhance the cooperation and collaboration between AICHR and CPR.

On measures to enhance cross-sectoral and cross-pillar collaboration, particularly to further mainstream human rights across the ASEAN Community pillars, the AICHR Representatives called for CPR's support and made recommendations for:

- Enhancing the coordination and collaboration with relevant ASBs in AICHR's efforts;
- Convening of the 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue to be co-chaired by Lao PDR and Indonesia this year; and
- Encourage closer cooperation and communication among the AICHR Chair, CPR Chair, and ASEAN Country Coordinator(s) to enhance coherence and consistency in the implementation of future activities with ASEAN DPs.

Several Permanent Representatives to ASEAN made general comments and suggestions underscoring the importance of the interface, and the need for collective efforts in the promotion and protection of human rights in the region, including:

- Human rights in ASEAN is not the sole domain of AICHR but of other bodies as well. The CPR and AICHR need to work together to make the human rights dimensions of ASEAN's work more visible and identifiable for ASEAN and all other stakeholders;
- Viewing ASEAN mechanisms, projects, and partnerships through a human rights lens is underscored as a way to gain a fuller appreciation of human rights as the foundation of the people-centred, people-oriented ASEAN Community;
- The need to work on both promoting and protecting human rights is underscored;
- Apart from engaging ASBs, AICHR should engage more with the various ASEAN centres, aiming not only to raise awareness about human rights and the work of AICHR but also to ensure human rights issues are addressed while these centres are carrying out their work, and thus to help develop a more effective strategy to promote and protect human rights, especially on current and emerging issues; and
- In preparation for the FYWP 2026-2030, AICHR is encouraged to (i) explore ways and means to address contemporary issues through the human rights lens and perspective; (ii) mainstream and support the implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP); and (iii) ensure alignment with the human rights elements in the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and its strategic plans.

The Meeting also discussed possible joint AICHR-CPR activities in 2024 and agreed to explore further possible initiatives for public outreach and awareness, which would benefit, women, children, university students, and youths as the target audience.

#### **4.1.3 ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR)**

AICHR held its 1<sup>st</sup> interface meeting with the ASEAN-IPR Governing Council on 30 May 2024 via videoconference with Timor-Leste's participation as Observer. The Meeting was updated on AICHR and ASEAN-IPR's work and substantive priorities in 2024 and 2025 in line with their respective mandates and approved work plans. Discussions were focused on sharing views and suggestions on possible modalities and areas of cooperation between AICHR and ASEAN-IPR, with the following key points:

- The intersection between human rights and peace and reconciliation, as well as peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance, was highlighted for consideration of joint programmes and interventions;
- On areas of priority, initiatives to realise the right to peace as stipulated in Article 28 of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, and the promotion of the culture of prevention could be considered; and
- Thematic discussion and/or dialogue on the interlinks between peace, security, and human rights could be further explored, such as on peace and sustainable development, and non-traditional security issues.

The Meeting took note of the strong interest in collaboration as well as the need to avoid overlapping and ensure effectiveness in future engagement and joint activities.

#### **4.1.4 ASEAN Disability Forum**

On 20 May 2024, AICHR held its 1<sup>st</sup> Interface Meeting with the ASEAN Disability Forum (ADF) with the participation of Timor-Leste as Observer. The parties deliberated the efforts and recommendations to ensure the progressive implementation of the *ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (Enabling Masterplan), including the important roles and contributions of persons with disabilities (PWDs) and organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) in ASEAN.

The meeting reaffirmed the commitment to strengthen the cooperation in advancing the human rights of persons with disabilities across Southeast Asia, including follow-up actions on the Midterm Review of the Enabling Masterplan, as well as measures to further mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities across three Community pillars in alignment with the ASEAN Community's Vision 2045 and its strategic plans.

#### **4.2 Engagement with CSOs with Consultative Relationship with AICHR**

##### **4.2.1 The Screening Panel for CSO Application**

At the Special Meeting 2/2023 of AICHR, the ASEAN Secretariat updated AICHR on the CSOs with consultative relationship with AICHR, which included new information on the accredited CSOs' contact detail, their governing board and membership, as well as their annual report, research, and key policy papers on human rights in the region.

