



SIMPLIFIED ANNUAL REPORT 2023

# EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE

PREVENTING VIOLENCE AND  
PROMOTING SOCIAL COHESION IN THE  
ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS



# 2023 Annual Report

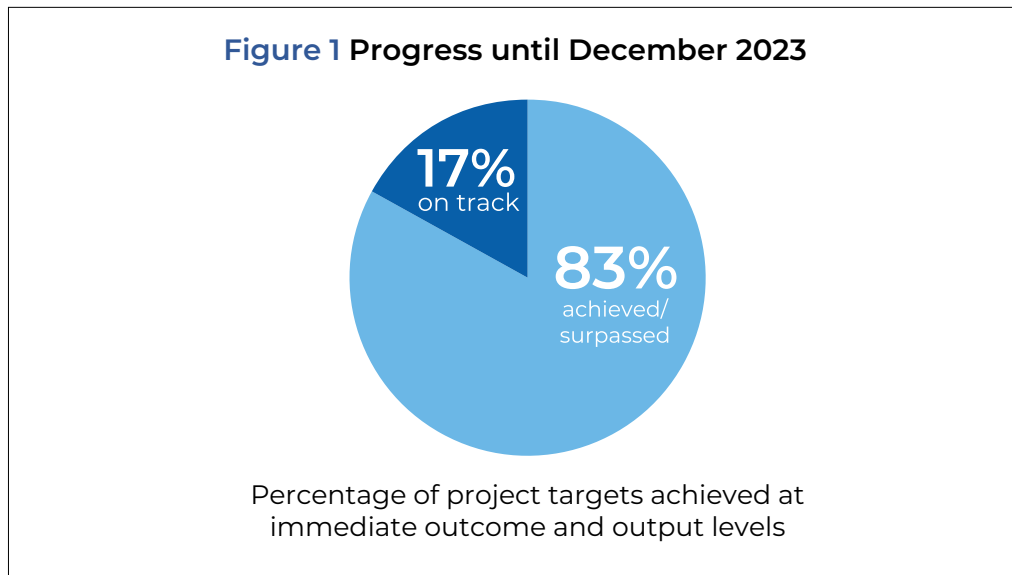
<b>Project Title:</b>	Empowering women for sustainable peace: preventing violence and promoting social cohesion in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
<b>Project Duration:</b>	Government of Canada through the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development: 1 April 2021 – 31 December 2025 Government of the Republic of Korea: 1 January 2021 - 30 June 2023 Government of the United Kingdom: 16 January 2022 - 31 March 2023; 16 August 2023 - 31 December 2025
<b>Reporting Period:</b>	1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023
<b>Countries Covered:</b>	ASEAN regional implementation with selected country-level implementation in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam
<b>Donors and Funds:</b>	CAD 8.5 million funded by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Development (DFATD) of Canada USD 800,000 funded by the Government of Republic of Korea GBP 2,731,284 funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of United Kingdom

## Project Background

With the generous support from the Government of Canada through the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the **Empowering Women for Sustainable Peace: Preventing Violence and Promoting Social Cohesion in ASEAN** project aims to advance the implementation of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda at the national level in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam and the regional level, through enhanced normative frameworks, capacity-building, knowledge exchange and good practices among the Member States and Observer State of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

This third annual report covers the period from January to December 2023.

In 2023, the project achieved or surpassed 99 per cent of the annual targets and 83 per cent of immediate outcome and output level project targets. The remaining targets are on track (figure 1):



ASEAN and its Member States made significant progress in the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security (RPA WPS), creating strong momentum and synergies at regional and national levels.

The project established a regional coordination mechanism for RPA WPS implementation, developed a baseline study and a preliminary set of indicators for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of RPA WPS, enhanced capacities and raised awareness on WPS among relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies, institutions and wider stakeholder groups in the region, and developed and launched a toolkit and guidelines to localize RPA WPS. At the national level, the **Philippines** adopted the fourth National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS, along with the third WPS action plan for Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The Philippines also finalized a road map to develop an M&E framework for the Philippines NAP WPS. Both **Timor-Leste** and **Viet Nam** are reviewing the drafts of their respective NAPs submitted for political endorsement, while **Thailand** finalized the first draft NAP WPS. Meanwhile, **Indonesia** finalized the M&E framework for NAP WPS, making it the first country in the region with a NAP WPS accountability mechanism.

