

ASEAN INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (AICHR)

2026 ANNUAL REPORT

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Executive Summary

The Annual Report of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) provides a comprehensive overview of the Commission's operations and activities from July 2025 to June 2026. This reporting period covers considerable strides in the institutional journey of AICHR and its mandate to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all peoples of ASEAN.

2026 is the first year of implementation of the new AICHR Five-Year Work Plan (2026-2030), where the Commission outlines greater synergy and coordination in cross-pillar and cross-sectoral issues, addressing the increasing global and regional challenges to realise the ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future.

Following its accession to ASEAN during the 47th ASEAN Summit and Related Meetings, AICHR welcomed the full membership of Timor-Leste into the Commission. Their inclusion significantly enriches AICHR's regional architecture through their contributions and diverse insights.

AICHR underscored its commitment in advancing the promotion and protection of human rights, and welcomed the adoption of two ASEAN human rights instruments: the *ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment* and the *ASEAN Declaration on Promoting the Right to Development and the Right to Peace Towards Realising Inclusive and Sustainable Development*. The Commission has begun undertaking efforts to develop a Regional Plan of Action for the first Declaration, as well as ongoing discussions to follow up on the realisation of the second.

AICHR successfully executed 26 Priority Programmes and Activities, which targeted a wide array of thematic issues, including human rights-based policing, countering online scams and forced criminality, the human rights dimensions of public health and drug policies, disability inclusivity, child mental health in the digital age, countering online harms against women and children, human rights-based cities, and human rights at sea.

AICHR remained committed to institution building and strengthening, with the view to introduce mechanisms within AICHR that will hopefully make the Commission more visible and relevant to its stakeholders. In developing common approaches and positions on human rights matters of interest to ASEAN, the Commission has published AICHR Notes on responsible business and migration, on the mainstreaming of rights of persons with disabilities, as well as on the promotion of the right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment for persons with disabilities, which serve as a reference point in strengthening ASEAN's outlook on various issues. AICHR is currently undergoing discussions on the publication of guidance notes on certain thematic areas, creating a foundation for refinement of these common approaches.

Furthermore, the Commission accelerated its institutional capabilities by adopting the AICHR Operational Guidelines on External Communications Received, a procedural tool in streamlining the engagement of AICHR with external stakeholders, and strengthening existing communication mechanisms.

AICHR maintained dynamic, cross-pillar interfaces within the ASEAN ecosystem, holding productive dialogues with the ASEAN Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), and the ASEAN University Network - Human Rights Education (AUN-HRE).

On the global stage, AICHR deepened its strategic partnerships through robust bilateral interfaces and policy dialogues with external partners, including Australia, the European Union, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, and the Republic of Korea, as well as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration (ADFM) and the Southeast Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum (SEANF).

Ensuring the meaningful participation and engagement of civil society organizations, AICHR undertook actions to strengthen the consultative relationship mechanism, and granted consultative status to three new CSOs since 2018, bringing the total network to 33 CSOs. AICHR has also initiated the creation of an updated CSO directory and information booklet outlining their engagements with AICHR and ASEAN.

Looking forward, AICHR has started discussions toward institutional self-assessment through the creation of its Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework, to ensure the timely, results-oriented execution of the new AICHR Five-Year Work Plan.

1. Introduction

The Annual Report of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) comprises the various meetings, programmes and activities of the Commission, and key engagements with ASEAN Sectoral Bodies, entities, dialogue partners and stakeholders.

It also provides guidance in the mainstreaming of human rights in the three Pillars of ASEAN, as well as thematic leads and institutional-strengthening initiatives of AICHR. Looking forward, the report provides observations and future directions of the Commission.

This report is submitted to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in accordance with Article 6.6 of AICHR's Terms of Reference.

2. Work of AICHR

2.1. AICHR Meetings

During the reporting period, AICHR held five meetings.

2.1.1. Special Meeting 2/2025 of AICHR

AICHR convened its Special Meeting 2/2025 on 7–10 July 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Edmund Bon Tai Soon, Chair and Representative of Malaysia to AICHR, and attended by AICHR Representatives and Alternate Representatives, and officials from the ASEAN Secretariat. Timor-Leste participated as Observer.

AICHR Representatives welcomed the adoption of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and its Strategic Plans, through the *Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future*, signed on 26 May 2025, and affirmed AICHR's commitment to working towards realising its aspirations and goals.

On 8 July 2025, AICHR held its 15th annual Interface with the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) during the 58th AMM. The AICHR Chair delivered AICHR's Statement to the AMM and submitted AICHR's Five-Year Work Plan (FYWP) 2026–2030, Priority Programmes/Activities for 2026, and Annual Report 2025. The Interface saw a constructive and frank dialogue on substantive human rights matters, emerging human rights challenges in the region, and possible ways to strengthen the implementation of AICHR's mandates and functions. The AMM reaffirmed its support for AICHR's endeavours in promoting and protecting human rights.

AICHR Representatives also held their 14th Interface with the Secretary-General of ASEAN, H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, and shared views on AICHR's ongoing work to advance human rights cooperation and dialogue in ASEAN.

During the plenary, AICHR discussed the impact of its work on the rights of peoples in marginalised and vulnerable situations, including women, children, persons with disabilities, and youth, as well as thematic priorities such as the right to peace, the right to inclusive and sustainable development, human rights and the environment, disability inclusion, business and human rights, digital transformation, human rights and policing, conflict and peace, trafficking in persons, telecommunications fraud, online scams, and economic, social, and cultural rights in the context of poverty eradication and access to education. The Meeting further deliberated on the proposed *ASEAN Declaration on Promoting the Right to Development and the Right to Peace Towards Realising Inclusive and Sustainable Development*.

AICHR Representatives and Alternate Representatives of Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam exchanged views on recent human rights developments in the region and their respective countries, including new and updated national laws, regulations, frameworks, and initiatives.

On 9 July 2025, AICHR held its 6th Interface Meeting with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) with a consultative relationship with AICHR, and its 1st Interface Meeting with New Zealand. Both meetings focused on sharing information on human rights priorities and exploring areas for potential cooperation. AICHR reiterated its commitment to strengthening regional cooperation to promote and protect human rights in ASEAN and welcomed continued support from stakeholders and dialogue partners.

2.1.2. Special Meeting 3/2025 of AICHR

AICHR convened its Special Meeting 3/2025 on 23–26 September 2025 in Putrajaya, Malaysia. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Edmund Bon Tai Soon, Chair and Representative of Malaysia to AICHR, and attended by AICHR Representatives and Alternate Representatives, and officials from the ASEAN Secretariat. Timor-Leste participated as Observer.

A significant outcome of the Meeting was the agreement on the proposed *ASEAN Declaration on Promoting the Right to Development and the Right to Peace Towards Realising Inclusive and Sustainable Development*, for submission to the AMM. The proposed Declaration aimed to advance the right to development and the right to enjoy peace through an ASEAN-led, ASEAN-owned, and whole-of-ASEAN approach, in accordance with the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) and the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD.

Reflecting on its work in alignment with *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future*, AICHR reviewed the *ASEAN Secretariat Information Paper on the Work of AICHR (2010–2024)* and discussed institutional strengthening and operational matters. These included ways to deepen thematic focus, strengthen cross-sectoral and cross-pillar cooperation and collaboration, enhance stakeholder engagement, explore pathways to implement AICHR's mandates, and raise awareness on human rights. The Meeting further discussed AICHR's relationship with CSOs with consultative status with AICHR, and communications received by AICHR. AICHR also issued a press release on human rights, telecommunications network fraud, and online scamming.

The Meeting discussed human rights thematic issues, including youth engagement, the right to education, the rights of persons with disabilities, women and children, business and human rights, human rights and policing, the right to development, the right to enjoy peace, and inclusive and sustainable development, among others.

AICHR Representatives and Alternate Representatives of Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand exchanged views on recent human rights developments in the region and their respective countries, including new laws and national action plans, regulatory and policy frameworks, and initiatives related to human rights, such as on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), equality rights, online scamming, trafficking in persons, the right to health, freedom of assembly and policing, the death penalty, and human rights concerns in conflict areas, including at the Cambodia-Thailand border.

The Meeting also discussed preparations for the 7th ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue and commemorative activities scheduled to be held in November 2025.

2.1.3. Special Meeting 4/2025 of AICHR

AICHR convened its Special Meeting 4/2025 on 10–14 November 2025 in Melaka, Malaysia. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Edmund Bon Tai Soon, Chair and Representative of Malaysia to AICHR, and attended by AICHR Representatives and Alternate Representatives, and officials from the ASEAN Secretariat.

AICHR warmly welcomed Timor-Leste as a full member of the Commission following its admission to ASEAN at the 47th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

AICHR expressed its deepest condolences to the people of Thailand on the passing of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit, the Queen Mother of Thailand, and extended its thoughts and prayers to the people of the Philippines and Viet Nam affected by Typhoons Kalmaegi and Fung-Wong.

The Meeting welcomed the adoption of the *ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment* and the *ASEAN Declaration on Promoting the Right to Development and the Right to Peace Towards Realising Inclusive and Sustainable Development* at the 47th ASEAN Summit. Discussions were held on the next steps for both Declarations, as guided by the Chairman's Statement of the 47th ASEAN Summit, including the development of an inclusive and sustainable Regional Plan of Action and follow-up actions to realise the Declarations respectively.

AICHR Representatives and Alternate Representatives continued their review of the *ASEAN Secretariat Information Paper on the Work of AICHR (2010–2024)*, focusing on strengthening institutional effectiveness, work processes and capacity, enhancing cross-sectoral and cross-pillar cooperation and collaboration, addressing emerging human rights challenges and threats, and engagement and outreach. Possibilities and future directions were also explored.

On institutional matters, AICHR discussed the implementation of the AICHR Terms of Reference (TOR) to uphold the integrity of principles underpinning the Commission. The Meeting adopted the *AICHR Operational Guidelines on External Communications Received* and the *AICHR Note on Responsible Business and Migration in ASEAN*. Discussions were also held on possible follow-up on the 6th ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights, as well as preparations for the 7th ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue and the Commemoration of the AHRD and the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD.