At the 38<sup>th</sup> Meeting of AICHR, the Representatives of Malaysia, Thailand, and Viet Nam were appointed as new members of the Screening Panel for Application of CSOs with Consultative Relationship with AICHR for the 2024 term. 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 21 May 2024, AICHR held its 5<sup>th</sup> Interface Meeting with the CSOs with Consultative Relationship with AICHR, with Timor-Leste attending as Observer. The Interface Meeting deliberated issues and challenges on human rights in the region, as well as exchanged ideas and recommendations for further work in the promotion and protection of human rights in the region towards building a more inclusive, sustainable, and rights-based ASEAN Community.

Discussions were focused on the 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, human rights and the environment and climate change, business and human rights, among others. The Meeting also deliberated on the

engagement and contribution of the accredited CSOs in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the implementation of the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025 as well as the development of the next AICHR FYWP for 2026-2030.

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.

### **4.3 Engagement with External Relations**

#### **4.3.1 The United Nations**

AICHR and the United Nations held the 1<sup>st</sup> AICHR-UN Dialogue on Human Rights on 27-29 September 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland, with the participation of Timor-Leste as Observer. AICHR Representatives/Alternate Representatives had interface meetings with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN officials representing various thematic sections within OHCHR, roundtable discussions with UN Special Procedures including the Special Rapporteur on extra-judicial summary or arbitrary executions, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of association and peaceful assembly, and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID), as well as substantive discussions with members of relevant UN human rights treaty bodies including the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), and the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED).

Various thematic issues including social and economic rights, civil and political rights, right to development, business and human rights, environmental rights and climate change, the rule of law and civic space, and protection of human rights defenders were discussed. During the Dialogue in Geneva, AICHR also engaged with the ASEAN Committee in Geneva and the Convention Against Torture Initiative (CTI).

The Dialogue marked a significant development in strengthening cooperation between ASEAN and the UN and reaffirmed the importance of dialogue and cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights in the region and around the world. It enabled a better mutual understanding of the mandates, working methods, and challenges of ASEAN and UN mechanisms, discussed areas for further collaborative efforts, and possibilities to create a channel of communication between AICHR and UN human rights mechanisms. The Dialogue contributed to the implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the UN 2021-2025 (Plan of Action).

On 9 November 2023, AICHR met with the UN for updates on recent developments in the implementation of the ASEAN-UN Plan of Action, as well as the UN support to AICHR in 2023. The Meeting also discussed possible follow-ups from the 1<sup>st</sup> AICHR-UN Dialogue on Human Rights and areas of further cooperation between AICHR and the UN in 2024.

#### **4.3.2 The European Union**



#### **4.3.2.1 5<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights and Related Meetings, 3-6 October 2023, Brussels, Belgium and Strasbourg, France**

On 3 October 2023, ASEAN and the EU held the 5<sup>th</sup> Policy Dialogue on Human Rights in Brussels. The Dialogue was co-chaired by AICHR and the EU, with nearly 30 ASEAN delegates in participation, including AICHR, ACWC, ACW, the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW), relevant divisions of the ASEAN Secretariat, and the participation of Timor-Leste as Observer.

The Dialogue facilitated an exchange of views on human rights, including civil and political rights, business and human rights, environmental rights and climate change, gender equality and inclusion, rights of the child and persons with disabilities, migrant workers' rights, and trafficking in persons, freedom of expression and assembly, digital and human rights, and respecting human rights while countering violent extremism. Both ASEAN and EU reiterated their commitment to collaborate and explore opportunities to strengthen the ASEAN-EU regional cooperation in promoting and protecting human rights, sharing knowledge and best practices, and building partnerships through ASEAN-EU engagements at the bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels. Subsequently, follow-up actions and post-dialogue engagement would be encouraged and explored to maximise the outcomes of this human rights dialogue mechanism between the two regions. The Dialogue was preceded by the 3<sup>rd</sup> EU-ASEAN Civil Society Forum on Human Rights in Brussels on 2 October 2023, during which representatives from civil society organisations presented a joint policy recommendation to be taken into consideration in the framework of the dialogue.

