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Supporting the Rights of Women and Children in ASEAN



The ASEAN-U.S. Partnership for Good Governance, Equitable and Sustainable Development and Security project works to protect the rights of women and children. Photo credit: ASEAN-U.S. PROGRESS

As in many parts of the world, women and children in the 10 countries that comprise the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are disproportionately affected by poverty, illicit trade, poor health and limited opportunities for quality education and employment.

To better promote and protect the rights of women and children in the region, ASEAN established the ASEAN Commission to Promote and Protect the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) in April 2010. This inter-governmental commission is comprised of two representatives per ASEAN member state, one representative for women and another representative for children. The ACWC is responsible for promoting adherence to the Convention on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, both of which were ratified by all 10 ASEAN member states.

The U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Department of State, through the ASEAN-U.S. Partnership for Good Governance, Equitable and Sustainable Development and Security (PROGRESS) project, works to help strengthen the ACWC and supports its mandate to promote and protect the rights of women and children through the following initiatives:

- **Supporting the establishment of a Network of Social Service Agencies (NOSSA):** The network will provide a platform from which to share information and best practices, conduct expert exchanges and implement other programs across the region. In 2016, the United States will support the launching and first official meeting of the NOSSA, which will initially include 34 social service agencies.
- **Harmonize ASEAN member state approaches to addressing violence against women and children:** Building upon earlier support to the ACWC to finalize the ASEAN Regional Plans of Action on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the Elimination of Violence Against Children, the United States will work closely with the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly to promote harmonization of national-level laws to the recently adopted plans.

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