

**Statement of the ASEAN Civil Society Conference / ASEAN People's Forum 2017 (ACSC/APF)  
Regional Steering Committee**

17 February 2017

**ASEAN for the people, by the people, of the people**

As the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) marks its 50<sup>th</sup> year, we, civil society organizations (CSOs) and people's organizations in the region remain critically engaged in asserting alternative forms of regional integration that addresses the long-standing issues and concerns affecting the peoples of Southeast Asia.

There have been several concerns raised by CSOs in the past years of its engagement with ASEAN including the lack of people's participation in ASEAN decision-making, the rising inequalities among member states, prevailing inaction on human rights issues, and the dominance of elite-centred and market-oriented development strategies among others.

Over the years, these issues have provoked wide-ranging responses and resistance against the current neoliberal integration model espoused by ASEAN. Consequently, it has also prompted CSOs and people's organizations to lead the way for establishing new forms of regional integration based on existing and emerging alternatives at the country-level – alternatives that are based on people-to-people interactions rather than state-to-state relations or purely market-oriented solutions to the region's problems.

As Chair of the ASEAN this year, the Philippine government is hosting the ASEAN Summits this April and November. A number of ASEAN high-level meetings have also been lined up to take place in the country. Similarly, the ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ ASEAN Peoples' Forum (ACSC/APF) is also set to hold parallel activities to voice out the people's concerns and issues in the region, as had been our practice for the past eleven years. This February 15 -16, we, representatives of CSOs and social movements from eleven countries in Southeast Asia have come together for the First Regional Consultation Meeting (RCM) leading up to the main Conference in August 2017.

The ACSC/APF is a network of Southeast Asian civil society organizations and social movements that engages the ASEAN processes to address the issues and concerns of the people –human rights and access to justice, peace and human security, trade, climate change, migration, jobs and livelihoods, and social protection. Its constituents include workers, the peasantry, urban poor, fisherfolk, women, children, LGBT community, indigenous peoples, migrants, older persons, workers, youth and persons with disabilities.

Even as we advance alternatives to the current ASEAN regional integration model, we continue asserting the meaningful participation of Southeast Asian peoples in government discussions especially on issues that affect our lives. By doing so, we seek to contribute in building an ASEAN region that is truly of the people, by the people, and for the people. ###

Philippines – (CHAIR) Ms. Jelen C. Paclarin, Women’s Legal and Human Rights Bureau/  
PhilWomen on ASEAN

Brunei – Ms. SitiZalehaKaprawi, *Women Graduates Association, Women Council of Brunei  
Darussalam*

Cambodia – Mr. SreySotheary, Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT)

Indonesia - Mr. Harry Sandy Ame, AGRA (AliansiGerakanReformaAgraria)

Lao PDR – Mr. Cher Her, The Association for Vulnerable Children and Community Development

Malaysia – Ms. Lee Shook Fong, Centre for Independent Journalism

Myanmar - May Shi Sho, Karin Development Network

Singapore – Mr. Soe Min Than, Think Centre

Timor-Leste – Mr. Valentin C. Pinto, PN DESITL (The national platform for water, sanitation and  
hygiene)

Thailand - SunsaneeSutthissunsanee, Pro-rights Foundation

Vietnam - Dong HuyCuong, Vietnam Peace and Development Foundation

Regional - Deborah Christine Stothard, Forum Asia