Following the Dialogue, ASEAN Delegates travelled to Strasbourg, France to meet representatives from the European Parliament (EP), European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI Committee), Council of Europe (CoE), European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), and the EU Delegation to the Council of Europe to discuss recent policy updates on human rights challenges and to enhance cooperation between different human rights mechanisms of the two regions. The events reiterated both sides' commitment to regional cooperation and integration, rules-based multilateralism, respecting and promoting international law, and abiding by internationally agreed norms and standards, in line with the UN Charter, the ASEAN Charter, the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, and the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD, and EU treaties.

#### **4.3.2.2 AICHR-EU Dialogue on Disinformation and Misinformation, 29 January 2024, Singapore**

Held in collaboration with the EU, the Dialogue brought together close to 80 participants, including representatives of AICHR, the EU, the ASEAN Secretariat, CSOs, the private sector, academia, media, and policy researchers. The Dialogue consisted of panels aimed at sharing experiences on the impact of disinformation and misinformation, including on

the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN and the EU. The panelists presented different approaches to counter disinformation and misinformation, to broaden the regional discussion and ASEAN-EU collaboration on promoting human rights, tolerance and cohesion.

The Dialogue contributed to fostering a shared understanding of the global challenge of disinformation and misinformation and discussed ways of tackling the challenge with full respect for human rights. The Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-EU Strategic Partnership (2023-2027) was highlighted, which seeks to strengthen cooperation on countering misinformation and disinformation, as well as to strengthen the cooperation between AICHR and the EU through training, regional dialogues, awareness-raising activities, exchange of best practices and other capacity-building initiatives. This Dialogue with a broad range of stakeholders in ASEAN and the EU delivers on the AICHR interest and request made during the EU-ASEAN Policy Dialogues on Human Rights and will serve to enhance the overall ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights.

#### **4.3.2.3 AICHR Meeting with the EU in 2024**

On 21 May 2024, AICHR met with the EU to discuss further cooperation based on the discussions and areas of priority identified at the 5<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights held in October 2023, including (i) freedom of expression and digital human rights, (ii) business and human rights, (iii) environmental rights and climate change, (iv) migration and trafficking, and (v) countering violent extremism and human rights. Activities in line with these areas of priority could be further developed in collaboration with AICHR and relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies across different pillars in line with the ASEAN-EU Plan of Action and as part of our efforts to deepen our strategic partnership leading up to the 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-EU Human Rights Policy Dialogue to be held in Malaysia in 2025.

#### **4.3.2.4 The EU Grant to Support AICHR in 2024-2025**

On 21 December 2023, the EU signed a grant contract for the “EU Support to the AICHR” project, with the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) as the implementing agency. The project aims to contribute to the fostering of a culture of respect, protection, and promotion of human rights across Southeast Asia and ASEAN Member States by strengthening the capacity and collaboration of AICHR, thereby contributing to a just, inclusive, and rights-respecting Southeast Asia community. It will also strengthen the cooperation between AICHR and the EU through training, regional dialogues, awareness-raising activities, exchange of best practices and other capacity-building initiatives to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The project duration is 24 months, starting from 1 January 2024, with the grant funding amounting to EUR 600,000. The thematic priorities were identified to include (i) freedom of expression, including the impact of digital transformation and human rights, (ii) business and human rights; and (iii) environment and human rights.

### **4.3.3 Switzerland**

#### **4.3.3.3 AICHR Official Visit to Switzerland, 30 September–2 October 2023, Geneva & Berne, Switzerland**

AICHR held its Official Visit to Switzerland from 30 September to 2 October 2023 in Geneva and Berne, with Timor-Leste's participation as Observer. AICHR Representatives/Alternate Representatives met with Officials of the Peace and Human Rights Division, and the Asia and Pacific Division of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland (FDFA), and the Asia Section of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in Berne. Discussions between AICHR and the Swiss federal administration focused on exchanges of recent developments, opportunities, and challenges in the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as on potential areas to further substantiate the cooperation between ASEAN and Switzerland in the implementation of the Practical Cooperation Areas (PCA) 2022-2026 for an enhanced and deeper ASEAN-Switzerland Sectoral Dialogue Partnership.

