



PRESS RELEASE

on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women 2022:

UNITE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS!

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence against women and girls is an international civil society led campaign that takes place each year. It commences on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ends on 10 December, Human Rights Day, indicating that violence against women is the most pervasive breach of human rights worldwide. It was started by activists at the inaugural Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991 and continues to be coordinated each year by the Center for Women's Global Leadership. It is used as an organizing strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls (VAWG). The theme and activities of the UNiTE Campaign in 2022, under the global banner is UNITE! Activism to End Violence against Women & Girls.

To celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Weaving Women's Voices in Southeast Asia (WEAVE), a network of feminist women's organisations in Southeast Asia advocating for women's rights¹, mobilised a session with WEAVE member countries from the 6 regional members namely, Indonesia, Philippines, Cambodia, Brunei Darussalam, Thailand and Malaysia. The agenda is to hold a session concurrently on December 4th, 2022 from each country taking part in solidarity on the issues: (1) Discrimination against women and children; (2) Equal economic opportunities for women and girl children; (3) Sexual violence and gender-based violence against women and girl children; (4) Meaningful and substantive participation of women and girl children to end culture of impunity.

Manohara Subraman from Women's Equality Association, a WEAVE member from Malaysia said that "Although Malaysia has ratified CEDAW since in 1995, gender inequality is still prevalent. During the recent GE 15, only 31 out of the 222 parliamentary seats are held by women. Malaysia currently ranks 103rd out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2022 lagging behind our regional neighbours namely the Philippines (19th), Singapore (49th), Thailand (79th), Vietnam (83rd), Indonesia (92nd) and Cambodia (98th). She calls Malaysian government for addressing gender inequality and empowering the socio-economic of women, and also providing meaningful and substantive participation of women and girls and to end the culture of impunity.

On the other hand, Indonesia has new law on sexual violence crime in year 2022, but the law could not be fully implemented because it still required derivative regulations in the form of government regulations and presidential regulations as mandated in the law. Even though at the law enforcement level there are still various obstacles, including the capacity and perspective of law

¹ WEAVE has agenda for rising the voice of marginalized women and girl children to enabling them to participate in addressing sexual violence to end of impunity and promoting feminist economic justice agenda

enforcement officials who often respond to cases of sexual violence without using the paradigm of protection and justice for victims. The planned legal reform of the Criminal Code (KUHP) contains several articles which will particularly impact on marginalized group. It will also exacerbate and encourage existing discriminatory practices that put women at a disadvantage and further limit access to vital information and education on sexual health and family planning as well as criminalise abortion in most cases. Ika Agustina of Kalyanamitra, one of the WEAVE members from Indonesia calls the Indonesian government to : (1) Accelerate the completion of derivative regulations of the sexual violence law and disseminate the law widely to all members of society; (2) Eliminate clauses in the draft Criminal Code that discriminate and bear the potential to criminalise women and marginalized group, and criminalise free access to contraception as well as education on sexual health and family planning.

Social negative norms are often a way to internalize inequality and how people are treated differently due to their sexual orientation and gender identity. Women and girls are labelled gender roles code since they were born which limited their ability and capacity to exercise their right and access to the same benefits and opportunity. Faced with multiple burden with household chores, women and girls are blamed in performing those roles with lack of sharing of responsibilities by other members of the family. Therefore, Sreymao Pang from SILAKA, a WEAVE member organization from Cambodia, calls the Cambodian government to end culture of impunity and strengthen support for victims, community and family to ensure women and girls have access to same benefits and opportunities, and an enabling environment that is free from discrimination and harassment.

Juriani Udan from Lun Bawang Murut Association, a community partner WEAVE member Project Women Brunei, called for continues protection of indigenous women from all forms of violence, strengthen support for victims of sexual violence at the workplace, protect those who report sexual violence from retaliation, awareness raising on respecting personal boundaries both online and offline, and building more supportive and inclusive workplace environment for all.

In the Philippines, sexual violence among women and girls both offline and online remains a serious and grave concern faced by women and girls. Women and girls who who are survivors of sexual violence suffered in all spheres of their lives i.e.socio-economic, physical, emotional and mental well-being. The indirect effects are are also felt by the community and the society. Based on the reported cases in 2020, there were 9,325 rape cases in the Philippines while 2021 had 7,963 and this is the most common form of sexual abuse followed by incest. The Philippines has now become the epicenter of child sexual abuse and exploitation cases which is also considered as a form of sexual violence affecting children specifically girls. An estimated 2 million Filipino children are victims of sexual violence based on the report of ECPAT and Interpol. Jeanette Laurel-Ampog, Executive Director at Talikala, a partner of WEAVE member Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau (WLB) called the Philippine government to take an aggressive action to address the issue of sexual violence in all levels from raising the awareness of the public on the issue, implementation of the law and provision of services to victims/survivors which can help in the recovery and reintegration.

WEAVE calls all government of ASEAN member states to reaffirm their commitment to end gender-based violence, make sexual violence as a regional agenda of ASEAN, empower women and girls in all their diversity and move towards accountability and justice.

Contact Persons :

1. Manohara Subraman (Malaysia) – oharasubramaniam5911@gmail.com
2. Ika Agustina (Indonesia) – ykm@indo.net.id
3. Sreymao Pang (Cambodia) – sreymaop@silaka.org
4. Juriani Udan (Brunei Darussalam) – juriani.udan@yahoo.com
5. Jeanette Laurel-Ampog (Philippines) – talikaladavao@gmail.com