



**Message from the ASEAN Women for Peace Registry (AWPR) on
the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic in ASEAN**

5 June 2020

The ASEAN Women for Peace Registry (AWPR) held a Meeting via videoconference on Friday, 5 June 2020, as means to get to know each other, exchange information on the work each Member is undertaking, and views on the direction of the Registry. The Meeting also aimed to discuss on ways and means to better contribute in the implementation of the “Joint Statement on Promoting Women, Peace, and Security in ASEAN” adopted in 2017.

During the Meeting, the Registry expressed sympathy to all the peoples of ASEAN who are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of the Registry conveyed appreciation for health workers, in which the majority are women, who are working dedicatedly at the front lines to aid the victims of the pandemic, and other front lines personnel who are engaging at community level to ease its impact.

The Meeting recognised the Declaration of the Special ASEAN Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 on 14 April 2020, which stressed the importance of involving multi-stakeholders and whole-of-ASEAN Community in responding to the pandemic in a timely and effective manner and furthering enhancement of a caring and sharing ASEAN Community. Notwithstanding, the Meeting also realised that the WPS Agenda remains more relevant than ever – bearing in mind the severe impact of the pandemic to all sectors of society, including women and girls, as well as other vulnerable groups.

In that regard, the AWPR discussed the need to ensure the role of women as one central stakeholder during times of the pandemic pursuant to the four pillars of Women, Peace, and Security, namely in the prevention, protection, participation, and recovery and relief. As a group, the Registry stands ready to work together with all other ASEAN institutions to fulfil the goals and aims of a resilient and peaceful ASEAN Community that is truly people-centred and leaves no one behind.

The Meeting also discussed some possible suggested activities that could be taken by both government and non-governmental institutions to mainstream the WPS Agenda while addressing the ongoing pandemic, including:

- (1) To chart a WPS Agenda framework focusing on situations such as this pandemic, as well as other public health emergency situations. This framework will specifically demonstrate the WPS Agenda pillars on prevention, protection, participation, and recovery and relief to ensure that girls and women will be treated equitably throughout the event of crisis management, government policy and development programming by multiple stakeholders. It is important that the framework take cognizance of the increased incidence and risk of violence against women and children in situations of confinement and quarantine, particularly vulnerable women who are migrant workers, refugees and living in conflict-affected areas.
- (2) To encourage information sharing and the availability of gender disaggregated official statistics and other data pertaining to cases of COVID-19 affected persons in order to increase awareness on the impact of pandemics and other crisis among the male and female population in addition to identifying prioritised issues that needs to be responded.
- (3) To advance policy research on women's economic empowerment, to strategically respond to their needs as a result of massive loss of jobs and livelihoods. One of the key objectives in the post COVID-19 recovery and rehabilitation would be the economic security of women, not only as a human resource of the region's market economy, but as an important pillar of the family unit.

The ASEAN Women for Peace Registry shall remain supportive, and collectively continue within our capacity throughout this pandemic situation to maintain and promote regional peace and stability, sustainable development and prosperity for the peoples of ASEAN.