AICHR discussed progress and upcoming implementation of its Priority Programmes and Activities, covering a wide range of thematic areas, including children's rights, rights of persons with disabilities, business and human rights, human rights and the environment, human rights and peace, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to health, economic, social and cultural rights, and the right to development.

During the Meeting, AICHR held its second Interface Meeting with the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights, H.E. Volker Türk, where both sides shared their respective work in promoting and protecting human rights and discussed human rights concerns in a constructive manner, including on transnational crimes, inequalities, business and human rights, climate change, digital rights, and online safety for women and girls. AICHR also held its first Interface Meeting with the Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration (ADFM), sharing information on human rights priorities and discussing possible cooperation.

AICHR Representatives and Alternate Representatives of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam exchanged views on recent human rights developments in their respective countries and the region, including new laws, national action plans, regulatory and policy frameworks, and initiatives related to the promotion and protection of human rights. Issues discussed included inclusive mental health services, amendments to national human rights law, human rights priorities in national development plans, capacity and effectiveness of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), human rights situations and border conflicts, participatory governance, combatting sexual violence, trafficking in persons, transnational cybercrimes, telecommunications fraud and online scams, preparations for free and fair elections, disability inclusion, local peacekeeping, participatory environmental governance, labour protection, multiracialism and religious diversity, rights-based national budgeting, social protection for gig workers, workplace fairness, and the death penalty.

AICHR also noted the participation of its Representatives and Alternate Representatives in various activities with relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies (ASBs) on issues related to

migrant workers, trafficking in persons, the care economy, disaster management, climate change, women, peace and security, disability inclusion, and the protection of children in the context of migration. Discussions on cooperation with the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) covered gender-responsive treatment of women offenders and prisoners, and ending gender-based workplace exploitation.

The Meeting concluded with the handover of the AICHR Chairship from Malaysia to the Philippines. AICHR expressed its appreciation to H.E. Edmund Bon Tai Soon for his leadership as AICHR Chair in 2025 and welcomed the Philippines as the incoming AICHR Chair for 2026.

2.1.4. 42nd Meeting of AICHR

AICHR convened its 42nd Meeting on 24–27 February 2026, in Manila, the Philippines. The Meeting was preceded by a parallel AICHR Representatives' Retreat and AICHR Assistants' Meeting. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Severo S. Catura, Chair and Representative of the Philippines to AICHR, and attended by AICHR Representatives and Alternate Representatives, AICHR Assistants, and officials of the ASEAN Secretariat.

As the Philippines assumed the ASEAN Chairship in 2026, the Chair reaffirmed the Philippines' commitment to lead the AICHR Chairship with seriousness and purpose, aiming for concrete deliverables to advance its institutional journey and progress in promoting and protecting human rights. The Chair expressed appreciation for the continued collective actions of all Member States in advancing human rights cooperation in the region. He warmly welcomed Timor-Leste as a full member of AICHR, underlining that its participation would complete and enrich the Commission's regional developments on human rights.

At this Meeting, a development process for a Regional Plan of Action on the *ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment* was discussed and agreed upon. AICHR also discussed the follow-up to the realisation of the *ASEAN Declaration on Promoting the Right to Development and the Right to Peace Towards Realising Inclusive and Sustainable Development* and related regional consultations planned for 2026, both of which would be further explored and deliberated through an AICHR Working Committee.

AICHR Representatives and Alternate Representatives of all ASEAN Member States (AMS) shared information and exchanged views on recent human rights developments in the region and their respective countries, including new laws, national action plans, regulatory and policy frameworks, and initiatives on a wide range of matters related to the

promotion and protection of human rights, including those relating to emerging challenges in the region.

The Meeting deliberated on institutional matters with a view to improving the Commission's work, including plans for a self-assessment of AICHR's work, development of a Monitoring and Evaluation framework for implementation of the AICHR FYWP 2026–2030, as well as thematic human rights priorities for 2026 and beyond. The Meeting also discussed measures to strengthen AICHR's work process pertaining to regional dialogues, thematic studies, thematic notes on human rights, handling of external communications sent to AICHR, as well as other mechanisms and initiatives to better engage and inform the public of AICHR's work and deliverables.

AICHR Representatives and Alternate Representatives reported on activities conducted in 2025, and provided updates on relevant upcoming activities to be organised in accordance with the approved AICHR Priority Programmes and Activities for 2026.

The Meeting discussed AICHR's coordination and collaboration with ASBs and Entities on various human rights matters. Initiatives to strengthen collaboration with relevant bodies, such as ACWC, were identified and further explored.

The Meeting also deliberated measures to strengthen stakeholder engagement, including a review of its consultative relationship with accredited CSOs. On external relations, AICHR discussed ongoing and upcoming engagements with ASEAN dialogue partners and international organisations for cooperation on human rights in areas of mutual interest.

2.1.5. 43rd Meeting of AICHR

AICHR convened its 43rd Meeting on 19–22 May 2026 at the ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta, Indonesia. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Bolivar L. Bao, Acting Chair and Alternate Representative of the Philippines to AICHR, and attended by AICHR Representatives and Alternate Representatives, AICHR Assistants, and officials from the ASEAN Secretariat.

The Meeting deliberated on the follow-up activities and actions towards the realisation of the *ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment* and the *ASEAN Declaration on Promoting the Right to Development and the Right to Peace Towards Realising Inclusive and Sustainable Development*.

The Meeting further deliberated on priority programmes and activities of AICHR. Thematic human rights issues addressed include human rights cities, countering trafficking in persons, online harms, protection of women and children, protection of groups in

vulnerable situations, and human rights at sea, among others. The Meeting also discussed human rights matters of interest, including the right to safe drinking water and sanitation; rights of accused persons in criminal cases; harm reduction, health policies and human rights; gender-based violence and CEDAW; poverty eradication and the right to an adequate standard of living; human rights, child immigration detention and implementing alternatives to detention; and consular assistance for victims of trafficking and forced criminality.

AICHR Representatives and Alternate Representatives of all AMS exchanged views and shared updates on recent developments relating to the promotion and protection of human rights in their respective countries and across the region, including developments in policies, legislation, institutional frameworks, and national initiatives addressing contemporary and emerging human rights challenges.

AICHR Representatives and Alternate Representatives discussed institutional matters, including AICHR's work processes and initiatives to enhance stakeholder engagement and public awareness of AICHR's work and activities, such as the development of a booklet on CSOs accredited with consultative status with AICHR, and the publication of a bulletin on human rights developments in ASEAN.

The Meeting further discussed measures for cross-pillar, cross-sectoral collaboration with relevant ASBs and Entities and considered the applications of CSOs for consultative relationship status with AICHR.

During this Meeting, AICHR met with the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR) and the ASEAN University Network - Human Rights Education (AUN-HRE), and held bilateral interface meetings with Australia, the European Union (EU), the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Norway, respectively.

AICHR Representatives and Alternate Representatives also discussed preparations for the 59th AMM Interface with AICHR Representatives, scheduled for July 2026, including the draft Annual Report of AICHR for 2025–2026, proposed AICHR Priority Programmes/Activities for 2027, and the draft Statement of the AICHR Chair to the 59th AMM.

2.2. AICHR Priority Programmes and Activities

During the reporting period, AICHR conducted twenty-six Priority Programmes and Activities.

2.2.1. AICHR Activity on Inter-Religious Harmony, 27 June 2025, Singapore

AICHR Singapore, in collaboration with the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, convened a roundtable on inter-religious harmony and the promotion of resilient and cohesive societies in Southeast Asia.

The Roundtable brought together over 30 participants from AICHR, the ASEAN Secretariat, and researchers from the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute and other think tanks in Singapore. Participants exchanged perspectives and different approaches to promoting religious harmony in Southeast Asia. The roundtable further explored ways to manage differences between the diverse religious groups in the region, and AICHR's role in promoting dialogue, capacity building, and sharing best practices towards building resilient and cohesive societies in ASEAN.

Researchers from the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute shared findings from their annual State of Southeast Asia Survey, as well as their research on social cohesion, religion, and diversity in Southeast Asia. The Roundtable highlighted the importance of open dialogue and outreach, as well as trust and confidence-building across various stakeholders to enhance the value of multiculturalism and cooperation among different communities.

Participants also visited the Harmony Centre at the An-Nahdhah Mosque and the Maghain Aboth Synagogue. At the Harmony Centre, AICHR was briefed on the Centre's work in promoting interfaith dialogue and the Muslim community's contributions to social cohesion in Singapore. At the Maghain Aboth Synagogue, AICHR engaged in a panel discussion with representatives from the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, and Jewish communities in Singapore who shared their best practices in promoting interfaith understanding and cooperation. The visit also included a guided tour of the Synagogue and the Jews of Singapore Museum.

2.2.2. AICHR Regional Workshop on Gender Lens Perspective on Business and Human Rights in ASEAN, 30 June–1 July 2025, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The Workshop aimed to identify best practices and challenges in promoting gender-responsive business conduct while exploring pathways towards an ASEAN approach on gender lens integration in business and human rights matters. It brought together over 80 participants from AICHR, ASBs such as ACWC and Senior Economic Officials Meeting (SEOM), NHRIs, the private sector, and CSOs.

The Workshop, supported by expert resource persons, explored gender dimensions in business and human rights, identifying practical ways to integrate gender into business operations. Panellists highlighted the perspectives of indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, migrant workers, and children's rights advocates. Participants discussed

strategies to mainstream human rights and gender inclusivity aligned with *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future* and the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations ‘Protect, Respect and Remedy’ Framework (UNGPs), including State policies, private sector practices, human rights due diligence (HRDD), and access to effective remedies.

As a way forward, participants provided key recommendations, including developing gender-responsive HRDD guidance, strengthening regional data-sharing and monitoring frameworks, enhancing capacity building for stakeholders, institutionalising multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms, improving cross-sectoral coordination among ASEAN bodies, and aligning national frameworks with relevant international standards.

