

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Working Group on Social ASEAN**

Network for Transformative Social Protection

7 March 2017

#### **Multi sectoral groups and parliamentarians in Southeast Asiato ASCC Ministers and ASEAN Leaders: Address the missing link. Adopt a Social ASEAN.**

One hundred national and regional networks of civil society organizations (CSOs), trade unions, workers, migrants and other vulnerable groups and parliamentarians in Southeast Asia called on leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to adopt a people's agenda for a Social ASEAN in order to realize a "people-oriented, people-centered ASEAN" and make ASEAN's 50th Anniversary "truly meaningful."

In a statement submitted to the Chair of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), the signatories urged high officials and leaders in ASEAN to include in the discussions and declarations the perspectives of ordinary people including those from vulnerable groups who are aspiring for a better quality of life – a life of dignity.

CSO networks based in the Philippines – DIGNIDAD Alliance and Network for Transformative Social Protection in Asia – delivered the statement to Department of Social Welfare and Development Secretary Judy Taguiwalo. The statement underscoring the importance of prioritizing people's rights and needs over profits, was given before the ASCC Chair left for Iloilo City for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of the ASCC on 7 March and the 17<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council Meeting on 8 March 2017.

The statement addressed to the ASCC Ministers from 10 member countries of ASEAN as they will discuss the socio-cultural concerns in the region and declarations/statements for adoption by the Heads of States at the ASEAN Summit in April, pointed out the continuing social deprivation and exclusion of majority of the people in Southeast Asia. "65% of the workforce in the region are in precarious work - without permanent and decent jobs and adequate income as well as access to social services and social protection that could enable them to live a life with dignity," underlined Ana Maria Nemenzo - co-convenor of DIGNIDAD Alliance.

It added that less than 30% of the population have social protection as government expenditure for it remains low. "In Southeast Asia, an average of only 3% of GDP per country goes to social protection. The data in four of the ASEAN countries is even below 2%," said HelpAge International.

"With widening inequality in the region, social protection becomes more a necessity. It should be for all, and must include not only healthcare, but other essential services especially housing, water, electricity and education; employment; and adequate social pension and income support for older people, persons with disability, the unemployed, and calamity victims," added NTSP member Anwar Maruf of KPRI-Indonesia.

MP Charles Santiago, head of the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights, highlighted that traditional livelihoods and means of survival of majority of the population are lost due to liberalization, deregulation and privatization policies pushed by our governments, now captured by big corporations. "These neoliberal policies have also led to further exploitation of workers, and diminished public access to essential services and social security. It is therefore imperative for our governments to adopt the notion of a Social ASEAN."

The Federation of Metal Workers in Indonesia (FSPMI) stressed the need to realize social security as a human right and social justice for all people in Asia. This resonates with the demands of signatories especially those representing marginalized groups in the region such as the ASEAN Disability Forum, ASEAN Youth Forum, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, Disabled Peoples' International Asia Pacific, and HelpAge.

The signatories to the statement noted that the integration efforts are taking place at a time when ASEAN member states are signing mega-trade pacts like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) that would affect almost half of the world's population. "The RCEP was originally an ASEAN initiative. All the negotiating partners are the dialogue partners with ASEAN who individually have an agreement with ASEAN," said ASETUC member Uni Apro.

"The ASEAN integration process must create opportunities for all. The bigger challenge of protecting the rights of the majority of migrant workers in the region should also be addressed," added Migrants Forum in Asia.

The Working Group on Social ASEAN and the rest of the signatories deem urgent for ASEAN leaders to incorporate a social dimension in the regional integration. They demand for the adoption of proposed agenda for a sustainable SOCIAL ASEAN, reflected in ASEAN Declarations in order to bind governments.

Specifically, a Social ASEAN calls for the adoption of the following structural issues:

- a) Democratic and participatory processes at national and regional levels;
- b) Gender equality and protection of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (children and young people, older persons, persons with disability, LGBTIQ persons, migrant workers and their families);
- c) State duty to provide essential services, especially universal healthcare and lifelong learning opportunities for all;
- d) Social protection for all (universal living pension as well as health, education, housing, water, electricity, land, employment);
- e) Safe and affordable food and access to productive resources; and
- f) Ratification and implementation of ILO core labor standards.

The statement, also endorsed by organizations from East and South Asia and international groups including World Social Forum and activist luminaries such as Samir Amin and Francois Houtart, was submitted as well to the Philippine Representative to AICHR at the consultation with CSOs, and to the Department of Affairs.

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## **Signatories to the Statement**

