



Thailand NOC for ASEAN Civil Society Conference/
ASEAN Peoples Forum 2023

CONVERGENCE SPACE ON Integrated Approaches to Socio-Economic Justice

BRIEF REPORT

By AMRC



More than 800 from a diverse civil society, ethnic minorities and groups, Indigenous Peoples, LGBTQIA+, Women, Persons with Disabilities, elderly, faith-based groups, migrant workers, informal workers, trade unions, farmers and fisherfolks, youths, human rights defenders, victims of land conflicts, victims of human right violations and people's organisations of South East Asia gathered together in in-person and online participants gathered at

Atma Jaya University, Jakarta, Indonesia from 1-3 September for the 2023 ACSC/APF, with the theme of 'Reclaiming safe space, restoring democracy in Southeast Asia', resulted in a [Join Statement](#).

The convergence space on **"Integrated Approaches to Socio-Economic Justice"** (CS5) is among 6 thematic convergence spaces of the event, which was collectively organised by networks and

organisations from global, regional and country levels including Asia Roundtable on Social Protection (**AROSP**), Asian Solidarity Economy Council (**ASEC**), Asia Monitor Resource Centre (**AMRC**), Asia Civil Society Partnership for Sustainable Development (**APSD**), ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, Asia Floor Wage Alliance (**AFWA** Indonesia), Blood Money Campaign (**BMC** - Myanmar), Confederation of Indonesia People Movement (**KPRI** - Indonesia), Equitable Community Legal Education Center (Cambodia), Extraterritorial Obligation Watch Coalition (**ETOs**), Greenpeace Southeast Asia, HomeNet Southeast Asia (**HNSEA**), International NGOS Forum on Indonesian Development (**INFID** - Indonesia), INSPiR, Migrant Forum in Asia (**MFA**), Sedane Labour Resource Centre (**LIPS**), Free to Be Me (**F2BM**), **TEAM9**, Task Force on ASEAN Migrant Workers (**TF-AMW**), **YBS**, Spirit in Education Movement Foundation (**SEM**) and Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising (**WIEGO**).

In total, there were 505 times of participants, 100 online participants and 405 physical participants with 241 women including trans-women, 161 men including trans-men and 3 non-binary. 34 AROSP members (22 women, 12 men) from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam actively participated in different workshops and 9 of them were speakers (6 women, 3 men).

On 1st and 2nd September, 7 workshops were successfully conducted out of 8 planned workshops, including: 1) Universalising Maternity Protection to foster an inclusive care economy in SouthEast Asia; 2) Inclusive Growth in ASEAN: Mainstreaming Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) and Improving Decent work for Informal Workers; 3) Transboundary Investments: Borderless Impacts and Extraterritorial Obligation and Governance; 4) Tackling Irresponsible Business Practices and Human Rights in the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Supply Chain and the Platform Economy Labour in ASEAN; 5) Beyond Bias: Building Inclusive Economies for a Brighter Future; 6) ASEAN Matters: Joint Efforts in Protecting Marine and Fisheries Sustainability through Enhancing Workers Protection; and 7) Panel Discussion: Civic Advocacy with the SDGS – Voluntary National Review (VNR) and Peoples’ Scorecard (PSC) in Southeast Asia. The workshop context analyses and specific

recommendations could be seen from the [Workshop reports](#).

The prevailing economic models in the region have placed the affairs of the private sector corporations and businesses above the affairs of peoples in society. While transboundary investments are increasing in the region, ASEAN lacks effective mechanisms and the rule of law to ensure the protection of the community, environment, labour and human rights. The expansion of global and regional value chains (GVC and RVC), which also has boosted economic development in Southeast Asia, also led to social inequality. Making policies in favour of the capital owners leaves irresponsible business practices and labour rights violations unaccounted for across the region.

Most of the ASEAN workforce is in informal employment and the informality rate is increasing amidst the digitalisation and casualisation of the ASEAN economies. Informal economies are characterised by a high incidence of poverty and decent work deficits which are in the form of unproductive and insecure jobs, poor working conditions, low wages, exploitation, and inadequate protection from income loss during maternity, unemployment, sickness, disability, and old age. Women and individuals from LGBTQIA+, platform workers, migrants, and agricultural and fisheries workers often fall into the most vulnerable form of employment and have lower access to social protection. The informalisation trend of the workforce also affects workers from traditional formal sectors such as manufacturing. The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the weakness of current public services and social protection systems and how the lack of such exacerbates poverty and inequality in the region.

Socio-economic justice cannot be achieved without the people at the centre; hence, economic systems must be shifted to the Social Solidarity Economy. ASEAN must have stronger measures to enhance inclusive economic growth, while decent work and social protection should be integrated as a core strategy for socioeconomic development. While inclusive economic growth and social protection are recognised in several ASEAN declarations, the effectiveness of each policy varies and often depends on the prevailing cultural and socio-political dynamics. The lack of a multi-sector approach also leaves non-state actors little to no space to affect these policies more substantively.