2.2.3. Launch of AICHR Thematic Study on the Rights to Peace and AICHR Regional Training Programme on Human Rights – Workshop on Intersection between Conflict and Human Rights: Pathways and Approaches to Peace in ASEAN (Workshop 1), 1–2 July 2025, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

AICHR adopted its Thematic Study on the Right to Peace, titled *The Right to Peace: ASEAN Perspectives and Prospects*, at its 40th Meeting and Retreat held on 11–14 February 2025 in Langkawi, Malaysia. The thematic study was subsequently launched on 1 July 2025. It outlined key peace actors and initiatives in the region and provided recommendations for further consideration by ASEAN.

An expert panel accompanying the launch reflected on the meaning of the right to peace and the right to enjoy peace, exploring whether the right is a collective or individual right, the roles of State and non-State actors, and the need to apply a gender lens to peacebuilding. Discussions also addressed threats to peace and practical methods for transformative peacebuilding encompassing conflict prevention, dialogue, and social cohesion.

On 2 July 2025, AICHR convened the Workshop on Building Peace – From Conflict Prevention to Sustainable Peace. It was the first in a series of six themed Workshops on Intersection between Conflict and Human Rights: Pathways and Approaches to Peace in ASEAN, aiming to develop ASEAN pathways to peace, including conflict prevention, management, and transformation, through structured dialogue and documentation.

The Workshop focused on the theories of peace and peacebuilding, their application in past regional conflicts, the evolution from State-centred peace to human-centred security and inclusive governance, and the intersections of conflict, peace and human rights. Participants also mapped peace actors in ASEAN, highlighting the important but under-recognised roles of civil society, women, youth and grassroots peacebuilders in maintaining peace and preventing relapse into conflict. Conflict dynamics and hotspots,

and factors to prevent and resolve conflict while sustaining lasting and durable peace, were also identified.

The initiative to develop pathways and approaches to peace in ASEAN was also intended to complement existing ASEAN mechanisms and contribute to the implementation of the *ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security (2022)* and the *ASEAN Declaration on the Culture of Prevention for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society (2017)*.

2.2.4. Regional Dialogue on Responsible Business and Migration in ASEAN, 21–22 July 2025, Bangkok, Thailand

The Dialogue served as a regional platform to explore how responsible business practices can enhance the protection and promotion of migrant workers' rights across Southeast Asia. Discussion focused on good practices and the localisation of the UNGPs on Business and Human Rights, emerging approaches to HRDD, and the experiences of governments, companies, and rights holders in advancing responsible business conduct in the context of migration.

Panellists shared practical examples and offered concrete recommendations from AMS, alongside contributions from corporate leaders, recruitment agencies, civil society actors, and survivors. These insights helped identify risks and strengthen protections for migrant workers in supply chains. They also addressed trends, gaps, and opportunities within national and regional frameworks for enhancing responsible business conduct to safeguard the rights of migrant workers.

Key recommendations from the Dialogue included a call for deeper integration of human rights into ASEAN's economic frameworks, along with strengthened cross-pillar engagement with ASBs under the ASEAN Economic Community. Participants also encouraged AICHR to explore its role further in promoting responsible business conduct and labour standards in the context of migration. Suggested actions included the development of practical tools and regionally aligned guidance for ASEAN businesses on implementing responsible business practices and promoting ethical recruitment, among others. The need for ongoing multi-stakeholder dialogue to facilitate coordinated, rights-based responses was further emphasised, in alignment with ASEAN's broader objectives of inclusive and sustainable growth, while ensuring protection of migrant workers' rights.

2.2.5. AICHR Regional Training Programme on Human Rights – Workshop on Intersection between Conflict and Human Rights: Pathways and Approaches to Peace in ASEAN (Workshops 2–4), 13–15 August 2025, Jakarta, Indonesia

These Workshops were part of the themed Workshops on Intersection between Conflict and Human Rights: Pathways and Approaches to Peace in ASEAN. Aimed to advance a human rights-based approach to conflict prevention, management, reconciliation, and peacebuilding in ASEAN, in line with *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future*, they contributed to the development of ASEAN pathways for peace through structured dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and documentation.

The Workshops examined ASEAN mechanisms for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, including existing frameworks, actors, and processes. Participants reviewed past regional experiences and identified gaps, challenges, and opportunities to strengthen ASEAN's approaches to conflict prevention, management, and resolution.

Discussions explored relevant international frameworks and comparative approaches to conflict resolution, highlighting the need to address root causes of conflict and to ensure that ASEAN mechanisms remain responsive, adaptive, and context-specific. Emphasis was placed on enhancing implementation tools, strengthening institutional capacity, and adopting flexible, results-oriented approaches aligned with ASEAN principles.

A dedicated session focused on the human rights of individuals and communities affected by conflict, particularly vulnerable and marginalised groups. Participants discussed prevention strategies, including early warning, risk mapping, and scenario planning, as well as measures to improve humanitarian access, accountability, and protection of civilians. They also discussed practical pathways to enhance ASEAN's peacebuilding capacity, including strengthening evidence-based approaches, improving coordination mechanisms, leveraging existing ASEAN tools, and embedding human rights considerations across relevant frameworks and processes.

Key challenges identified included limited integration of human rights data into early warning systems, resource and coordination constraints, barriers to humanitarian access, and transboundary pressures such as displacement and climate-related risks. The need for stronger cross-pillar coordination within ASEAN and more timely and effective responses to emerging crises was also underscored.

A scenario-based simulation exercise during the workshops enabled participants to apply peacebuilding strategies in a regional context, fostering inclusive dialogue and generating practical insights for conflict prevention and resolution. Lessons learned from the workshops would contribute to the development of an ASEAN-led framework on peace, conflict prevention, management, and transformation.

2.2.6. 3rd AICHR Consultation on the Human Right to Development to Enhance the ASEAN Community: Intersection of Business and Human Rights,

Environment and Climate Change, 21–22 August 2025, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Following the success of the 2nd AICHR Consultation on the Human Right to Development to Enhance the ASEAN Community: Realising Article 35 of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration held on 28 April 2025, the third iteration focused on pathways to protect people and groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and vulnerabilities, particularly from business- and climate-related impacts. This was the first time that AICHR formally examined the nexus of business, human rights, and climate change through the right to development.

At the Consultation, regional experts addressed emerging human rights challenges from climate change, forced displacement, migration, and unethical business practices. They highlighted ASEAN initiatives and shared best practices to strengthen regional cooperation for the protection and participation of groups in vulnerable and marginalised situations. A human rights case-study simulation followed, with participants role-playing ASEAN bodies, AICHR, NHRIs, and CSOs to develop possible protection gateways for victims seeking remedies and justice. The exercise identified shared protection protocols and referral pathways, demonstrating how ASEAN bodies and AICHR could leverage their mandates to coordinate effectively in support for victims of violations by businesses and States.

Recommendations resulting from the consultation highlighted the need to strengthen the mainstreaming of the right to development across ASEAN's three pillars, enhancing the responsiveness and forward-looking role of ASEAN bodies, fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships, improving data sharing and capacity building among AMS, and encouraging the adoption of human rights-based policies and due diligence by businesses.

2.2.7. Regional Workshop on Dissemination of the Outcome of the Thematic Study on the Rights to Education: Promotion of Access to Tertiary Education in ASEAN, 28–29 August 2025, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR

The Workshop served to disseminate the outcomes of the Thematic Study on the Right to Education: Promotion of Access to Tertiary Education in ASEAN, with the goal of raising public awareness across ASEAN, concerning human rights, particularly the right to education among the peoples of ASEAN. Through presentations and discussions, the representatives of AMS and other stakeholders had fruitful and constructive discussions aimed at further elaboration in the future.

The event brought together around 50 participants from various sectors, including representatives from several AMS' Ministries of Education and Foreign Affairs, academic institutions, Lao PDR's human rights focal points, Cambodian Human Rights Committee,

AICHR, relevant sectoral bodies and entities, such as the ASEAN University Network-Human Rights Education (AUN-HRE), and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), and the ASEAN Secretariat.

2.2.8. 7th AICHR Youth Debate on Human Rights, 1–2 September 2025, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

The 7th AICHR Youth Debate on Human Rights brought together 21 university students from seven AMS to engage on contemporary human rights issues and showcase youth leadership in regional discourse.

Over two days, youth participants debated motions on contemporary topics on human rights affecting the region. Their exchanges demonstrated the ability of ASEAN youths to address sensitive and complex issues with openness and respect, linking universal human rights standards with ASEAN's diverse cultural and social contexts.

Five debaters from Cambodia, Indonesia, and Singapore were recognised as best speakers across the motions, reflecting both strong preparation and meaningful engagement throughout the competition.

Since 2012, the Youth Debate has become one of AICHR's flagship initiatives to engage young people on human rights, with six editions previously held in the Philippines (2012), Singapore (2015), Malaysia (2016), Cambodia (2018), and Thailand (2017 and 2019). The 7th edition contributed to raise awareness of AICHR and human rights among ASEAN youth, foster public speaking, critical thinking, leadership, and solidarity. It provided a platform for youth to express their views and interact with experts and practitioners in the region.

2.2.9. AICHR Regional Consultation on Enhancing ASEAN's Human Rights Mechanisms for the Effective Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, 22–23 September 2025, Putrajaya, Malaysia

The Consultation aimed to explore ways to strengthen the effectiveness, responsiveness, and relevance of ASEAN's human rights mechanisms in line with *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future*. Discussions reviewed progress, challenges, and good practices in ASEAN's human rights development, drawing on comparative experiences from other regional human rights systems.

Participants examined gaps in the current human rights architecture and identified areas for improvement, including strengthening coordination and trust among ASEAN bodies and stakeholders, enhancing collaboration between governments and civil society, and balancing the promotion and protection mandates of ASEAN mechanisms.

The Consultation was built on AICHR's ongoing efforts to enhance ASEAN's human rights architecture through inclusive dialogue and multi-stakeholder engagement, and contributes to advancing a more responsive and people-centred approach to human rights in the region. Recommendations emphasised the importance of improving accessibility and public awareness of ASEAN human rights mechanisms, enhancing media literacy and engagement, strengthening data-sharing and communication channels, and developing more effective pathways for victim feedback and referral mechanisms.