The ASEAN Secretariat and sectoral bodies and institutions have enhanced their access to WPS expertise to implement RPA WPS. UN Women played a key role in **transforming the ASEAN WPS Advisory Group**<sup>1</sup>, shifting the focus from overseeing

<sup>1</sup> The ASEAN WPS Advisory Group is a cross-sectoral coordination group in ASEAN established to provide guidance on ASEAN's work to promote WPS agenda. The members of the ASEAN WPS Advisory Group are the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW); ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC); Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crimes (SOMTC); ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting (ADSOM); ASEAN Inter-Governmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR); ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR), which liaises with members of the ASEAN Women for Peace Registry (AWPR); ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM); and ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network (AWEN).

the development of RPA WPS to coordinating its implementation. During the RPA WPS implementation process, approximately 100 per cent of ASEAN representatives from sectoral bodies and institutions reported enhanced capacity on gender and WPS.

Out of 58 persons (52 women, 6 men) representing eight ASEAN sectoral bodies and institutions, all reported deepened knowledge and capacities in implementing regional WPS policies. Of those surveyed, **29 per cent expressed confidence** in applying their acquired skills in their day-to-day work.

The ASEAN WPS Advisory Group maintained a regional platform for cooperation, promoting good practices and evidence on WPS among Members States. ASEAN representatives from relevant sectoral bodies and institutions participated in **nine cross-sectoral dialogues**, supported by UN Women, to promote knowledge exchange within and across regions.

A total of **207 stakeholders** (164 women, 41 men, 2 non-binary/other) reported increased knowledge related to the WPS agenda in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. Additionally, the project reached out to **1,636 stakeholders** (1,065 women, 329 men, 1 non-binary individual, 241 unidentified) across the same target countries and Timor-Leste.

In 2024, UN Women will continue supporting RPA WPS implementation at regional and country levels, including additional capacity-building for developing, implementing and monitoring NAP WPS.

## New Developments

2023 saw increased political commitment to advance the WPS agenda among a wider group of stakeholders at the regional and national levels. The Government of Indonesia officially assumed the ASEAN Chair and prioritized the implementation of the WPS agenda. The ASEAN WPS Summit, held in July, galvanized support among Members States to implement and localize RPA WPS.

Furthermore, at the Tenth ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) in November 2023<sup>2</sup>, high-level commitment to the WPS agenda was demonstrated for the first time by key stakeholders within the ASEAN Political-Security Community through a joint statement in which the full implementation of RPA WPS was recommended.

The United Kingdom provided generous support to UN Women, as lead convener, in support of ASEAN efforts to advance the WPS agenda. Utilizing additional funding from the United Kingdom, Timor-Leste was integrated into the project with activities starting in September 2023.

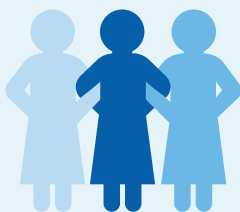
<sup>2</sup> ADMM-Plus is a platform for ASEAN and Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United States (collectively referred to as the "Plus Countries"). See <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2023-10th-ADMM-Plus-Jakarta-16-Nov-2023-Final-Joint-Statement-by-the-ADMM-Plus-on-Women-Peace-and-Security.pdf>.



UN Women initiated an **independent midterm review** of the project in 2023. The independent evaluator rated the project's performance as 3 on coherence, effectiveness and efficiency, using a four-point scale from the Independent Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme. The evaluator also noted as a best practice the **project's success in enhancing the involvement of marginalized groups** in programming and policymaking in the Philippines.

## Lessons Learned

### At the regional level



**Regional policy framework adoption inspires national Governments and can leverage national policy framework development.** After the adoption of RPA WPS in December 2022, several countries expressed interest in developing their NAPs, including Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Localizing RPA WPS into NAPs is the key to enhancing synergies of efforts, and foster exchange, networking and shared understanding in the region.



**Building institutional capacity of the ASEAN Secretariat to coordinate and monitor the implementation of RPA WPS is essential** to ensure the sustainability of results in implementing ASEAN cooperation projects. Partnership with the Poverty Eradication and Gender Division will be the key to demonstrate tangible benefits for ASEAN and its Member States, including its alignment with other regional policy frameworks and priorities, such as disaster management and emergency response, transnational crime, prevention of violent extremism, and cybersecurity.

### At the national level



**Flexibility and sensitivity to political and operational realities at both country and regional levels are necessary for achieving results**, with neutrality of UN Women being well-received by local authorities. Balancing partnership with government agencies and the support to civil society and women's organizations to engage in the implementation process requires both political and technical engagement to strike the right balance to promote multi-stakeholder collaboration.



