14 February 2011

THE ASEAN COMMISSION FOR THE
PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF
WOMEN AND CHILDREN (ACWC)
Jakarta, Indonesia

Dear Excellencies:

Greetings from the Child Rights Coalition – Asia (CRC-Asia).

CRC-Asia is a network of child rights and human rights organizations currently working in 8 countries in Southeast Asia since 2008. The network has a special interest in ensuring the effective and meaningful implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) in the region especially within the ASEAN. It serves as a facilitator advocating for meaningful civil society engagement with inter-governmental bodies such as the ACWC by promoting transparency and participation. The network aims to promote and ensure children’s right to participation in all processes and decisions that have an impact on their rights and welfare.

As part of our mandate to facilitate civil society interest and engagement in ASEAN affairs, CRC-Asia and its member organizations were instrumental in organizing a child rights workshop during the ASEAN People’s Forum in September 2010 (Hanoi, Vietnam), an ASEAN Children’s Forum civil society parallel workshop involving children and young people entitled “Making Our ASEAN Meaningful for Children and Young People” in October 2010 (Manila, Philippines), and in incorporating the child rights concerns in various civil society recommendation to ASEAN over the past two years especially emphasising the promotion of children’s meaningful participation.

We support the ACWC’s first official meeting this February 2011 in Jakarta, Indonesia. We think that this meeting serves as an important platform to discuss and generate clarifications on the rules of procedure and the future programme of action. Bearing this in mind, CRC-Asia would like to put forward the following recommendations:

1. Develop mechanisms and processes within the ACWC that engage civil society groups and children to monitor and report on key child rights issues and violations in ASEAN member countries.

2. Take into serious consideration and ensure implementation of the country-specific recommendations and Concluding Observations from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and of other international human rights mechanisms such as from the Special Representatives to the UN Secretary General. In this regard, we request the ACWC to come up with a research, mapping out the UN CRC Committee’s recommendations in line with the UN CRC reports and to monitor the extent of state compliance thereof.

3. Encourage ASEAN member states to ratify the Optional Protocols of the UN CRC and the CEDAW, and withdraw reservations made on the Conventions, in line with their commitments to uphold the principles of non-discrimination, protection and participation of all children in the region.
4. Promote and adopt a common understanding and minimum standards of children’s participation that is consistent with the UN CRC and other international human rights standards and that reflects the diverse perspectives, experiences and contributions of local civil society actors and children. In this regard, we request the ACWC to closely engage in the process of finalizing the terms of reference of the ASEAN Children’s Forum initially convened by the Philippine government and ensure that future processes are more inclusive and open for civil society groups especially the most marginalized.

5. Develop and promote a set of indicators to measure and monitor child rights concerns and common guidelines for duty bearers mandated to address these, taking into consideration the existing international children’s rights and human rights standards and the diverse perspectives and experiences of civil society groups and children.

6. Support the formation, operationalisation and the strengthening of institutions and mechanisms mandated to promote and protect the rights of children. In this regard, we request the ACWC to closely engage in the on-going global process of finalizing and adopting a proposed Optional Protocol to the UN CRC creating a communications procedure.

7. Institutionalize a transparent and participatory process in developing, implementing and evaluating the ACWC’s programme of action. We urge the ACWC, in coordination and consultation with civil society groups and children, to come up with its rules of procedure to further elaborate on the steps to implementing its mandate.

8. Ensure the appropriation of adequate resources for the operations of the ACWC so it may fulfill its mandate of promoting and protecting the rights of children, including its proposed role to monitor, report and address thematic or country-specific situations of children.

CRC Asia wishes the ACWC a fruitful and meaningful meeting.

Sincerely,

Ryan V. Silverio, Regional Coordinator, Southeast Asia Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (SEASUCS)

Eva Maria Cayanan, Regional Advisor Child Rights Governance and Protection, Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific

Alberto R. Cacayan, Regional Coordinator, Terre Des Hommes Germany in Southeast Asia

Muhammad Jailani, Executive Director, Yayasan KKSP

Diena Haryana, Chairperson, Yayasan SEJIWA

Antarini Arna, Director, Children’s Human Rights Foundation

Tran Thi Mai Huong, Vice President, Vietnam Association for the Protection of Children’s Rights (VAPCR)
Nguyen Thi Huong, Executive Director, Centre for Research and Support for Vietnamese Children (CENFORCHIL)

Nguyen Thi Huyen, Institute for Social Studies

Roldan Gonzales, Director, Gitib, Inc. / Mindanao Action Group for Children’s Rights and Protection (MAG-CRP)

Aung Myo Min, Executive Director, Human Rights Education in Burma (HREIB)

Nooreen Preusser, Director, P.S. the Children

Kreangkrai Chaimuangdee, Director, The Life Skills Development Foundation

**Endorsed by the Following CRC-Asia Partner/Network Organizations:**

Ly Samnang, Program Manager, NGO Committee on the Rights of the Child (NGOCRC)

Yap Swee Seng, Executive Director, FORUM-ASIA

The Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS)