2.2.10. AICHR Training on the Intersection of Drug Policies with Human Rights and Health in Southeast Asia, 6–7 October 2025, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

ASEAN has committed to addressing drug abuse and trafficking through the *ASEAN Declaration of Principles to Combat the Abuse of Narcotic Drugs*, adopted in 1976, and successive work plans under the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters (AMMD) and the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Drug Matters (ASOD). Building on these important efforts, the training programme offered an opportunity for ASEAN government officials, human rights commissioners, experts, academics, medical practitioners, and civil society representatives to reflect on the human rights impact of punitive drug policies, as well as to deliberate on health-based and community-led approaches that have been emerging across the region. The deliberations were conducted in the context of the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs (2016-2025), which was due for renewal in 2026.

Panel discussions and breakout sessions surfaced pressing challenges, including the shifting and expanding drug markets and the spread of methamphetamine use, as well as the need for regional cooperation, corruption eradication and the enhancement of social development; the human rights violations linked with approaches that criminalise drug use and forced rehabilitation, affecting the rights to health, to an adequate standard of living, employment and social security; decriminalisation approaches already implemented in the ASEAN space and alternatives to incarceration; and intersectional discrimination impacting in particular people who use drugs and belong to groups in marginalised situations, including children, women deprived of liberty, and Indigenous Peoples, in the context of drug control policies implementation.

A site visit to the Kuala Lumpur Health Clinic (*Klinik Kesihatan Kuala Lumpur*) and Kabin Harapan, a public health service platform, was conducted to highlight a practical model of integrated, community-based care in Malaysia. Participants were engaged in discussion with medical professionals at the clinic and gained insights on how Malaysia was gradually shifting from a punitive approach toward a more health- and community-

oriented response. While resources could be limited and the stigmatisation of drug use remained prevalent, this model showed that a different approach could be possible.

2.2.11. AICHR Regional Training Programme on Human Rights – Workshops on Intersection between Conflict and Human Rights: Pathways and Approaches to Peace in ASEAN (Workshop 5–6), 23–24 October 2025, Selangor, Malaysia

The Workshops provided a platform to examine the interlinkages between conflict, peacebuilding, and human rights, and to identify practical approaches to strengthen ASEAN's role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. They brought together representatives from AMS, ASBs and Entities, NHRIs, CSOs, academia, and relevant stakeholders to exchange views and share experiences on sustaining peace in the region.

Participants discussed inclusive and multi-level approaches to peacebuilding, including the role of dialogue across Track 1, Track 1.5, and Track 2 processes, and highlighted the importance of trust-building, inclusivity, and participation of stakeholders, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities. The Workshops also explored ASEAN's experiences in managing conflict and crisis situations, and identified the need to strengthen institutional coordination, early-warning and response mechanisms, and cross-sectoral cooperation. They contributed to advancing ASEAN's efforts in promoting a people-centred, inclusive and coordinated approach to conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and the promotion of human rights in the region.

2.2.12. ASEAN Consultation Workshop to Share Best Practices in Implementation of Bohol Work Plan 2.0 against Trafficking in Persons: Enhancing the Implementation of the Non-Punishment Principle through Capacity Building and Monitoring Tools, 30–31 October 2025, Jakarta, Indonesia

The Workshop was held by AICHR in collaboration with the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and supported by the Australian Government-funded ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking programme. Building on the ASEAN Guideline on the Implementation of the Non-Punishment Principle (NPP) for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Persons, launched in June 2025, the Workshop provided a platform to discuss key elements for developing ASEAN-specific training materials, indicators, and monitoring tools to improve the identification, investigation, and protection of trafficking victims involved in forced criminality. It was attended by over 80 participants, both in-person and online, including representatives from AICHR, SOMTC, and relevant ASBs, as well as experts from national law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, judges, social service providers, and CSOs.

The Workshop deliberated on the development of ASEAN-specific training materials and case studies on the application of the NPP, the creation of ASEAN indicators to identify trafficking cases involving forced criminality, and the establishment of an inter-sectoral Drafting Working Group to prepare the Zero Draft of the ASEAN Indicators, with participation from AICHR, SOMTC, and other relevant ASBs. It was concluded with a shared understanding among the participants of the way forward and agreed key milestones for the project. The first online meeting of the Drafting Working Group was tentatively scheduled for January 2026.

2.2.13. Consultation of Right to Mental Health (AHRD 29(1)) in the Digital Age with a Focus on Protection of Mental Health of Children, 3 November 2025, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam

AICHR convened the Consultation on the Right to Mental Health (AHRD 29(1)) in the Digital Age, with a Focus on the Protection of Children's Mental Health on 3 November 2025, in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.

The Consultation brought together 60 participants, comprising AICHR Representatives, relevant ASBs, CSOs, policymakers, child mental health experts, and digital safety practitioners, to discuss collective approaches to protect children's mental well-being amid growing digital challenges.

The Consultation highlighted the importance of balancing digital access and protection for children, recognising digital engagement as an inevitable aspect of modern life while emphasising that policy responses should be guided by moderation to ensure both access and protection. Discussions underscored that prevention was preferable to cure, calling for continuous efforts to build digital resilience among children and adults through education and awareness. The Consultation also emphasised the need for empathy-driven approaches that address underlying human challenges, rather than focusing solely on restricting technology use. Continuous education and training for parents, teachers, and other stakeholders were identified as essential to equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to support children's well-being in an increasingly digital world.

Thematic discussions covered digital safety, stigma, regulation, and future well-being for children in ASEAN. The Consultation concluded with an interactive session outlining policy options and collective actions to strengthen regional cooperation in protecting children's mental health in the digital era.

2.2.14. 7th ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue and Commemorating the Adoption of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD) and the Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD, 17–18 November 2025, ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat

AICHR convened the 7th ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue, co-hosted and co-chaired by the Representatives of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand to AICHR. The Dialogue was supported by AMS through the ASEAN AICHR Fund, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, and the ASEAN Secretariat. Timor-Leste participated in the Dialogue for the first time as a full member of ASEAN, following its admission at the 47th ASEAN Summit held in Kuala Lumpur in October 2025. It gathered delegates from AMS, AICHR, the CPR, NHRIs, and CSOs with a consultative relationship with AICHR. Academia from universities participated as observers.

The Dialogue adopted an enhanced thematic-based, issue-clustered format to allow for deeper reflection, information sharing, and cross-sectoral cooperation among AMS and stakeholders. It featured thematic sessions on human rights and the environment, business and human rights, the right to development, and online scams and trafficking in persons. There was also one general dialogue segment, in which AMS further shared updates and human rights concerns on a broad range of issues, including gender equality, protection of children from online harm, protection of migrant workers, combating online scamming, misinformation and disinformation, and the rights of people in vulnerable and marginalised situations, among others.

During a dedicated segment for stakeholder engagement, representatives of the CPR, NHRIs, and CSOs shared their views to further strengthen cooperation with and support for ASEAN's efforts to promote and protect human rights, emphasising the importance of continued engagement, capacity-building, and cross-sectoral collaboration.

The Dialogue gathered recommendations from delegates on the way forward, including proposals to focus on specific thematic issues with stronger cross-sectoral and cross-pillar participation; developing an ASEAN regional response on the relationship between human rights, trade, and development; establishing a formal mechanism for receiving and investigating complaints; encouraging the creation of new NHRIs; and continuing to refine the modality of the Dialogue.

On 18 November 2025, in commemoration of the anniversary of the adoption of the AHRD and the Phnom Penh Statement, AICHR issued a press release on strengthening the AHRD through the two newly adopted ASEAN Declarations on human rights and organised an interactive fireside chat with AICHR Representatives as panellists, and a treasure hunt for youths and CSO representatives, aimed at deepening understanding and appreciation of the AHRD and ASEAN's key human rights principles through experiential learning.

2.2.15. AICHR Workshop on Poverty Eradication and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Context of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration

**(AHRD) and UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
4–5 December 2025, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR**

The Workshop brought together around 50 participants, comprising representatives from AMS, including government officials, AICHR Representatives, representatives from relevant ministries of Lao PDR and other AMS, Lao PDR's Human Rights Focal Points, business entrepreneurs, and the ASEAN Secretariat.

The Workshop provided a platform for sharing national and regional perspectives on the implementation of economic, social, and cultural rights through the AHRD and the UN 2030 Agenda for SDGs in support of poverty eradication across AMS. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to narrowing the development gap among AMS and reducing poverty and socio-economic disparity in the region. Discussions highlighted key regional initiatives and programmes contributing to the improvement of the well-being of ASEAN peoples and the socio-economic development of AMS, including the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), the Master Plan for ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC), and the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN).

The Workshop concluded with fruitful and constructive exchanges among AMS representatives and other stakeholders, laying the groundwork for further elaboration and follow-up action on the promotion and protection of economic, social, and cultural rights in the region.

2.2.16. Regional Consultation on Promoting the Rights to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment of Persons with Disabilities in ASEAN, 8 December 2025, Bangkok, Thailand

The Consultation was led by AICHR Thailand in collaboration with the Senior Officials' Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) Thailand, ACWC Thailand, the Australian Human Rights Commission, UNICEF, the International Disability Alliance, and the ASEAN Disability Forum. It brought together representatives from AMS, ASBs, the ASEAN Secretariat, civil society, international organisations, and organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs).

Following the adoption of the *ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment*, the Consultation focused on integrating disability inclusion into environmental and climate-related policymaking. Participants underscored the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration, data-driven planning, and the meaningful participation of OPDs in the development and implementation of the Regional Plan of Action. Discussions emphasised a rights-based framework and highlighted the need for strategies that reflect intersectionality and the diverse experiences of persons with disabilities.

During breakout group activities, participants identified environmental risks that disproportionately affect persons with disabilities due to inaccessible systems and limited participation. Recommendations included developing disability-inclusive protocols, universal-design evacuation centres, accessible environmental information, strengthened OPD leadership, circular-economy initiatives, and improved data systems, all coordinated through rights-based governance to ensure inclusive and effective regional responses.

The Consultation concluded with a reaffirmation of the commitment to continued multi-stakeholder engagement to ensure the effective operationalisation of the Declaration, and with participants underscoring that meaningful disability inclusion is essential to building a resilient, people-centred, and sustainable ASEAN Community.