### **Effective implementation of national WPS action plans required a strong political will by relevant line ministries**

and not only the women's machinery. Hence, the inclusive participatory process in the development of NAPs will be the key to galvanizing the needed political will and ownership in order to ensure effective implementation and accountability at the country level.

## **Next steps**

In 2024, UN Women will continue to support the implementation of RPA WPS with a particular focus on finalizing the monitoring framework of RPA WPS and aligning with NAPs as well as establishing a community of practice to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and good practices between ASEAN, CSOs and other stakeholders. UN Women will focus on disseminating the Localisation Toolkit and Guidelines of RPA WPS and finalizing regional policy research on conflict and crisis prevention mechanisms and a regional study on youth, peace and security, which will help to enhance linkages with WPS in partnership with ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation. In addition, UN Women will continue implementing the recommendations from the midterm review.

At the regional level, fully integrating the RPA WPS into the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 will be critical to sustaining the WPS agenda beyond 2025. Starting in 2024, it will be essential for UN Women to engage with the ASEAN Secretariat and Member States to integrate the WPS agenda in the strategic papers of the three ASEAN Community Pillars, while providing technical support to ensure inter-pillar collaboration as well as regional-country synergies to localize RPA WPS.

At the national level, UN Women will continue to support targeted ASEAN Member States and Timor-Leste to localize RPA WPS and strengthen the capacities of stakeholders on WPS, M&E and GRB.



***The Women, Peace and Security Agenda is critical for the promotion of gender equality. Advancing WPS needs more than a regional commitment. We need to develop national plans of action to ensure that the regional commitment is translated into practical actions at national and local levels. Cambodia as the lead country for the development of the ASEAN RPA WPS and now for the WPS localization initiative is committed to enabling the regional commitment to become a reality for all women and girls in ASEAN.***

- H.E. Ing Kantha Phavi, Minister for Women's Affairs of Cambodia at the launch of the localization toolkit and guidelines for RPA WPS

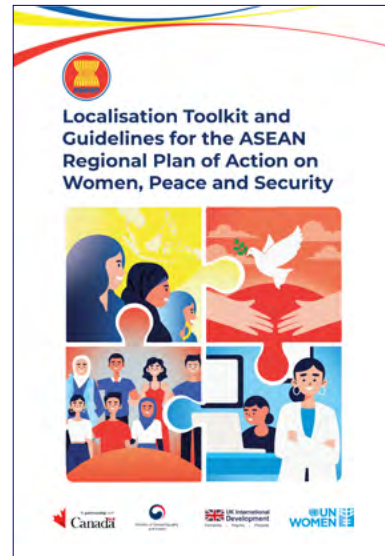
## Key partnerships

- ACW (ASEAN Committee on Women)
- ACWC (ASEAN Commission on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children)
- ACDM (ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management)
- ASEAN-IPR (ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation)
- ASEAN Women for Peace Registry
- AHA Centre (ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance)
- TW PGI (Technical Working Group on Protection, Gender and Inclusion)
- ASEAN WPS Advisory Group
- USAID through USAID-funded PROSPECT project for RPA WPS
- United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Department of Peace Operations
- Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection in Indonesia
- Ministry of Peace and Security, Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity
- Bangsamoro Women Commission
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam
- Ministry of Social Development and Human Security of the Royal Thai Government
- Coordination Center for Children and Women in Southern Border Provinces of the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre in Thailand
- Global Network of Women Peacebuilders
- Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy
- South China Morning Post

UN Women's work is funded almost entirely through the voluntary support of our partners in government, civil society, and the private sector. The contributions from the Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs Trade and Development Office, The Government of the Republic of Korea and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the Government of the United Kingdom enable UN Women to deliver on its mandate to protect the rights of women and girls, to foster an enabling environment where they can thrive alongside men and boys as equals, and to enable opportunities to reach their full potential in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam. We take this opportunity to thank ASEAN, the ASEAN Secretariat, the Department of Foreign Affairs Trade and Development Office, The Government of the Republic of Korea and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, for their commitment, confidence, and trust in UN Women.



## [The Making of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security](#)



## [Localisation Toolkit and Guidelines for the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security](#)



### Women, Peace and Security Context in Indonesia

Indonesia recognizes that a stable and peaceful society cannot be achieved without acknowledging and highlighting women's important roles in building peace, preventing conflict, and addressing emerging security threats and in driving change and social reforms. With the global framework of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), Indonesia has endeavored to localize the WPS agenda into a variety of Action Plans (APs) at the national, provincial, and district levels, as well as through its National Plan of Action (NPA) on WPS for the protection and empowerment of women and children during local conflict, and post-conflict WPS, via various forums such as peace, security, negotiation, and empowerment, and participation of women's organizations.