### **Working Group on Social ASEAN**

*ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR)*

*ASEAN Services Employees Trade Union Council (ASETUC)*

*Migrant Forum Asia (MFA)*

*Network for Transformative Social Protection (NTSP) – Asia/Southeast Asia*

*Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC)*

*Monitoring Sustainability of Globalisation (MSN) - Malaysia*

*Trade Union Rights Centre (TURC)*

### **National organizations/formations in Southeast Asia**

*Buhay na may Dignidad para sa Lahat (DIGNIDAD) Alliance - Philippines*

*WomanHealth Philippines*

*Kampanya para sa Makataong Pamumuhay (KAMP) - Philippines*

*Aksyon sa Kahandaan sa Kalamidad - National Coalition - Philippines*

*Alyansa Agrikultura, Centro Saka, Inc. – Philippines*

*Development Action for Women Network (DAWN) – Philippines*

*Empower - Philippines*

*Federation of Free Workers (FFW) - Philippines*  
*Integrated Rural Development Foundation (IRDF)*  
*Keep Hope Alive - Philippines*  
*Labor Education and Research Network (LEARN) - Philippines*  
*LILAK (Purple Action for Indigenous Women's Rights) – Philippines*  
*Manggagawang Kababaihang Mithi ay Paglaya (MAKALAYA) – Philippines*  
*National Movement for Food Sovereignty (NMFS) - Philippines*  
*National Union of Building and Construction Workers (NUBCW) - Philippines*  
*Partnership for Clean Air (PCA) Inc. - Philippines*  
*Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA) – Philippines*  
*Philippines for Natural Farming, Inc. (PNFI)*  
*Philippine Migrants Rights Watch (PMRW)*  
*Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM)*  
*Public Services Labor Independent Confederation (PSLINK)- PSI - Philippines*  
*Reporma Isusulong ng Survivors Kalamidad -Laguna Lakes - Philippines*  
*Save Sierra Madre Network Alliance Inc. - Philippines*  
*Sustainability and Participation through Education and Lifelong Learning (SPELL) - Philippines*  
*Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau, Inc. (WLB) – Philippines*  
*World Council for Curriculum and Instruction (WCCI) – Philippines*  
*ZAMBAL KA – Philippines*  
*Cambodian Grassroots Cross-Sector Network (CGCN)*  
*CamASEAN Youth's Future (CamASEAN) – Cambodia*  
*Cambodian Independent Civil-Servant Association (CICA)*  
*Independent Farmers Association for Community Development (IFACD) - Cambodia*  
*Farmers for Farmers Network (FFF) - Cambodia*  
*Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK) – Cambodia*  
*Social Action for Change (SAC) – Cambodia*  
*Aspek - Indonesia*  
*FSPMI (Federation of Metal Workers)- Indonesia*  
*Indonesia for Global Justice (IGJ)*  
*INISIATIF- Indonesia*  
*INKRISPENA– Indonesia*  
*Jamkes Watch (Social Security Healthcare & Workers)- Indonesia*  
*Institut Pemberdayaan Perempuan-Institute for Women Empowerment(IWE) - Indonesia*  
*Konfederasi Pergerakan Rakyat Indonesia (KPRI) - Indonesia*  
*Konfederasi Serikat Nasional/National Union Confederation ( KSN) - Indonesia*  
*Lembaga Informasi Perburuhan Sedane/Sedane Labour Resource Center (LIPS)– Indonesia*  
*Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi Masyarakat/Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy (ELSAM) -*  
*Forum Islam Progresif/Progressive Islam Forum - Indonesia*  
*Local Initiative for OSH Network (LION ) - Indonesia*  
*Migrant Care – Indonesia*  
*Sarekat Hijau Indonesia/Indonesian Green Union (SHI) - Indonesia*  
*Serikat Mahasiswa Progresif Universitas Indonesia/Progressive Student Union (SEMAR UI) –Indonesia*  
*Serikat Pekerja Percetakan Penerbitan dan Media Informasi Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia (SP PPMI SPS)–*  
*Indonesia*  
*Solidaritas Perempuan (Women's Solidarity for Human Rights) – Indonesia*  
*SPN (Nasional Trade Union) -Indonesia*  
*Working Peoples Party (PRP) - Indonesia*  
*Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia/ Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI) – Indonesia*  
*National Union of Bank Employees (NUBE) - Malaysia*  
*TENAGANITA – Malaysia*  
*Phan Tee Eain (Creative Home) - Myanmar*  
*Yangon Watch – Myanmar*  
*Think Centre - Singapore*

HomeNet Thailand  
Vietnam Peace & Development Foundation

**Regional and other National Organizations in Asia**

ASEAN Disability Forum (ADF)  
ASEAN Youth Forum (AYF)  
ASEAN SOGIE Caucus  
ALTSEAN-Burma  
HomeNet Southeast Asia  
Asian Roundtable on Social Protection  
Asia Network on the Right to Social Protection (ANRSP)  
Asia Monitor Resource Centre  
Asia Pacific Network for Food Sovereignty (NMFS)  
Building and Wood Workers International - Asia Pacific Region (BWI-AP)  
Disabled Peoples' International Asia Pacific (DPIAP)  
Focus on the Global South  
HelpAge International  
NGO Forum on ADB  
Bangladesh Krishok Foundation  
Centre for Environmental Justice/Friends of the Earth - Sri Lanka  
Christian Development Alternative (CDA) - Bangladesh  
Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF)  
Mrinal Gore Interactive Centre - India  
Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum  
Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee  
Programme on Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (PWESCR) - India

**Individuals and other International networks**

Achin Vanaik, retired professor of "International Relations and global Politics," University of Delhi  
Anuradha Chenoy, professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University – India  
Birgit Daiber, Common Good Network  
Cora Fabros, Co-Vice President of International Peace Bureau  
Girly E. Amarillo, DSD, Alay kay Inay Foundation, Inc.  
Francois Houtart, professor-National Institute of Higher Studies of Quito (Ecuador)  
Kamal Mitra Chenoy, professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University – India  
Samir Amin, Chair – World Social Forum  
Subodh R Pyakurel, Chairperson, INSEC (Informal Sector Service Center) - Nepal  
William Nicholas Gomes, Human Rights Defender and Freelance Journalist - UK  
Europe solidaire sans frontières (ESSF)  
Global Social Justice  
Institute for Globalization studies and social movements (IGSO) - Moscow  
World Social Forum