2.2.17. Regional Consultation to Promote Disability Inclusivity in the ASEAN Communities: Towards and Beyond EMP 2025, 9 December 2025, Bangkok, Thailand

The Consultation was led by AICHR Thailand in collaboration with SOMSWD Thailand, UNICEF, the International Disability Alliance (IDA), and the Australian Human Rights Commission. It brought together more than 70 representatives from AMS, ASBs, CSOs, international partners, OPDs, and the ASEAN Secretariat.

The Consultation highlighted that ASEAN stood at a strategic juncture to define the next phase of disability inclusion in the region, building on the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan (EMP) 2025. Discussions emphasised the need to move beyond a social welfare approach and to embed disability inclusion as a structural norm across all three ASEAN Community pillars, including economic governance and digital transformation. Participants underscored the importance of ensuring the meaningful participation of OPDs, strengthening disaggregated data systems, and aligning future regional frameworks with the ASEAN Community Vision 2045.

Participants reaffirmed that disability inclusion must be future-oriented, firmly grounded in human rights, and responsive to demographic change, technological transformation, and climate realities. Key recommendations included improving cross-sector coordination; enhancing accessibility across physical, digital, and financial systems; expanding economic empowerment through inclusive employment, entrepreneurship, universal design, and job-coach models; and aligning national policies more closely with obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The integration of disability perspectives into business and human rights frameworks was also highlighted as a priority.

The Consultation concluded with participants underscoring that meaningful representation, lifelong learning, digital skills development, and private-sector

engagement are essential to ensuring the equal participation of persons with disabilities in a resilient and inclusive ASEAN Community.

2.2.18. AICHR Regional Consultation: Advancing the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment in ASEAN, 15–16 December 2025, Makati City, the Philippines

The Consultation provided a platform to advance discussions on promoting disability inclusivity in ASEAN communities in the lead-up to and beyond the EMP 2025. It brought together representatives from AMS, ASBs, CSOs, international partners, OPDs, and the ASEAN Secretariat to exchange views on strengthening disability-inclusive development in the region.

Participants discussed the need to embed disability inclusion across all three ASEAN Community pillars, including economic governance and digital transformation, and emphasised the importance of meaningful participation of persons with disabilities, strengthened data systems, and alignment with the ASEAN Community Vision 2045. The Consultation highlighted the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration, accessibility, and inclusive economic opportunities, including employment and entrepreneurship. It also underscored the need to align national policies with the CRPD and integrate disability perspectives into broader regional frameworks. The Consultation contributed to advancing ASEAN's efforts in promoting a rights-based, inclusive and sustainable approach to disability inclusion in the region.

2.2.19. 6th ASEAN Dialogue on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 17 December 2025, Manila, the Philippines

The Dialogue provided a platform to enhance understanding of the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), particularly General Comment No. 17 on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts. The Dialogue brought together representatives from AMS, ASEAN bodies, international organisations, NHRIs, and CSOs to exchange views and share experiences on advancing children's rights in the region.

Participants discussed key concepts of General Comment No. 17 and its implementation in relation to physical and digital environments, culture, education, and business practices. The Dialogue highlighted the importance of aligning efforts with the AHRD and strengthening coordination among ASBs and stakeholders. It also reaffirmed the role of the ASEAN Dialogue on the UNCRC as a platform for sharing best practices and addressing emerging challenges in promoting and protecting children's rights. The Dialogue contributed to advancing ASEAN's efforts in mainstreaming children's rights in policy-making processes and regional cooperation.

2.2.20. 2nd ASEAN Dialogue on Human Rights and Policing, 26–27 January 2026, ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat

The Dialogue provided a platform to advance cooperation on human rights-based policing across ASEAN, bringing together representatives from AMS, national police forces, government agencies, NHRIs, CSOs, academia, and international partners. It aimed to strengthen integrity, accountability, and professionalism in law enforcement in line with the AHRD.

Participants exchanged views on regional and national approaches to human rights-based policing, including international and ASEAN human rights standards, integrity mechanisms, capacity-building, policing in relation to vulnerable groups and crisis situations, and enhanced intersectoral cooperation. The Dialogue highlighted the importance of aligning policy and practice, strengthening accountability, and fostering public trust in law enforcement. It reaffirmed that sustained reform, inclusive engagement, and practical cooperation are essential to advancing professional, accountable, and human rights-based policing in ASEAN.

2.2.21. AICHR Activity on Countering Online Harms for Women and Children, 15 April 2026, Singapore

AICHR Singapore, in collaboration with SG Her Empowerment (SHE), convened the AICHR Activity on Countering Online Harms for Women and Children on 15 April 2026 in Singapore. The Activity brought together over 50 participants, which included AICHR Representatives, government officials, civil society organisations and industry experts to exchange views on how ASEAN could strengthen regional collaboration on countering online harms.

Participants received briefings from Singapore Minister of State at the Ministry of Digital Development and Information (MDDI) Rahayu Mahzam, officials from the Singapore Ministry of Social and Family Development, as well as SHE on the growing threat of online harms across Southeast Asia. The activity provided a platform for participants to discuss and review various perspectives and country case studies on concerns such as the intersection of online and offline harms in intimate partner violence as well as online child sexual exploitation and abuse. The participants also discussed possible regional policy solutions and frameworks that could be implemented to counter online harms. Participants reflected on the challenges of effective implementation of laws and policies for countering online harms; called for a more collaborative and ecosystem-wide approach involving governments, technology platforms, schools and families.

The participants then made site visits to SHECARES – Singapore’s first support centre for targets of online harms – and TikTok’s Transparency and Accountability Centre. At

SHECARES, participants were briefed on the programmes and services that SHECARES offers to support victims of online harms while at TikTok, participants engaged with TikTok staff members on content moderation systems, recommendation algorithms, and data security practices.

2.2.22. Regional Forum on Human Rights Cities in ASEAN: Localising Human Rights for Inclusive Development Towards Localising the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, 27–28 April 2026, Bangkok, Thailand

The Regional Forum was convened by AICHR Thailand, with support from the EU, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD), the ASEAN Governors and Mayors Forum (AGMF), and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. The Forum highlighted that local governments are central to advancing human rights at the grassroots, and that inclusive cities require participatory approaches, cross-sector collaboration, and sustained political commitment. It aimed for a compilation of good practices, providing cities and local governments with practical references to guide their own efforts to localise human rights in line with the ASEAN Community Vision 2045.

Participants examined how local governments can translate regional commitments into tangible, on-the-ground action, and how city-to-city partnerships, within ASEAN and with European counterparts, can accelerate inclusive, rights-based urban development. They visited four Bangkok initiatives that demonstrate how human rights principles are integrated into urban services: Bueng Sakae Ngam Nursing Home, which supports older persons and persons with disabilities; Baan Im Jai Emergency Shelters, which provides holistic support for people experiencing homelessness; the BKK Food Bank, which improves food access for vulnerable groups; and Benchakitti Park, an example of inclusive and sustainable urban design. The exchanges at the Forum opened space for deeper ASEAN–EU cooperation on sustainable cities and human rights.

2.2.23. Regional Workshop on Human Rights-Based Approaches to Address Intersectionality of Vulnerabilities in the Context of Trafficking in Persons, 7–8 May 2026, Laguna, the Philippines

The Workshop aimed to advance more inclusive and rights-based approaches to combat trafficking in persons, with particular attention to persons with disabilities. Building on the initiatives and efforts of ACWC, the Workshop focused on validating a zero draft of the ASEAN Policy Brief on Disability and Trafficking in Persons, bringing together representatives from ASBs, government institutions, civil society, and OPDs. It aimed to gather technical inputs, strengthen regional ownership among AMS, and enhance the relevance, coherence, and practical application of the proposed policy recommendations.

The Workshop also provided a platform for participants to review and refine key elements of the draft policy brief through interactive sessions and group discussions. Contributions from stakeholders, including those with lived experience, helped ensure the draft reflects practical realities and diverse perspectives. Through interactive sessions and group discussions, participants provided their inputs to refine key elements of the draft policy brief and enhance the relevance, coherence, and practical application of the proposed policy recommendations. The policy brief was expected to offer actionable guidance for AMS in enhancing national and regional responses to trafficking, reinforcing efforts to protect those most at risk and promote more inclusive and effective policy development across the region.

2.2.24. Regional Dialogue on the Nexus between Transnational Crime and Human Rights, 13–14 May 2026, Bangkok, Thailand

The Dialogue aimed to examine the growing nexus between transnational organised crime and human rights, with a particular focus on trafficking in persons and forced criminality linked to online scam compounds in Southeast Asia. It underscored the importance of victim-centred, human rights-based, and cross-sectoral approaches in addressing transnational organised crime and trafficking linked to scam compounds.

Participants exchanged experiences, identified challenges, and shared good practices on victim identification, protection, consular assistance, repatriation, reintegration, and inter-agency coordination. Discussions focused on the human rights implications of scam compounds and forced criminality, including the non-punishment principle and victim-centred approaches, and underscored the need for stronger regional coordination, information-sharing, and cooperation among governments, law enforcement agencies, international organisations, and civil society to effectively respond to emerging forms of exploitation, protect victims, and disrupt scam networks across ASEAN. Site visits to the Anti-Cyber Scam Center of the Royal Thai Police and the Pathumthani Welfare Protection Center for Victims of Trafficking in Persons provided practical insights into Thailand's efforts to combat cyber-enabled crime, support victims, and enhance inter-agency coordination.

2.2.25. Writeshop on Finalising the ASEAN Indicators on Trafficking for Forced Criminality and Training Materials on the Application of the Non-Punishment Principle, 25–26 May 2026, Manila, the Philippines

The Writeshop was jointly organised by AICHR and SOMTC, with support from the ASEAN-ACT programme. It brought together lead and contributing drafters from selected AMS, technical experts, UN agencies, and CSOs to review, refine, and consolidate two regional tools supporting implementation of the ASEAN Guideline on the Implementation of the Non-Punishment Principle for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Persons.