The **Recommendations** from the “Integrated Approaches to Socio-Economic Justice” convergence space:

1. Governments must accurately monitor the numbers, wages, working conditions and social protection of vulnerable workers, irrespective of nationality and legal status, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion. ASEAN Member States and Timor-Leste should adopt and ratify all relevant international human and labour rights conventions that guide the implementation of employment laws and policies promoting the formalisation of work across ASEAN. This must not be used to identify and disadvantage undocumented migrants or other vulnerable groups, including platform-based workers, but as part of increasing all workers’ voices in the workplace and society and not depriving them of the social protection that they are entitled to.



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2. Promote equality for women and LGBTQIA+ persons and eliminate all forms of systemic and cultural stigma, discrimination, and all forms of violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity, expression, and sex characteristics. ASEAN Member States and Timor-Leste should initiate campaigns, educational programmes and legislative provisions to challenge and transform gender norms at all stages of life. These efforts should target both employers and society at large to address entrenched norms. ASEAN Member States and Timor-Leste can pave the way for greater acceptance and implementation of maternity protection measures. Of particular importance is to ensure parents/carers are given the necessary support to conceive and to raise children free from discrimination and with protection to ensure health and safety for all.



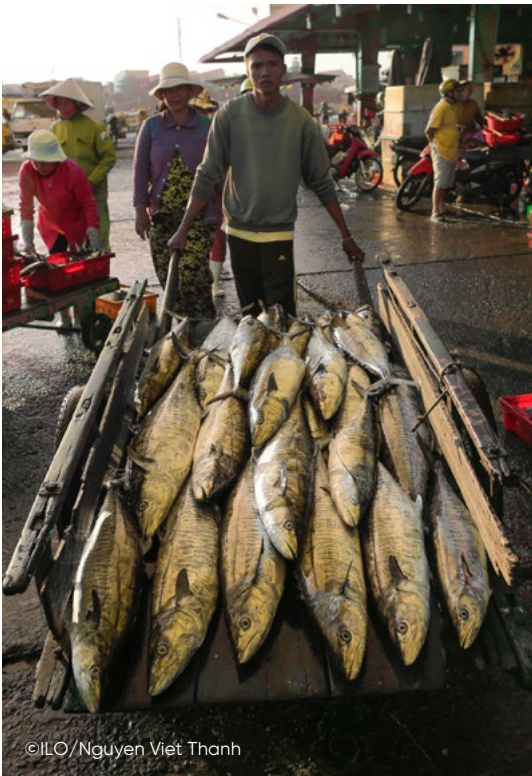
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3. Social protection relies on socio-economic policies covering inclusive business, and social protection must be reviewed through a multi-stakeholder approach. The policy and legislative agendas should be based on the “people needs” and cover the principle of inclusiveness for all. This depends not only on government action but also on holding businesses accountable for promoting a strong civil society. Therefore, ASEAN Member States and Timor-Leste should recognise the Social Solidarity Economy, support the strengthening of Civil Society and workers’ organisations and work with businesses to include CSOs at community as well as national tripartite levels.



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4. ASEAN Member States and Timor-Leste must endorse a business and human rights mechanisms and transboundary jurisdiction applying for all the ASEAN countries within and beyond the territories where its people operate businesses or projects with human rights violations in other countries. Including the establishment of ASEAN human rights court to ensure that people can access justice and protection.



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We also heard the **echoes and related recommendations relating to decent works and social protection** from other convergence spaces, including:

ASEAN and all member states must provide the legal and policy frameworks on the social and solidarity economy for workers in the formal and informal economy, including migrant, domestic, informal and sex workers and other vulnerable groups, especially ratify, formulate and implement national laws and policies in line with the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, ILO Resolution concerning decent work the informal economy (2002), ILO R193 on Cooperatives, ILO C190 on Ending Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, and ILO R204 on Concerning the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy.

We call for a regional collaboration of trade union led social movements in ASEAN to demand the creation of ASEAN Fair Minimum Wages for cross-border formal and informal workers as tier of the value chain of production and reproduction of goods and services (Recommendation 1 - Convergence Space 2: Alternative Regionalism).



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Ensure Comprehensive and Non-discriminatory Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Education and Services: To address sexual and reproductive health and rights in ASEAN, governments should invest in comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights education programmes, including the state support and recognition of such community-led services provided by civil society and the communities (Recommendation 3 - Convergence Space 3: Human Rights and Safe Space for Marginalised Groups).

ASEAN Governments must establish a fund that provides subsidies for farmers, including women farmers, to sustain their small production, both for endemic food crops and endemic livestock and fish so peoples could achieve food sovereignty. Financial resources should be allocated to invest in agroecology and divert from industrial agroecology that is harmful to the environment and livelihood of smallholder farmers (Recommendation 3 - Convergence Space 4: Climate and Environment Justice).



Asia Monitor Resource Centre

Email amrc@amrcentre.org

Website <http://www.amrcentre.org/>

Facebook Asia Monitor Resource Centre

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