



KEYNOTE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ASEAN-IPR
THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
“ACTION WITH WOMEN AND PEACE”

**“Strengthening Women’s Roles and Leadership in Building and
Sustaining Peace, with the Survivor-Centred Approach”**

Thursday, 25 November 2021
[Pre-recorded video remarks]

Excellencies,
Distinguished Speakers & Participants,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

1. Warmest greetings from Jakarta! I hope everyone is staying safe, and in good health.
2. I would like to congratulate and thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea for convening the 3rd International Conference on ‘Action with Women and Peace’ and inviting the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation to be a part of this avenue for promoting the Women, Peace and Security agenda across the world.
3. This is indeed an excellent opportunity to discuss women’s participation in peacebuilding. As the world is opening up after the pandemic, we must put focus again on the ongoing conflicts that have affected innocent lives, including vulnerable groups such as women.
4. Allow me to start by giving you a glimpse of the ASEAN-IPR, sharing some of our goals and works in relation to today’s topic; and how the ASEAN-IPR has been working to forge and foster the culture of peace – including the strengthening of WPS agenda – in the region.

I. ASEAN-IPR: mandate, functions and its role

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. The ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR) was established to provide a platform for research activities on peace, conflict management, conflict resolution and reconciliation.

6. To fulfil such mandate, the Institute functions on: (i) research; (ii) capacity building; (iii) pooling of expertise in support of ASEAN bodies; (iv) networking with like-minded institutions; and (v) dissemination of information. Through these functions, the Institute commits to contribute to the community-building process in the region, namely on the sustenance of regional peace and stability.

7. Pursuant to its research function, as well as an action line in the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025, ASEAN-IPR is given the duty to undertake studies to promote gender mainstreaming in peace processes and conflict resolution, as well as promoting collaboration and networking with like-minded actors.

8. Thus, the Institute endeavours to engage and partner with relevant stakeholders – ranging from government institutions, academic institutions, civil society, and gender communities – in carrying out its work.

II. ASEAN on WPS and AWPR

9. Since the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, important steps to ensure women's meaningful participation on peace processes have been taken on the local, national, regional, as well as global levels.

10. Consequently, ASEAN has pursued various initiatives to advance the WPS agenda. Notable milestones include – among others – the ASEAN Leaders' 2017 Joint Statement on Promoting the Women, Peace and Security in ASEAN; the 2019 Regional Symposium on Implementing WPS Agenda in ASEAN; and the 2020 ASEAN Ministerial Dialogue on Strengthening Women's Role for Sustainable Peace and Security.

11. In 2018, ASEAN-IPR contributes to this process and reached its milestone – namely through the establishment of the ASEAN Women for Peace Registry (AWPR). The Registry is the first embodiment of the ASEAN-IPR’s function to establish a pool of experts to assist conflict management and resolution efforts, as well as to build capacity for women peacebuilders.

12. AWPR aims to encourage more women to take part in peace initiatives, and for national and regional strategies to take gender perspectives into account.

13. In order to facilitate better coordination and division of work among its members, the AWPR sorted themselves into three thematic working groups, namely (i) gender mainstreaming and WPS, (ii) conflict management, conflict transformation, and conflict resolution, (iii) peace education and creation of culture of peace. As situations surrounding the pandemic improve, it is hoped that the AWPR could pursue more initiatives to advance the WPS agenda.

14. Another notable initiative from ASEAN on WPS is a collaboration with USAID and UN Women in the form of the ASEAN Regional Study on WPS in 2021 – that examines the progress and challenges of WPS implementation in the region.

III. Initiatives for sexual violence in conflict-affected areas

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

15. Despite the advancement of the WPS agenda, and gender mainstreaming in peace processes, violence against women is unfortunately still ever-present, which poses a devastating conundrum in today’s society. Violence against women reflects how fragmented the social and economic development are in communities and perpetuates the marginalisation of women within the society.

16. Amongst the forms of violence against women is one that is conflict-related. Conflicts affect women and men differently. Disruptions to health access, humanitarian aid, and development programs can limit women’s access

to regaining authority over themselves. By virtue of this, women can be subjected to different types of violence, including sexual violence.