The first day focused on the Zero Draft of the ASEAN Indicators on Trafficking for the Purpose of Forced Criminality. Participants agreed that the indicators should remain focused on forced criminality, align with ASEAN legal frameworks, and provide practical guidance for screening, interviewing, referral, and documentation. They also emphasised victim-centred, trauma-informed, child-sensitive, and disability-inclusive approaches, as well as the need to recognise diverse trafficking experiences and avoid assumptions about the stereotypical behaviours of victims.

The second day reviewed five modules of the ASEAN Training Materials on the Application of the Non-Punishment Principle, covering trafficking and the principle of victim identification, prosecutorial decision-making, defence of victims, and judicial application. Participants recommended stronger operational guidance, practical ASEAN case studies, measurable learning outcomes, and a separate Facilitator Guide. The drafting team agreed to align and revise both tools for regional validation in Jakarta on 24-25 August 2026, before their submission through relevant ASEAN processes.

2.2.26. AICHR Workshop on Raising Awareness and Sharing Best Practices on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights at Sea, 26 June 2026, Ha Noi, Viet Nam

The Workshop pursued three main objectives: to enhance understanding of relevant international and regional legal frameworks; to raise awareness and share experiences; and to explore practical recommendations for strengthening cooperation, capacity-building, and information-sharing. During its four thematic sessions, participants explored the realities faced by maritime workers and discussed the cross-sectoral nature of human rights at sea, intersecting with labour, migration, maritime safety, fisheries, and sustainable development. The discussions reinforced the importance of the rule of law at sea and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the legal foundation for all ocean activities.

To advance the protection of human rights at sea, participants underscored the importance of prioritising capacity-building, strengthening information-sharing, and enhancing coordination mechanisms among relevant authorities. The Workshop identified key practical areas for further cooperation, including maritime safety, responsible business practices, and awareness-raising through existing ASEAN mechanisms and with dialogue partners as well as other relevant stakeholders. It also emphasised closer cooperation and shared learning over comparison, focusing on improving practical outcomes rather than seeking identical legal systems. The Workshop concluded that economic prosperity from the blue economy must not come at the expense of human dignity, keeping people at the centre of all development efforts.

2.2.27. ASEAN Workshop on Strengthening the Implementation of Business and Human Rights to Address Forced Labour and Modern Slavery and Enhance Protection Through Human Rights Due Diligence, 13–14 July 2026, Bangkok, Thailand

The Workshop aimed to strengthen regional cooperation on the implementation of business and human rights, with a focus on addressing forced labour and modern slavery and enhancing migrant worker protection through human rights due diligence (HRDD). Built upon ongoing regional efforts on responsible business and migration and provided a platform to discuss practical approaches to strengthen the protection of migrant workers within increasingly interconnected supply chains, the Workshop brought together representatives from AICHR, ASEAN bodies including ACMW, SEOM, and ASEAN Senior Law Officials Meeting (ASLOM), government institutions, private sector, civil society organisations, and experts.

Participants exchanged views on challenges and practical approaches in strengthening HRDD implementation, particularly in identifying and addressing forced labour risks affecting migrant workers throughout supply chains, which highlighted the importance of ethical recruitment practices, improved supply chain transparency, meaningful engagement with affected workers, and effective grievance and remediation mechanisms. Participants also explored emerging developments in HRDD, including Thailand's ongoing efforts in developing a proposed mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence framework, informed by international standards and experiences such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, OECD Guidelines, and relevant developments in other jurisdictions. The Workshop underscored the importance of continued regional cooperation and shared learning among governments, businesses, and relevant stakeholders to advance business and human rights, strengthen migrant worker protection, and support sustainable economic growth in the region.

3. Mainstreaming Human Rights Across Pillars of the ASEAN Community

AICHR continues to strengthen collaboration with ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and Entities to ensure that human rights-based approaches are well-integrated in the development of the three Pillars of the ASEAN Community, in our goal to realize the ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future.

During the 47th ASEAN Summit and Related Meetings in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the ASEAN Leaders adopted two ASEAN Declarations on the right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, and on the rights to development and peace. The creation

of these Declarations are a result of intensive consultations with ASEAN organs, a testament to the valuable efforts of AICHR to mainstream human rights across all three Pillars.

Moving forward, AICHR has begun undertaking efforts to develop a Regional Plan of Action for the first Declaration, as well as ongoing discussions to follow up on the realisation of the second. These actions will require continued collaboration with our partners in the ASEAN Community, strengthening an ASEAN-led and ASEAN-owned process in the development of human rights.

AICHR in partnership with the Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) launched the *ASEAN Guideline on the Implementation of the Non-Punishment Principle for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Persons*, a significant milestone in ASEAN's regional efforts to strengthen victim protection in addressing trafficking in persons (TIP), as well as to advance cross-sectoral cooperation in upholding human rights.

The Commission further ensures the mainstreaming of human rights through its active participation in events and consultations facilitated by other ASEAN Sectoral Bodies.

AICHR reiterates its commitment to continue engaging and collaborating with ASEAN organs, bodies and entities to enhance greater synergy on cross-pillar and cross-sectoral human rights challenges.

3.1. Thematic Leads on ASEAN Human Rights

AICHR explores the broad spectrum of regional human rights by targeting thematic issues that are of importance to ASEAN. Since the implementation of the Thematic Leads modality in 2025, AICHR Representatives have expressed their interest in leading the 33 identified thematic areas, and have served as focal persons in representing AICHR on consultations and events relevant to their thematic areas.

Acknowledging the presence of contemporary and emerging human rights challenges, AICHR continues to update the Thematic Leads modality to include new thematic issues and subthemes, including Conflict Prevention, and Human Rights Cities, among others. The Commission is committed to adapt to the evolution of ASEAN's human rights architecture, and contribute to its discussions.

4. Institutional Strengthening Initiatives

AICHR remains committed to institution building and strengthening, with a view to introduce initiatives within AICHR that will hopefully make the Commission more visible, relevant, and inclusive to its stakeholders.

The Commission has integrated in its Meetings a platform for the ASEAN Member States to share human rights developments in their respective countries, along with their regional outlook and direction. These reports provide AICHR with stronger context in understanding human rights challenges in the region, and allow for open discussion on sensitive concerns.

These diverse developments are worth sharing to the public. In this regard, AICHR has endeavoured to publish its first bulletin on human rights developments to promote public awareness and knowledge-sharing on human rights in the region.

In developing common approaches and positions on human rights matters of interest to ASEAN, the Commission has published AICHR Notes offered for the consideration of ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and Entities, and relevant stakeholders. While AICHR Notes are non-binding considering the consultative nature of the body, it is a reflection of the Commission's efforts to provide a unified perspective on human rights in the region.

AICHR has issued three AICHR Notes, all available on the AICHR Website:

1. AICHR Note on Responsible Business and Migration in ASEAN,
2. AICHR Note on the Promotion of the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment for Persons with Disabilities in ASEAN, and
3. AICHR Note on the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Post – the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Moving forward, AICHR is currently undergoing discussions on issuing additional AICHR Notes, and the publication of guidance notes on certain thematic areas, creating a foundation for refinement of these common approaches.

The Commission remains open in receiving communications from the public regarding human rights issues and concerns in the region, amounting to 60 correspondences over the reporting period. In line with this, AICHR accelerated its institutional capabilities by adopting the *AICHR Operational Guidelines on External Communications Received*, a foundational procedural tool in streamlining the engagement of AICHR with external stakeholders, and strengthening existing communication mechanisms.

Ensuring the meaningful participation and engagement of civil society, AICHR undertook actions to strengthen the consultative relationship mechanism based on guidance from the *ASEAN Secretariat Information Paper on Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) with Consultative Status with AICHR*, aiming to reinforce the implementation of the *Guidelines on the AICHR's Relations with Civil Society Organisations (2015)*.

Furthermore, AICHR granted consultative status to three new CSOs since 2018: Family Support & Welfare Selangor & Kuala Lumpur (Family Frontiers), International Justice

Mission (IJM) Foundation, and Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Masyarakat (LBHM). This enlargement brings the total network to 33 CSOs, underscoring AICHR's commitment in dialogue with civil society.

The Commission has also initiated the creation of an updated CSO directory and information booklet outlining their engagements with AICHR and ASEAN, for publishing on the AICHR website.

AICHR underscores the importance of increasing the visibility of ASEAN's unique and diverse human rights architecture, and the progress in the promotion and protection of human rights, to the people it serves.

5. AICHR Key Engagements

5.1. 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 the three Community pillars.

5.1.1. ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting

On 8 July 2025, AICHR held its 15th Annual Interface with the AMM during the 58th AMM and Related Meetings, with the participation of Timor-Leste as Observer. AICHR submitted its 2025 Annual Report to the AMM, outlining key accomplishments and developments of AICHR in the reporting period from July 2024 to June 2025.

The AMM commended AICHR's work and accomplishments in progressing the promotion and protection of human rights in the region, including its implementation of the FYWP 2021–2025, collaboration with ASBs, and engagement with Dialogue Partners and relevant stakeholders. AICHR was encouraged to continue evolving to deliver impactful outcomes and to strengthen its role as the overarching human rights body of ASEAN, while upholding ASEAN Centrality and unity and ensuring that ASEAN's human rights work remains ASEAN-led and ASEAN-owned, in line with the ASEAN Charter and the AHRD.

Discussions included the need to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration and promote inclusive dialogue and engagement with stakeholders. The Meeting underscored the importance of addressing emerging and cross-cutting challenges, including climate change, digitalisation and its impact on children and youth, artificial intelligence, trafficking in persons, and the protection of vulnerable groups, while maintaining a balanced approach that respects the diverse contexts of AMS. The AMM noted progress on key initiatives, including the proposed *ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean,*

Healthy and Sustainable Environment and ASEAN Declaration on Promoting the Right to Development and the Right to Peace Towards Realising Inclusive and Sustainable Development, and encouraged AICHR to continue strengthening its role in contributing to ASEAN Community-building efforts.