Indonesia enhances the links between societal structures and international instruments regarding the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security (ARPA) through the joint plan (the Joint Plan) on WPS, which includes a gender-responsive approach to WPS and joint action initiatives with various ASEAN member states with a view to ensuring that the United Nations WPS framework intersects the gender roles and needs of women in providing youth education, these bodies include the Asian Committee of Women (ACW) and Asian Commission on Child Protection and Protection of Children (ACPC).

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### Women, Peace and Security Context of Thailand

Thailand has ratified and committed to a number of international instruments promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, through the adoption and implementation of 17 national laws and policies. These include the Constitution on the promotion of all forms of Government against Women, the Bangkok Declaration and Charter for the promotion of women and children during local conflict, and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and subsequent WPS-related instruments, and subsequent WPS-related instruments, and subsequent WPS-related instruments.

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## [Women, Peace and Security in Indonesia](#)

## [Women, Peace and Security in Thailand](#)

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## Take Five: “Where women are active and playing a leading role, peace is sustainable and democracy lasts”



Amina Rasul is President of the Philippines Center for Islam and Democracy (PCID) and Chair of ASEAN Women for Peace Registry. PCID organized dialogues among civil society organizations that provided input to the drafting of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security. ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, adopted the plan in November 2022.

### What inspired you to start working on women, peace and security?

First and foremost, I am a democracy advocate. During the time of the late President Corazon Aquino, I was appointed as one of the commissioners of what is now the Philippines Commission on Women, representing Muslim women. That's when I got my eyes opened on women, peace and security issues.

Later, working at PCID, it became clearer that where women are active and playing a leading role, peace is sustainable and democracy lasts. As I got more engaged internationally, I learned that my friends in ASEAN countries have done so much work empowering women in their communities. We are continuing to push for expanding the women network together with my friends, some of who are also members of ASEAN Women for Peace Registry, to get more women actively involved.

### What are some of the milestones that you have seen in the Philippines in your advocacy on women, peace and security?

We have had female leaders in peace and security such as the Presidential Advisers on the Peace Process including Teresita “Ging” Quintos Deles and late Annabelle Tecson-Abaya, and had Prof. Miriam Coronel Ferrer as the chief negotiator of the Government during the peace process with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). It was a historic moment to have Miriam become the first woman in Asia to successfully conclude and sign a peace agreement. There were CSOs who tirelessly helped to lobby for support of the negotiations. Although unseen by the public, the CSO participation helped in changing the opinion of MILF so they become more open to women participating and advising them.

The implementation of National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security was another very important milestone. Now the NAP is in its fourth generation and we want to see more financial support for the implementation of the plan.

The Bangsamoro regional government created its own regional action plan on women, peace and security led by the Regional Commission for Bangsamoro Women. This has demonstrated the ability of political women to work with men who are running the MILF and the regional government.

### PCID has facilitated dialogues among civil society organizations on women peace and security. What are some of the key findings?

Region-wide, the majority of the civil society representatives agree that the space for them to operate is shrinking. So, the need to include CSO participation in the RPA WPS was repeatedly stressed.

Additionally, many conflicts in Southeast Asia are ethnic and religion-based. We need to do a lot more in getting the religious leaders to appreciate the role of women in peace and security and to change some fundamentalist ideas around gender.

Another area is to work with women entrepreneurs. It is challenging but they can influence the politicians..

### What are your expectations for the ASEAN regional action plan?

ASEAN's way of working is by consensus. When you have attained consensus, support for decisions made becomes more concrete and strong.

Still, you keep wondering, how can you speed it up a little bit? The RPA WPS is a leverage that we can use to reach out to those especially in the Governments of ASEAN. But external groups, especially UN Women, will have an important role to play as you can bring different actors together.

### What role can the ASEAN Women for Peace Registry play in implementing the plan?

The Registry has a big role to play. The majority of people in the ASEAN region don't really know what the WPS agenda is. Members of the AWPR are academics, in governments, and civil society leaders. We can network, help organize discussions, be messengers, advocates or lobbyists for WPS and the RPA.

Lobbying with the ASEAN Secretariat and our own government is an important role. For instance, we are discussing on how AWPR can be more active so we can make actual inroads, even small, in supporting women in Myanmar or Thailand and to see what each of us can do to help flesh out what is already in the RPA WPS. It may be challenging but not a single one of us is about to give up.

**#WPSASEAN  
#ASEANRPAWPS**



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