



## CONCLUDING STATEMENT

### **12<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the South East Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum (SEANF) Hotel Everly, Putrajaya, Malaysia 29-30 September 2015**

The South East Asia National Human Rights Institutions Forum (SEANF) consisting of the National Human Rights Commission of Indonesia (Komnas HAM), the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM), the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC), the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (CHRP), the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT) and the Provedoria for Human Rights and Justice of Timor Leste (PDHJ) convened its 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, which was hosted by SUHAKAM in Putrajaya, Malaysia on 29-30 September 2015.

The main outcomes of the Annual Meeting were as follows:

#### **1.0 SEANF Seminar on the Role of NHRIs in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights**

1.1 SEANF Members welcomed the SEANF Seminar on the Role of NHRIs in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights organised by SUHAKAM in the morning of 29 September 2015 in Putrajaya, Malaysia, which was attended by 108 participants from various stakeholders including SEANF Members, Government agencies, United Nations agencies, NGOs, academic institutions and the media.

#### **2.0 Adoption of the Agenda**

2.1 The Agenda for the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of SEANF was adopted with an additional item on “SEANF – The Way Forward” as proposed by SUHAKAM.

#### **3.0 SEANF – The Way Forward**

3.1 SEANF Members agreed in principle to the proposal mooted by SUHAKAM to adopt a more focussed approach in promoting and protecting human rights in South East Asia by prioritizing on a single common thematic human rights issue, on which all Members would carry out joint activities during the course of a particular year, with a view to bringing forth more concrete outcomes.

3.2 SEANF Members decided that the rights of older persons be considered as a possible priority area during the period under the chairmanship of MNHRC.

#### **4.0 SEANF Permanent Secretariat**

4.1 SEANF Members noted with much appreciation the initiative made by Komnas HAM in securing some funding from the Government of Indonesia to facilitate the establishment of the SEANF Permanent Secretariat, and the efforts taken by NHRCT in identifying potential donor organisations.

4.2 SEANF Members agreed to proceed with the establishment of an interim SEANF Permanent Secretariat, which will be based at the premises of Komnas HAM's office. Komnas HAM agreed to further look into the Indonesian laws, under which the SEANF Permanent Secretariat could be registered, and to provide an update on the matter as well as on details regarding the funding received from the Government of Indonesia, at the upcoming SEANF TWG Meeting 1/2016 scheduled to be held in Yangon, Myanmar in January 2016.

4.3 SEANF Members agreed to task the interim SEANF Permanent Secretariat to undertake initial work on the drafting of the SEANF Strategic Plan 2017-2022 to be discussed at the SEANF TWG Meeting 1/2016.

#### **5.0 Discussion on Thematic Human Rights Issues**

5.1 SEANF Members deliberated on several thematic human rights topics, namely the following issues:

- i. Human Rights and Climate Change
- ii. Business and Human Rights
- iii. National Human Rights Action Plan
- iv. Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals
- v. Abolition of the Death Penalty
- vi. Rights of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Victims of Trafficking

5.2 SEANF Members noted that the issues of Human Rights and Climate Change and Business and Human Rights are closely related and agreed on the need for further capacity building for SEANF Members on the two human rights areas.

5.3 The Meeting took note of the experiences of several SEANF Members with regard to the development and implementation of the national human rights action plans of their respective countries.

5.4 SEANF Members noted with appreciation the adoption of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by world leaders during the United Nations SDG Summit, which was held in New York on 25-27 September 2015. Recognising the crucial role of NHRIs in national efforts towards achieving the SDGs, SEANF Members agreed on the desirability to focus on their capacity enhancement in this regard at this stage.

5.5 SEANF Members shared their experiences in promoting the abolition of the death penalty and the current situation in their respective countries in relation to the death penalty.

5.6 SEANF Members discussed the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and victims of trafficking and agreed to continue to work together on the issue.

## **6.0 Other Matters**

6.1 SEANF Members took note of the communication received by SUHAKAM from the Embassy of the Azerbaijan to Malaysia regarding its request for SEANF to discuss, at its 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, the judgment of the Europe Court of Human Rights on the alleged human rights violations committed by Armenia that had led to the displacement of a large number of Azerbaijan nationals, and agreed not to take any position on the matter as it is outside of SEANF's mandate, and would respond to the Embassy of Azerbaijan accordingly.

6.2 SEANF Members agreed with MNHRC's proposal to hold the SEANF TWG Meeting 1/2016 in Yangon, Myanmar in January 2016.

## **7.0 SEANF Communiqué**

7.1 SEANF Members issued a SEANF Communiqué ahead of the 27<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit containing recommendations on various human rights issues.

## **8.0 Handing Over of SEANF Chairmanship from SUHAKAM to MNHRC**

8.1 On the principle of rotation, the SEANF chairmanship was handed over from SUHAKAM to MNHRC at the conclusion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of SEANF.

*Putrajaya, 30 September 2015*

*The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)*