5.1.2. Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN

The 17th Interface Meeting between AICHR and the CPR was held on 21 May 2026 at the ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat and was co-chaired by Mr. Bolivar L. Bao, Acting AICHR Chair, and Ambassador Evangeline T. Ong Jimenez-Ducrocq, CPR Chair. AICHR and CPR had an engaging and constructive discussion, focusing on strengthening cooperation and cross-sectoral collaboration for the promotion and protection of human rights in ASEAN. They deliberated on measures to enhance institutional capacity and effectiveness. Deliberations also emphasised the importance of a balanced approach in fulfilling AICHR's mandates and ensuring the timely, effective, and results-oriented implementation of AICHR's priority programmes and activities, thereby contributing to the realisation of *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future* and its vision of a resilient, innovative, dynamic and people-centred ASEAN Community.

5.1.3. Secretary-General of ASEAN

AICHR held its 14th Annual Interface with the Secretary-General of ASEAN, H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, on 8 July 2025. The Meeting exchanged views on AICHR's ongoing work to advance human rights cooperation and dialogue in ASEAN.

The Secretary-General reiterated the ASEAN Secretariat's support for AICHR's mandate and activities, commending its progress in promoting the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, human rights education, and related initiatives. AICHR was encouraged to further mainstream human rights across all ASEAN Community pillars, enhance responsiveness and future-readiness, adopt an integrated and balanced approach in the discharge of its mandates, and promote inclusive, consensus-based dialogue and cooperation, in alignment with *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future*.

5.1.4. ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children

AICHR held its 5th Interface Meeting with ACWC on 11 December 2025 via videoconference. The Meeting marked the first participation of Representatives of Timor-Leste as full members of both AICHR and ACWC following Timor-Leste's admission to ASEAN.

The Meeting served as a platform for dialogue and constructive engagement on the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children in the region. Discussions covered a broad range of issues, including gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, trafficking in persons, online harms, access to remedies and justice, climate change, and the rights of women, children, and persons in vulnerable and marginalised situations.

The Meeting explored potential areas of collaboration, including undertaking a stocktaking exercise to improve alignment between AICHR and ACWC in line with *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future*, strengthening protection pathways for violence prevention, promoting human rights education, deepening technical expertise and advisory services, enhancing coordination through an intersectoral mechanism, and advancing gender equality and social inclusion. The Meeting also noted the proposed co-organisation of AICHR's Priority Programmes and activities in 2026, including the 2nd ASEAN Cross-Sectoral Dialogue on the effective implementation of ASEAN commitments on the human rights of women and children, among others.

5.1.5. ASEAN University Network–Human Rights Education

On 21 May 2026, AICHR held its 3rd Interface Meeting with AUN-HRE at the ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat. The Meeting exchanged views on AICHR's thematic priorities and initiatives, as well as AUN-HRE's ongoing efforts to promote human rights education in the region.

The Meeting took note of the development of the Framework for Human Rights-Based Universities in ASEAN (HRBU Framework), which could be relevant to build further collaboration between AICHR and the AUN–HRE on human rights education, as well as other initiatives to support the implementation of the Five-Year Work Plan of AICHR (2026-2030). Both sides noted the need for closer cooperation in areas of common interest, such as support for greater awareness of and engagement with the youth on human rights promotion and protection in the region and of the work of AICHR, and advancing the integration of human rights in higher education in ASEAN.

5.2. CSOs with Consultative Relationship with AICHR

During the reporting period, there were ten applications by CSOs, showing increasing interest in AICHR's work and engagement. Of these applications, three CSOs were newly granted consultative relationship status with AICHR, bringing the total number of CSOs with consultative relationship status with AICHR to thirty-three. These new admissions demonstrate AICHR's continued commitment to fostering meaningful engagement with CSOs in the promotion and protection of human rights across the region.

AICHR held its 6th Interface Meeting with CSOs with Consultative Relationship with AICHR on 9 July 2025, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Interface served as an open platform for dialogue and constructive engagement on key human rights issues in the region. Discussions covered a broad range of topics, including the right to development, the right to peace and conflict prevention, business and human rights, access to remedies and justice, environmental and climate change issues, and the rights of women, children, and persons with disabilities. Emerging human rights issues, including artificial intelligence and civic space, as well as the AICHR communication mechanism on human rights, were discussed.

At the 42nd Meeting of AICHR in February 2026, AICHR deliberated on the ASEAN Secretariat Information Paper on Civil Society Organisations with Consultative Status with AICHR, aiming to reinforce the implementation of the Guidelines on the AICHR's Relations with Civil Society Organisations (2015) and foster meaningful engagement and partnership with stakeholders, including CSOs, toward the building of a resilient, innovative, dynamic, and people-centred ASEAN. Further, actions were taken to strengthen the consultative relationship mechanism, such as updating the CSO directory to strengthen the network and coordination, and creating a booklet for information on all the accredited CSOs, their human rights work, and their engagements with and support to AICHR and ASEAN.

5.3. Engagement with External Partners

5.3.1. Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration

AICHR held its 1st Meeting with the ADFM on 12 November 2025 via videoconference. The Meeting exchanged views on respective mandates and areas of work and discussed issues related to forced migration in the region.

The Meeting exchanged information on ongoing initiatives and developments, including regional responses to forced migration, alternatives to immigration detention for children, and research on ASEAN mechanisms relevant to migration. Discussions covered key issues, including trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants, displacement, and the protection of vulnerable migrants, and highlighted the importance of strengthening cross-sectoral collaboration among relevant ASBs. Discussions also explored potential areas for cooperation, including research and knowledge sharing, protection of vulnerable persons on the move, and possible collaboration with Dialogue Partners, including on issues such as safety of lives at sea and broader regional responses to forced migration

5.3.2. Southeast Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum

AICHR held its 5th Interface Meeting with the Southeast Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum (SEANF) on 20 November 2025 via videoconference. The Meeting marked the first participation of the Representative of Timor-Leste to AICHR as a full member following Timor-Leste's admission to ASEAN.

The Meeting served as a platform for dialogue and constructive engagement on key human rights priorities, developments, and challenges in the region. Discussions covered a broad range of issues, including the right to development, rights of women, children, persons with disabilities, migrant workers and other vulnerable groups, as well as business and human rights, trafficking in persons, transnational crimes, access to remedies and justice, climate change, and emerging issues such as online scams, digitalisation, and civic space.

The Meeting also discussed ways to deepen cooperation, including on communications received, referral modalities, and grievance-handling mechanisms to address transboundary human rights challenges. Updates were shared on ongoing initiatives and potential areas for collaboration, including follow-up to the *ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment* and the *ASEAN Declaration on Promoting the Right to Development and the Right to Peace Towards Realising Inclusive and Sustainable Development*.

5.4. Dialogue Partners

AICHR met with the following Dialogue Partners during the reporting period.

5.4.1. European Union

AICHR and the EU conducted the 6th ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights on 14–17 October 2025, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Dialogue was co-chaired by H.E. Edmund Bon Tai Soon, Representative of Malaysia to AICHR and AICHR Chair 2025, and H.E. Kajsa Ollongren, EU Special Representative for Human Rights. It was attended by Representatives and Alternate Representatives of AICHR, representatives of Timor-Leste as Observer, the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW), ASEAN Secretariat, and representatives of the EU from the European External Action Service, European Commission and European Parliament.

Convening biennially since 2015, the 6th Dialogue commenced with a dedicated session reviewing a decade of dialogue on human rights between ASEAN and the EU. Observations for further cooperation and enhanced outcomes were made for future programming, including identifying concrete steps to advance the promotion and

protection of human rights in both regions, in line with the existing ASEAN-EU Strategic Partnership.

Its thematic sessions covered a broad range of issues focusing on freedom of assembly, association, expression, opinion and media, access to information and justice, business and human rights, environment and climate change, migration, rights of persons in vulnerable and marginalised situations, human trafficking, gender equality, combating all forms of discrimination on all grounds, digital transformation and cybersecurity. AICHR Representatives and Alternate Representatives shared information on their work and initiatives, including AICHR's FYWP and Priority Programmes, and the progress of AICHR-led declarations on the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and on the right to development and the right to peace towards realising inclusive and sustainable development. EU representatives informed about the latest policy and legislative developments inside the EU, including on the rule of law, media freedom, disinformation, gender equality, migration, business and human rights. Timor-Leste, as Observer, also engaged with both ASEAN and the EU and shared its approach on relevant matters.

The Dialogue facilitated a robust and frank exchange of views on human rights in the respective regions as well as on global developments and challenges with implications for the promotion and protection of human rights. As strong advocates of multilateralism, ASEAN and the EU both stressed that rules-based multilateral and regional cooperation underpinned by the respect and promotion of international law, abiding by internationally agreed norms and the principles of the United Nations Charter, ASEAN Charter, AHRD and Phnom Penh Statement on the Adoption of the AHRD, EU treaties and legislation, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and relevant international human rights law, were essential to overcome current global and regional challenges.

The Dialogue was followed by a side event on business and human rights on 16 and 17 October 2025, attended by ASEAN, the EU, government, business and civil society representatives, which also included a field visit to a business site in Pahang, Malaysia.

On 22 May 2026, the 9th Interface Meeting of AICHR and the EU was held at the sidelines of the 43rd Meeting of AICHR. Representatives of AICHR and the EU shared updates on human rights developments, ongoing cooperation, and initiatives since their 8th Interface Meeting in May 2025 and the 6th ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights in October 2025.

The Meeting noted the collaborative work and partnership in strengthening the ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights (PDHR) mechanism, as well as joint activities complementary to the PDHR thematic discussions. AICHR and the EU discussed

enhancing cooperation in implementing the Five-Year Work Plan of AICHR (2026-2030) and the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-EU Strategic Partnership (2023-2027). The Meeting welcomed the EU's continued support for AICHR's strong commitments and efforts on human rights under the EU-ASEAN Strategic Partnership Dialogue Facility (EASPDF) in 2026 and 2027.

AICHR and the EU reaffirmed their shared commitment to deepening collaboration and looked forward to future interface meetings as part of a sustained and constructive dialogue on human rights. Both parties also looked forward to preparations for the 7th ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights, to be held in 2027.