Indonesia’s NGO Coalition for International Human Rights Advocacy (HRWG)

Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC)

Dede Suhendri, Executive Director, Lembaga Advokasi Anak (LADA)

Tabrani Yunis, Director, Center for Community Development and Education (CCDE) Banda Aceh

Magdalena Sitorus, Chairperson, Sahabat Anak dan Perempuan Indonesia

Think Center Singapore

Disabled Peoples’ International Asia-Pacific

Chalida Tajaroen, People’s Empowerment Foundation

ALTSEAN-Burma

Veerawit Tianchainan, Executive Director, Thai Committee for Refugees

Margarita F. Gomez, Coordinator, Bantay Kita
**Background Information of the Child Rights Coalition – Asia (CRC-Asia)**

The Child Rights Coalition Asia (CRC-A) is a regional network of children’s rights and human rights organizations with the main objective to mainstream the children’s rights perspectives and agenda into the regional and international advocacy processes. CRC-A was brought into fruition as a result of support provided by Save the Children Sweden to national and regional children’s rights civil society organizations that have expressed and pursued interest to engage in advocacy work within ASEAN.

The network was created on 25 November 2008 during the Southeast Asia Regional Meeting of Children’s Rights Organizations held at Discovery Suites, Pasig City, Philippines and was convened by Save the Children Sweden.

Working within a framework of equality, mutual respect and non-discrimination, CRC-Asia seeks to enable civil society to effectively advocate for the promotion and protection of children’s rights. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) and its Optional Protocols are held as the basic standards of the entitlements and freedoms of all children, and these serve as the foundation of the work of the CRC-Asia.

CRC-Asia strives towards the following goals:

1. Meaningful participation of children on issues that concern them;
2. Strong regional and global advocacy which is grounded on and reinforces national civil society initiatives;
3. Strong regional and global advocacy which holds national governments accountable for their obligations as articulated in the UNCRC;
4. The promotion and protection of children’s rights in ASEAN and other regional mechanisms.

CRC-Asia is regional network to enhance civil society cooperation with an end view of strengthening broad-based children’s rights advocacy. Its objectives are as follows:

1. Identify and develop common positions across thematic and sectoral issues that have implication on children’s rights;
2. Promote children’s rights perspectives within the discourse and agenda of various thematic and sectoral concerns;
3. Enhance children’s rights analysis to inform and help improve the advocacies and actions of various thematic and sectoral concerns;
4. Engage government and other duty bearers with an end view of promoting and ensuring accountability.

Since 2008, CRC-Asia has done advocacy work focusing on ASEAN together with other civil society groups that are part of the Solidarity of Asian People’s Advocacies Task Force on ASEAN and Human Rights (SAPA-TFAHR). CRC-Asia works as the child rights focal point of the SAPA-TFAHR.

The following are the past activities of CRC-Asia in line with its advocacy around ASEAN:

- Development and submission of position papers to influence the terms of reference of the AICHR and the ACWC, e.g. “Submission of Child Rights Groups on the ACWC” (7 May 2009); “ASEAN Human Rights Body Should be Strong Enough to Protect the Rights of Children in ASEAN.”
Participated in civil society processes to influence the agenda of ASEAN such as the ASEAN People’s Forum (September 2009, Cha-am, Thailand), and ASEAN People’s Forum (September 2010, Hanoi, Vietnam).

Organized consultation workshops with child rights civil society organizations to generate recommendations for the terms of reference of the AICHR and the ACWC, entitled “Regional Consultation for Child Rights Organizations on the ASEAN HR Body and the ACWC” (May 2009, Jakarta, Indonesia).

Organized workshops to promote and ensure children’s participation in ASEAN, particularly, the “Southeast Asia Regional Workshop on Children’s Participation in ASEAN” (February 2010, Bangkok, Thailand), and “Regional Workshop to Promote and Support Children and Young People’s Participation in ASEAN – Making Our ASEAN Meaningful for Children and Young People” (November 2010, Quezon City, Philippines).

CRC-Asia’s membership is composed of the following organizations:

Indonesia
- Children’s Human Rights Foundation
- Yayasan SEJIWA
- Yayasan KKSP - Education and Information Centre for Child Rights

Philippines
- Mindanao Action Group for Children’s Rights and Protection (MAG-CRP)

Malaysia
- Protect and Save the Children – Malaysia

Myanmar
- Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB)

Thailand
- The Life Skills Development Foundation (TLSDF)

Vietnam
- Vietnam Association for the Protection of Children’s Rights (VAPCR)
- Centre for Research and Support for Vietnamese Children (CENFORCHIL)
- Paradise for Children Network (PCNet)
- Institute of Social Studies (ISS)

Regional
- Southeast Asia Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (SEASUCS)
- Save the Children Sweden – Southeast Asia and Pacific Regional Office
- Terre des Hommes Germany in Southeast Asia
- NGO Advisory Committee on the Follow-up of the UN Study on Violence Against Children
The Southeast Asia Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (SEASUCS) serves as the convenor of the CRC-Asia.

CRC-Asia can be contacted through:

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