

MANILA, January 22, 2007:

**Working Group Statement on the Eminent Persons' Group Recommendations for Inclusion in the ASEAN Charter**

The Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism (Working Group) commends the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) for their Recommendations for Inclusion in the ASEAN Charter.

We are encouraged by the EPG's recognition of the establishment of an ASEAN human rights mechanism as a worthy idea that should be pursued. The foundations for the mechanism are already in place. To date, all ASEAN countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). ASEAN has also adopted a number of declarations on women and children and, most recently, on migrant workers. The challenge for ASEAN now is to honor and implement these commitments in a timely manner. Establishing an ASEAN human rights mechanism, or at least establishing a commission for the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children as provided for by the ASEAN Vientiane Action Programme (VAP), will be a good start.

Since 1996, the Working Group has been cooperating with ASEAN and supporting its human rights endeavors. It can be recalled that in 2005, the ASEAN asked for the Working Group's assistance in implementing the human rights provisions of the VAP. Since then, the Working Group has commenced studies and has convened workshops, roundtable discussions, and meetings on the VAP. We look forward to continued partnership with ASEAN as it takes the necessary steps to promote and protect the fundamental rights of all ASEAN peoples.

The Working Group welcomes the CEBU Declaration on the Blueprint of the ASEAN Charter wherein the ASEAN Heads of Government endorsed the EPG Recommendations without any reservations

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**The Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism's (Working Group) primary objective is the establishment of an intergovernmental human rights mechanism in Southeast Asia.**

It is organized into national working groups in ASEAN states which are composed of representatives of government institutions, parliamentary human rights committees, the academe, and NGOs.

For more information on the Working Group, please visit [www.aseanhrmech.org](http://www.aseanhrmech.org).