5.4.2. New Zealand

The 1st Interface Meeting between AICHR and New Zealand was held on 9 July 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The parties exchanged information on respective human rights priorities, initiatives, cooperation frameworks, and recent developments. They also discussed potential areas of collaboration, particularly in capacity building, technical assistance, and knowledge-sharing on human rights thematic areas such as the rights of persons with disabilities, gender equality, rights of people in vulnerable situations, online safety, artificial intelligence, human rights at sea, business and human rights, and effective access to remedies, among others.

5.4.3. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

AICHR held its 2nd Interface Meeting with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, H.E. Volker Türk, on 13 November 2025 via videoconference. The Meeting exchanged views on AICHR's ongoing work and explored ways to strengthen cooperation between AICHR and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

The High Commissioner commended AICHR's active role and welcomed the adoption of the *ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment* and the *ASEAN Declaration on Promoting the Right to Development and the Right to Peace Towards Realising Inclusive and Sustainable Development*. He highlighted key global human rights challenges, including the erosion of international human rights law in conflict situations, shrinking civic space, widening inequalities, climate change, and digital-related risks, particularly affecting women and children. He emphasised the importance of integrating human rights into economic, environmental, digital governance, and strengthening multilateral cooperation.

Discussions included exchanges on priority issues such as digital safety, trafficking in persons, climate change, and protection of vulnerable groups, as well as opportunities to enhance ASEAN–UN cooperation through capacity-building, technical support, and

cross-sectoral coordination. The Meeting underscored the importance of aligning regional and global efforts, strengthening collaboration at national, regional, and international levels, and continuing engagement between AICHR and OHCHR

5.4.4. Australia

AICHR held its 9th Interface Meeting with Australia on 22 May 2026 at the ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat. The Meeting exchanged information on recent human rights developments and initiatives on thematic priorities since the last meeting, including follow-up to the *ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment* and the *ASEAN Declaration on Promoting the Right to Development and the Right to Peace Towards Realising Inclusive and Sustainable Development*.

The Meeting acknowledged the contribution of the AICHR Engagement Project 2024-2025, which supported AICHR's priority programmes/activities on trafficking in persons, right to development, right to peace, the environment and climate change, human rights mechanisms, and rights of persons with disabilities. The Meeting welcomed Australia's continued support for AICHR in 2026 and 2027, in line with the *ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future* and the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2025-2029).

AICHR and Australia reaffirmed their commitment to promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, strengthening ASEAN-led mechanisms, and deepening cooperation. Cooperation in human rights education, capacity-building, and the promotion of peace and inclusive and sustainable development were further explored, together with opportunities to enhance cooperation on issues such as gender equality, protection of vulnerable groups, and youth engagement, among others.

5.4.5. Japan

The 5th Interface Meeting of AICHR and the Mission of Japan to ASEAN was held on 20 May 2026 at the ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat. The Meeting discussed areas of work on human rights, and highlighted thematic priorities by AICHR, such as business and human rights, digital rights and artificial intelligence, online harm and protection of children and women, environmental protection and climate change, the right to peace and right to development, women's empowerment, sustainable development and protection of groups in vulnerable situations, human trafficking, cybersecurity and digital transformation, as well as human rights at sea, among others.

The Meeting discussed enhancing cooperation with a view to advancing the implementation of the Five-Year Work Plan of AICHR (2026-2030), aligned with *the*

ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future, and the Joint Vision Statement on ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation: Trusted Partners (2023). Emphasis was placed on areas of intersection between human rights and business, trade and investment, and digitalisation.

5.4.6. The Republic of Korea

On 21 May 2026, AICHR held its 2nd Interface Meeting with the Republic of Korea at the ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat. The parties exchanged information on respective human rights focus areas, including initiatives on business and human rights, access to justice, new and emerging digital technologies, technology-facilitated trafficking in persons, rights to health, persons with disabilities, environment and climate change, and strengthening human rights mechanisms, among others.

AICHR highlighted progress in various areas of work, including the adoption of two ASEAN Declarations on human rights at the 47th ASEAN Summit, i.e., the *ASEAN Declaration on the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment*, and the *ASEAN Declaration on Promoting the Right to Development and the Right to Peace Towards Realising Inclusive and Sustainable Development*, and follow-up activities being pursued in the realisation of these important Declarations.

Both sides encouraged continued engagement, including through dialogue and exchange of views, to further strengthen cooperation in areas of mutual interest with a view to strengthening cooperation in supporting the *ASEAN Community Vision 2045* and the Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-Republic of Korea Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2026-2030).

5.4.7. Norway

The 2nd Interface Meeting between AICHR and Norway was held on 20 May 2026 at ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat.

The parties shared updates on human rights developments, ongoing cooperation and initiatives since their last meeting in 2025. They discussed enhancing cooperation in implementing the AICHR FYWP (2026-2030) and the ASEAN-Norway Sectoral Dialogue Partnership: Practical Cooperation Areas (2026-2030) through capacity building and knowledge sharing of best practices in the promotion and protection of human rights. Thematic areas addressed include the rule of law and human rights through supporting the work and mandates of AICHR.

AICHR and Norway noted the need to foster closer cooperation in areas of common concern in the promotion and protection of human rights, such as environmental

protection, climate change, human rights cities, digital rights, and peace and reconciliation.

5.5. Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement

AICHR continued to enhance its engagement with ASEAN Organs, Bodies, and Entities, to strengthen cross-pillar cross-sectoral collaboration and advance the promotion and protection of human rights in the region. Such engagement contributed to improved coordination on cross-cutting issues, including through collaboration with relevant ASBs, and supported knowledge sharing, capacity building, and the exchange of good practices. AICHR also recognised the value of engagement with Dialogue Partners, CSOs, NHRIs, and other stakeholders, which could further support inclusive dialogue, foster mutual understanding, and enhance the effectiveness and relevance of its work.

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

At the start of 2025, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers instructed AICHR to evaluate the *ASEAN Secretariat Information Paper on the Work of AICHR 2010-2024*, for which the Commission has reported on the outcomes of its discussions.

Recommendations in the Information Paper resonate with AICHR's ongoing efforts that focus on defining clear and deepening thematic priorities, enhancing cross-sectoral and cross-pillar collaboration, and strengthening internal governance and work processes, which are essential to achieving greater impact and ensuring AICHR remains highly relevant to ASEAN's Community-building efforts.

In this regard, AICHR has made significant progress in strengthening its institutional capacity, focusing on delivering responsive and impactful outcomes for the ASEAN Community. AICHR's evolutionary approach to human rights continues to uphold ASEAN Centrality, enhancing its leadership in human rights. Our efforts implement AICHR's Terms of Reference (TOR) and contribute to the realisation of ASEAN's goals for a people-centred Community.

Discussions on the Information Paper focused on four core thematic areas, outlining AICHR's strategies in strengthening institutional effectiveness and capacity, enhancing cross-sectoral and cross-pillar cooperation and collaboration, addressing emerging human rights challenges and threats, and widening engagement and outreach. AICHR expressed its commitment to determine the most effective approaches to build upon AICHR's existing efforts.

2026 is the first year of implementation of the new AICHR Five-Year Work Plan (2026-2030), where the Commission outlines greater synergy and coordination in cross-pillar and cross-sectoral issues, addressing the increasing global and regional challenges to realise the ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future.

Looking forward, AICHR has started discussions toward institutional self-assessment through the ongoing creation of its Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework, to ensure the timely, effective, and results-oriented execution of the new AICHR Five-Year Work Plan.

7. Observations and Future Directions

The reporting period from July 2025 to June 2026 underscored AICHR's continued evolution as ASEAN's overarching institution on human rights. As ASEAN begins implementing the ASEAN Community Vision 2045: *Our Shared Future*, the Commission's work increasingly reflects a broader understanding of human rights as a cross-cutting element of regional integration, sustainable development, peace, and resilience.

One notable development during the reporting period was the gradual shift from regional norm-setting towards implementation. Building on the adoption of the two ASEAN Declarations on the right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, and on the rights to development and peace, along with the commencement of the AICHR Five-Year Work Plan (2026–2030), the Commission is increasingly focused on translating regional commitments into practical initiatives, regional cooperation, and tangible outcomes. This evolution presents opportunities to strengthen implementation, monitoring, and the exchange of good practices among ASEAN Member States while remaining consistent with ASEAN's principles and modalities.

The reporting period also demonstrated that the human rights agenda in ASEAN continues to expand in both scope and complexity. Alongside longstanding priorities, emerging issues—including digital transformation, artificial intelligence, climate change, environmental sustainability, business and human rights, transnational organised crime, online harms, migration, human rights at sea, and demographic change—are increasingly shaping regional discussions. These developments reinforce the importance of adopting integrated and forward-looking approaches that recognise the interdependence of human rights with economic, social, environmental, and security issues.

A further observation is the growing importance of cross-pillar and cross-sectoral collaboration. Many of the challenges addressed during the reporting period extend beyond the mandate of any single ASEAN body, underscoring the value of strengthened coordination among ASEAN Organs, Bodies and Entities. Continued collaboration with

Dialogue Partners, national human rights institutions, civil society organisations, academia, and other stakeholders similarly contributes to broader knowledge-sharing, technical cooperation, and more inclusive regional dialogue.

The reporting period likewise highlighted the continued importance of institutional strengthening. As AICHR's work expands in scope and complexity, ongoing efforts to enhance its effectiveness, improve work processes, strengthen communications, and reinforce monitoring and evaluation of programme outcomes will remain important in supporting the implementation of its mandates and the delivery of meaningful outcomes. Sustained institutional development will further enable AICHR to respond effectively to evolving regional priorities while maintaining its consensus-based and consultative approach.

Looking ahead, AICHR will continue to pursue a balanced and constructive approach to the promotion and protection of human rights, guided by the ASEAN Charter, the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, and its Terms of Reference. The Commission will seek to further strengthen regional cooperation, deepen cross-pillar collaboration, and support the implementation of ASEAN's human rights commitments in ways that are practical, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of the peoples of ASEAN.

As ASEAN advances towards the aspirations of the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, AICHR remains committed to contributing to a resilient, innovative, dynamic, and people-centred ASEAN Community where human rights continue to serve as an important foundation for peace, sustainable development, and shared prosperity.