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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ACWC and United Nations: Stamping out Violence against Women and Violence Against Children in ASEAN together

(17 January 2012, Manila, the Philippines)— The ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) convened a two-day Consultative Meeting on prevention and elimination of violence against women and violence against children.

Convened in Manila on 16-17 January 2012, the Consultation was officiated by H.E. Corazon Juliano-Soliman, Secretary of Department of Social Welfare and Development of the Philippines. The Consultation, jointly supported by UN Women and UNICEF, was held with Ms. Marta Santos Pais, the Special Representative to the United Nations Secretary General on Violence against Children (SRSG-VAC), Ms. Indira Jaising, UN CEDAW Committee expert, Dr. Lara Fergus, Expert Advisor on Service Delivery for the Ending Violence against Women section of UN Women, and other international experts on eliminating violence against women and violence against children in the ASEAN region.

The two-day Consultation aims to further strengthen the ACWC's engagement with United Nations human rights mechanisms, and explore ways to address the multifaceted and complex issues of violence against women and violence against children in the region.

In the course of the Consultation, the ACWC Representatives enhanced their understanding of human rights norms and standards in addressing violence against women and violence against children; learn about best practices and minimum standards in providing services to survivors of violence; and the implementing and monitoring of relevant legislations. From the Consultation, the ACWC has identified some potential actions towards the prevention and elimination of violence against women and violence against children among ASEAN Member States.

"The discussion on violence against women and children with the CEDAW Committee expert and the SRSG-VAC helped to deepen the knowledge of the ACWC Representatives on VAW and VAC. We appreciate the productive dialogue throughout the Consultation and the rich experiences shared by the experts that provided valuable inputs for the 5-year Work Plan" said Mdm. Kanda Vajrabhaya, Thailand's Representative for women's rights and the ACWC Chair. She believed that the dialogue will act as a springboard for the ACWC to come up with more meaningful strategies to prevent and eliminate violence against women and children in the ASEAN region.

Established in 2010, the ACWC is mandated to, among others, encourage ASEAN Member States to undertake periodic reviews of national legislations, policies and practices related to the rights of women

and children, and promote appropriate measures, mechanisms and strategies for the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women and children, including the protection of victims. Elimination of violence against women and children is one of the themes identified in the ACWC's five-year Work Plan.

"Violence against children is hidden, widespread and occurs in all contexts, including where children are expected to benefit from special protection. With strong laws and policies and effective action violence can be prevented enabling children's development to their full potential and ensuring high returns for society as a whole. The ASEAN ACWC plays a critical role in advancing this process within the region", said Ms. Marta Santos Pais, the SRSB-VAC.

Concerning violence against women in the region, Ms. Indira Jaising, CEDAW Committee expert, underlined "Violence against women must be seen as a manifestation of unequal power relations in society. All efforts to end violence against women must move from a welfare approach to a human rights approach. States, as duty bearers, have the duty to exercise due diligence to protect, respect and fulfil the rights of women. All religious and cultural discourses that perpetuate the subordinate position of women must be rejected."

Following the Consultation, the ACWC will have a dialogue with civil society on the issues of elimination of violence against women and children in the region on 18 January 2012. The ACWC and civil society will also explore possible collaboration at national and regional levels to ensure women's and children's rights to live free from violence are upheld in the region. Forty national and regional civil society organisations from the region participated in the Dialogue.

Notes:

ABOUT THE EXPERTS

Ms. Marta Santos Pais was appointed in 2009 as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children bringing to the Consultation a long experience on children's human rights issues and engagement in intergovernmental processes, including as member of the drafting group of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols.

Ms. Indira Jaising, CEDAW Committee expert, a human rights lawyer and founder of the Lawyers Collective in India, shared her extensive experience and knowledge related to implementing and monitoring domestic violence legislation.

Dr. Lara Fergus, Expert Advisor on Service Delivery for the Ending Violence against Women section of UN Women, discussed current trends, new initiatives and good practices from around the world on standards for services to women and child survivors of violence.

ABOUT THE ACWC

The ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) was inaugurated on 7 April 2010 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, in conjunction with the 16th ASEAN Summit. Each ASEAN Member State appointed two Representatives to the ACWC, one Representative for women's rights and one Representative for children's rights. Mdm. Kanda Vajrabhaya, Thailand's Representative for women's rights, and Mr. Ahmad Taufan Damanik, Indonesia's Representative for children's rights,

serve as the ACWC Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. For more information about the ACWC and its Representatives, visit www.asean.org/ACWC.htm.

ABOUT UN WOMEN

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their rights worldwide. For more information, visit www.unwomen.org.

ABOUT UNICEF

UNICEF works in 190 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments. For more information about UNICEF and its work visit: www.unicef.org.

ABOUT THE SRSG

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children is an independent global advocate in favour of the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against children, mobilizing action and political support to achieve progress the world over. The mandate is anchored in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other Human Rights instruments and is framed by the recommendations of the UN Study on Violence against Children. For more information, visit: www.srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org

ABOUT CEDAW

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is an international human rights treaty that provides the normative standards for non-discrimination and substantive equality between women and men in all fields. All countries in the ASEAN region have signed and ratified CEDAW and therefore are committed to implementing the principles of CEDAW. ASEAN countries have also signed The Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women. Governments have a responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil the equal rights of all women.

ABOUT CRC

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the most widely ratified international human rights treaty incorporating the full range of human rights—civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights—for all children. The Convention and its two Optional Protocols spell out the basic human rights that children everywhere have: the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from violence, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.

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