AICHR and Switzerland reviewed their work in the past years and explored opportunities to further cooperation on human rights through training programmes, regional dialogues, and other capacity-building initiatives. During the Visit, AICHR also had a roundtable discussion with the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT). The constructive and substantive exchange with APT on a preventative approach to torture resonated with

AICHR's campaign for the implementation of Article 14 of the ASEAN Declaration on Human Rights, as well as AICHR's effort toward realising Southeast Asia as a torture-free region.

#### **4.3.3.4 Meeting with Switzerland in 2023**

On 10 November 2023, AICHR met with Switzerland at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia to discuss follow-ups from the AICHR Official Visit to Switzerland and further the excellent collaborations with AICHR in the first phase of the Switzerland-ASEAN Sectoral Dialogue Partnership on a wide range of areas on human rights, including freedom of expression and opinion, prevention of torture, and business and human rights, which was briefly halted due to COVID-19.

The Meeting took note of the suggestions and proposals for further cooperation in areas of mutual interest and looked forward to deepening the cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN.

#### **4.3.4 Australia**

On 20 May 2024, AICHR met with Australia to discuss ways to strengthen the cooperation and support to AICHR in line with the ASEAN-Australia Joint Leaders' Vision Statement and the Melbourne Declaration announced at the 2024 ASEAN-Australia Special Summit to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations, which set out practical cooperation and shared aspirations for the future.

Australia's support of human rights in ASEAN was channelled through the project titled "*Support to Human Rights Dialogues and Activities in ASEAN*" with the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) as the implementing agency within the project duration from January 2019 to December 2023. At the meeting on 20 May 2024, Australia informed further support to AICHR through a one-year successor project titled "*AICHR Engagement Project 2024-2025*". The new project aims to continue and expand AHRC's support for the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN through engagement with AICHR, specifically, with the following targeted outcomes: (i) support the implementation and outcomes of AICHR's work plan; (ii) support AICHR's engagements with NHRIs, regional mechanism, UN bodies and civil society; and (iii) support AICHR-Australia meetings that have been held since 2019. In addition to its allocated budget of AUD 487,292, the project will also enable AHRC to engage with all relevant stakeholders, particularly AICHR and the ASEAN Secretariat, to explore opportunities for activity funding from other sources such as the Australia for ASEAN Futures Initiative (Aus4ASEAN).

#### **4.3.5 Japan**

On 8 November 2023, AICHR met with Japan at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia to discuss further possible areas of future cooperation in line with the framework of the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025 and the Priority Programmes/Activities of AICHR 2024, as well as contribute to the ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation marked by the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit for the 50<sup>th</sup> Year of the ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation to take place in December 2023. It was noted that priority areas of cooperation were identified since the first meeting between AICHR and Japan in 2015, including (i) the rights of persons with disabilities, (ii) empowerment of women, and (iii) fight against trafficking in persons. From 2015 to 2019, Japan supported nine AICHR activities for the development and implementation of the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025. The Meeting took note of suggestions for further cooperation which may include (i) interface meeting between AICHR and Japan to be held on a regular basis; and (ii) new thematic and priority areas of cooperation to be explored for 2024 and beyond aiming for the enhancement of the strategic partnership across all sectors including human rights.

On 22 May 2024, AICHR held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Interface Meeting with Japan to discuss possible cooperation between Japan and AICHR in realising the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025, as well as in the Joint Statement and Implementation Plan, which were adopted in the Commemorative Summit for the 50<sup>th</sup> Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. AICHR and Japan exchanged views on the recent development and future direction and shared the view to deepen cooperation, such as in the area of business and human rights, among others.