17. Sexual violence has become a weapon of warfare and one of the defining characteristics of contemporary conflict. Responding to this, ASEAN commits to respect fundamental freedoms and protect human rights.

18. Numerous initiatives have been taken by ASEAN to prevent and combat conflict-related sexual violence.

19. In 2002, the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) was established to promote and complement activities for the effective participation of women in all fields and at various levels of the political, economic, and social landscape. Part of the work done by ACW is monitoring women's participation in all aspects within the society, including women's participation in peacebuilding, and advancing the WPS agenda with relevant ASEAN bodies.

20. In 2004, ASEAN Member States concluded the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Elimination of Violence against Children in ASEAN. This Declaration acknowledged the importance for the ASEAN Member States to prevent and protect women and children from all forms of violence, including conflict-related sexual violence.

21. In 2010, ASEAN established ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women (ACWC), a regional human rights mechanism to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and children.

22. One of the landmark breakthroughs of ACWC is by commissioning the ASEAN Regional Action Plan for the Elimination of Violence against Women (ASEAN RPA on EVAW). The ASEAN RPA on EVAW is a framework containing a set of actions that incorporate both prevention and response strategies. The Regional Plan of Action adopts the following strategies, such as: (i) devising effective; (ii) coordinated strategies to prevent violence; (iii) protection of victims/survivors of violence; (iv) developing & strengthening legal framework; (v) capacity building; (vi) data collection; and (vii) monitoring the efforts through periodic review.

23. The RPA covers a 10-year period, from 2016 until 2025, and is in line with the APSC Blueprint 2025. Within its Midterm Review, ACWC noted that there is a need to deepen the understanding of gender-based violence in emergencies and its impact on the lives of vulnerable persons in conflict-affected areas.

24. As a part of its long-standing cooperation, ACWC and ACW collaborated with UN Women in 2018 to develop the ASEAN Regional Guidelines on Violence against Women and Girls Data Collection and Use. It provides guidance for ASEAN Member States in generating reliable data to improving: (i) evidence-based Violence against Women and Girls prevention and response policies, as well as (ii) the quality; and (iii) availability of services, protection, and justice for women who experience violence in ASEAN.

IV. Current activities

Distinguished Speakers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

25. Sustainable peace can only be attained if it manages to address the structural and cultural roots of conflict. In doing so, peacebuilding must put forth inclusivity for all layers of society, including gender groups.

26. However, as gender issues within conflict are multidimensional, we acknowledge the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration between all ASEAN community pillars.

27. In this regard, ASEAN-IPR has convened an online Webinar on September 2021, engaging with AWPR, ACWC, and Southeast Asian Network of Women Peace Negotiators and Mediators to discuss and review the implementation of WPS agenda and explore the best practices and lessons learned of WPS initiatives from different sectors in ASEAN.

28. Moreover, in order to raise awareness among ASEAN Member States on the importance of gender perspectives and gender-responsive mechanisms in peace processes; as well as in pursuit of our Training Roster; the ASEAN-IPR

is currently initiating the development of Module for Training Programme on WPS.

29. On this initiative, the ASEAN-IPR is engaging with various experts and practitioners on peacebuilding, to formulate and develop the training modules on WPS – that is envisioned to be a tool to enhance and support women’s participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

30. Through such training based on the modules, it is hoped that the ASEAN Community could create a common understanding of the importance of gender inclusion, and ways to formulate gender-responsive mechanisms, both at the national and regional levels.

V. Closing

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests and Speakers,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

31. Before I conclude, I would like to emphasise how truly happy and privileged I am to be here today, as this Conference is a reflection of our joint commitment to enhancing the role and representation of women in key decision-making bodies and institutions.

32. The ASEAN-IPR stands ready to continue its partnership with the Republic of Korea, in advancing the WPS Agenda, as well as to empower the role of women in peace processes, amongst many of our endeavour together.

33. I look forward to the outcome of this Conference, as I believe that it shall be a very lively, inclusive, and diverse platform for stakeholders to promote sustainable peace, through the advancement of WPS agenda.

34. I thank you.
