

Term of Reference

CSO Led Side Event on The 2nd ASEAN WPS Summit

Securing the Future: Intergenerational Leadership Pathways of Women Peacebuilders in Advancing the WPS Agenda in ASEAN

Format : CSO-Led Side Event – WPS Summit 2025
Date/ time : 6 September 2025, 09.00-12.00 Jakarta Times
Location : Online

1. Background

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda—since the adoption of UNSCR 1325—has become a foundational framework for promoting women’s rights, leadership, and agency in peacebuilding and security governance. In Southeast Asia, where multiple and overlapping crises—from violent extremism to climate-induced displacement—challenge the traditional notion of security, WPS offers a transformative lens that centers on human security and gender justice.

The endorsement of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on WPS (2022–2032) marks a significant regional milestone in institutionalizing women’s leadership and protection in peace and security. However, the urgency to implement this agenda sustainably and inclusively is heightened by the emergence of interlinked threats that often transcend national borders. Climate-induced displacement continues to rise, with 7.4 million people displaced in the Asia-Pacific in 2022 alone—many of them women and children—according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). In Southeast Asia, women in rural and coastal areas bear the brunt of environmental degradation, often losing access to land, water, and livelihoods, which pushes them into precarious migration routes.

The political crisis in Myanmar has also intensified regional displacement, with over 1.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and tens of thousands seeking refuge in neighboring Thailand, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The lack of legal protections in host countries, coupled with weak regional migration governance, has led to a sharp rise in trafficking and exploitation of women and girls, especially in border regions. A 2022 report by the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) warned of growing risks of forced labor, sexual exploitation, and trafficking among displaced populations, exacerbated by conflict and authoritarian crackdowns.

Compounding this, the absence of strong accountability frameworks in business and investment—particularly in the extractive and agribusiness sectors—has increased ecological and gender-based risks. Projects that violate Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) disproportionately affect women, particularly Indigenous and rural communities, leading to land grabs, water pollution, and forced evictions without meaningful consultation. Despite ASEAN’s endorsement of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, implementation across Member States remains weak, with limited access to remedy for affected women.

Additionally, gendered disinformation and online hate speech are rapidly rising. UN Women (2023) documented how digital platforms in countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines are being weaponized to undermine women human rights defenders, peacebuilders, and activists, often

framing them as threats to cultural or religious values. This undermines women's participation in public life and silences critical voices, eroding the democratic spaces essential to advancing the WPS agenda.

Recent border clashes between Thailand and Cambodia have escalated beyond military confrontations, leaving civilians—particularly women—caught in the crossfire. Many have been displaced or cut off from essential services, increasing their vulnerability to gender-based violence and exploitation, with limited protection or recourse. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, ongoing protests spurred by public outrage over political privilege have similarly exposed women to heightened risks. Amid tear gas deployment and civil unrest, young people and women protesters face significant threats of physical harm and social backlash.

Crucially, the sustainability of WPS depends not only on formal institutions but also on nurturing intergenerational leadership pathways. Younger women activists are emerging as peacebuilders and digital defenders, while senior women leaders carry institutional knowledge and strategic experience. Yet civil society voices—particularly youth, Indigenous women, and grassroots peacebuilders—remain largely underrepresented in formal ASEAN WPS processes.

Implementation of the ASEAN WPS RPoA varies across Member States. The Philippines and Indonesia have made substantial progress through national and local action plans. Indonesia is currently expanding its third WPS National Action Plan to address Non-Traditional Security (NTS) threats. Vietnam launched its first WPS National Action Plan (2024–2030) in August 2024, signaling its commitment to women's leadership in peace and security, including NTS. Thailand has embedded WPS elements within broader gender policies. Malaysia, the host of the 2025 Summit, has yet to adopt a national WPS plan but is showing increased engagement. Meanwhile, Myanmar continues to face structural and political constraints that hinder the institutionalization of WPS.

This side event, grounded in the theme “*Securing the Future: Intergenerational Leadership Pathways of Women Peacebuilders*,” provides a critical platform to reflect on regional progress, identify leadership gaps, and co-develop feminist, inclusive, and sustainable strategies. In the face of intensifying non-traditional security threats and shrinking civic space, intergenerational collaboration offers not only continuity but also the innovation required for the future of WPS in ASEAN.

II. Objectives

1. To showcase how women peacebuilders across different generations have contributed to advancing the WPS agenda in ASEAN, especially in addressing evolving peace and security challenges.
2. To identify strategies that promote sustained leadership pathways for women peacebuilders through formal and informal mechanisms at local, national, and regional levels.
3. To foster stronger cross-country networks that enable women peacebuilders to share practices, build solidarity, and enhance their role in peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

4. To formulate practical and inclusive recommendations for ASEAN and Member States to ensure meaningful participation, protection, and recognition of women peacebuilders in the implementation of the WPS agenda.