#### **4.3.6 United States of America**

On 21 May 2024, AICHR met with the United States (U.S.) to discuss the cooperation in support of the implementation of the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025 and the Priority Programmes and Activities of AICHR in 2024 and beyond. The U.S. updated AICHR on

the new ASEAN-USAID Partnership Program, which will continue to support the implementation of agreed-upon areas of cooperation underscored in the ASEAN-U.S. Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Plan of Action and align with the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. The goal of the new ASEAN-U.S. Partnership for Good Governance, Equitable and Sustainable Development and Security Program is to strengthen ASEAN's institutional capacity to guide policies and frameworks to stimulate inclusive and equitable development in the region on a demand-driven basis, including the four main objectives, namely inclusive economic, capacity to address transnational threats, good governance and inclusive development, and strengthening ASEAN entities.

## **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 32<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC) Meeting on 3 February 2023, AICHR has invited Timor-Leste to its meeting, starting from the 37<sup>th</sup> Meeting of AICHR held in May 2023. In addition to attending AICHR meetings, representatives of Timor-Leste have been attending policy dialogues and official visits of AICHR and related engagements with ASEAN Dialogue Partners and stakeholders, such as the 1<sup>st</sup> AICHR-UN Dialogue on Human Rights, the 5<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights, and the AICHR-EU Dialogue on Disinformation and Misinformation.

Timor-Leste has been also 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, which was adopted in 2021.

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

The Midterm Review of the AICHR Five-Year Work Plan 2021-2025 was conducted to provide an overview and take stock of the progress in the implementation of the AICHR FYWP 2021-2025 from January 2021 to December 2023. The Midterm Review report was endorsed by AICHR on 21 February 2024 during the 38<sup>th</sup> Meeting of AICHR.

The Midterm Review followed a robust process of tracking data and information to assess:

- progressive in the implementation of the FYWP;
- responsive in addressing the current and emerging human rights challenges;
- promotion of regional cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights; and
- contribution to the implementation of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint 2025 and the realisation of ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

Based on the approved AICHR FYWP 2021-2025, progress could be observed for 54 indicative activities out of the 74 indicative activities in the FYWP. The implementation of the FYWP thus far was considered on track with progress made towards accomplishing the objectives and targets of the FYWP.

As outcomes of the Midterm Review, AICHR's work and efforts in response to the regional challenges and priorities are well documented; the priority areas that AICHR may consider focusing on in the remaining duration of the FYWP 2021-2025 are identified; and recommendations to further enhancing the M&E of the FYWP implementation are noted for follow-ups. It was also noted that climate change, business and human rights, and digital technologies including artificial intelligence (AI) are among cross-cutting issues where an integrated and multi-sectoral approach is essential for the continued mainstreaming of human rights. The next two years may see AICHR redoubling efforts in promoting greater synergy and coordination in cross-pillar and cross-sectoral issues, optimising work processes, and effectively mobilisation of resources to reach the goals of the FYWP.

## **7. AICHR's Deliverables of 2024, Observations and Future Directions**

AICHR has been committing its mandate and functions as enshrined in its TOR since 2009 and become the leading mechanism on human rights in ASEAN by generating regional discussions, workshops and activities related to the promotion and protection of human rights.

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 organs and ASEAN Sectoral Bodies. Joint projects, activities, and meetings, among others, with relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies have been planned and organised with a view to promoting relationship and coordination, and enhancing effectiveness and impacts of the activities. In this connection, AICHR will continue to work closely with relevant ASEAN organs and ASEAN Sectoral Bodies with the aim to mainstream human rights across the three pillars of ASEAN.

ASEAN has been working on the development of the Strategic Plans of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045. In this regard, AICHR can contribute towards the development of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and its Strategic Plans by submitting its input related to the promotion and protection of human rights.

As the region's human rights mechanism, AICHR has interfaced or conducted joint activities with relevant external partners. In this regard, AICHR will work closely with the CPR and ASEAN Country Coordinators to further strengthen its cooperation with external partners, both existing and potential partners, to explore further areas of common interests. Furthermore, AICHR will continue its representation at the regional and international level at important events or meetings such as the UN meetings on human rights, which will foster recognition of ASEAN and its efforts in the promotion and protection of human rights.