III Place and Time

The event will be conducted on an online platform scheduled for Saturday, 6 September 2025, from 09:00 AM to 12:30 PM Jakarta Time. The forum will be conducted online using the Zoom platform, which can be accessed here:

Meeting ID: 849 3638 3290 | Passcode: WPS2025, or click
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84936383290?pwd=ou3uHaJ8bnXtZjbZTHa3CTACPA0iO9.1>

IV. Participants

Participants will include 100 people from women's rights organizations, youth-led groups, and Indigenous women's networks across Southeast Asia, alongside government, ASEAN bodies, and international partners. This diverse composition ensures inclusive, intergenerational, and community-rooted perspectives in advancing the WPS agenda. The organizer will also invite a number of selected participants who have long engagement with the issues to provide substantial comments.

V. Co-Organizers:

The Side Event of the 2nd ASEAN WPS Summit will be co-organized by a consortium of civil society organizations, research institutes, and regional networks that have long been engaged in advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Southeast Asia. As co-organizers, these institutions play a vital role in shaping the agenda, facilitating inclusive participation, and ensuring that the perspectives of women, grassroots actors, and marginalized groups are brought to the forefront. Here are several organizations joining the consultation:

The **Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN)** works to advance the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and creates exchange-learning opportunities among interfaith youth and women from different countries.

The **Gender Equality Network (GEN)** in Myanmar is a coalition of organizations and activists working to advance women's rights, gender justice, and inclusive peacebuilding.

The **People's Empowerment Foundation (PEF)**, based in Thailand, works to strengthen grassroots democracy and human rights by amplifying community voices, supporting marginalized groups, and fostering civic participation across the country.

Thammasat University's Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology and the **Center for Contemporary Social and Cultural Studies (CCSCS)** serve as a research hub dedicated to advancing critical scholarship on social change, culture, and contemporary issues in Thailand and beyond.

BRIN, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia's state institution responsible for advancing research, technology, and innovation to support national development.

The Women's Advocacy Coalition–Myanmar (WAC-M) is a network of women's rights groups and activists that amplifies women's voices in peacebuilding, democracy, and humanitarian response, ensuring gender equality and the WPS agenda are central in Myanmar's crisis.

The IMAN Research Center in Malaysia is an independent organization that conducts research and advocacy on peacebuilding, preventing violent extremism, and inclusive democracy. By linking community perspectives with policy dialogue, IMAN works to build resilience, promote interfaith understanding, and ensure women and youth are part of security and governance efforts in the region.

VI. Rundown of the side event

Times	Agenda
09.00 - 09.30 am	Opening Remarks of Side Event (The host will give a brief about WPS Agenda and the orientation of the consultation)

09.30 - 11.00 am

Breakout Session :

(Participants will be divided into 8 thematic areas such as:

1. Breaking the Cycle of Conflict in SEA
2. Climate Crisis, Women's Security: Whose Voices Count?
3. People on the Move: Protection or Exploitation for Migrants in Southeast Asia?
4. Clicking into Danger: How Cyber Insecurity Threatens Rights and Democracy
5. From Margins to Mainstream: Why Violent Extremism Still Persists in Our Communities"
6. Beyond Silence: Can ASEAN Civil Society Break the Deadlock on Myanmar?"
7. Borders Under Fire: Lessons from the Thailand–Cambodia Tensions
8. Youth, Peace and Security

Guiding Questions:

1. In your community, what situations create fear or insecurity? When a crisis causes victims, what support systems are available from the government or the community?
2. What local practices help communities deal with fear and insecurity from conflict, radicalism, migration, climate change or violent extremism?
3. What roles do women play in addressing crises and building peace?
4. How can the RPA WPS better reflect the voices and priorities of women, youth, and grassroots communities?

11.00 am -12.00 pm	<p>Plenary Session: Sharing the recommendation from break out sessions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There will be 8 representatives of civil society from the break out rooms to share the recommendation. Each person will have 5 minutes. 2. Panelists will share a 3 minute speech in response to the recommendation from CSO. They are; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Maziah binti Che Yusoff, Representatives of ACWC Malaysia 2. Prof. Lourdesita Sobrevega-Chan, Representative of ACWC Philippines 3. Christine Arab, Regional Director of UN Women for Asia and the Pacific 4. Helen Fazey, The UK Ambassador to ASEAN 5. Ambra Dickie, The Canadian Ambassador to ASEAN 6. Tiffany McDonald, The Australian Ambassador to ASEAN 7. Kiya Masahiko, The Japan Ambassador to ASEAN <p>(All speakers are under confirmation)</p>
12.20 - 12.30 pm	Closing