



THE HABIBIE CENTER

**Talking ASEAN on Regional Development
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**Regional Development and Challenges in Southeast Asia
Democracy, Human Rights, Gender
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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHALLENGES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Democracy, Human Rights, Gender



DEMOCRACY & HUMAN RIGHTS

- ▶ Greatest stumbling blocks in Southeast Asia is widespread impunity.
- ▶ Long-standing armed conflicts have resulted in erosion of the rule of law (for instance, in Southern Thailand and in some parts of Myanmar)
- ▶ Lack of political will and capacity to deliver development results in other countries of the region has brought serious consequences, such as corruption, the breakdown of law and internal security, as well as separatism and disparities
- ▶ Democracy has not yet become a strong institution in Southeast Asia.
- ▶ The recent Thai military coup also warrants caution, and perhaps even a bit of scepticism that democratization in Southeast Asia is not necessarily an irreversible process.
- ▶ Southeast Asia's regional approach to human rights protection is still state-centric, with the mandate of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission of Human Rights (AICHR): more promotion than protection of human rights.
- ▶ The absence of alternative mechanisms within the inter-governmental structure limits the options for people to seek justice, especially on issues related to cross-border human rights violations.
- ▶ Human rights remain a sensitive issue in Southeast Asia

GENDER ISSUES

- ▶ Gender disparity in Southeast Asia remains large in the political dimension. Although the participation of women in politics in ASEAN countries increased.
- ▶ The rate of female literacy rate has slightly improved to 0.95 during 2005-2011 from 0.94 in the previous decade.
- ▶ Female workers: low paid, informal sectors, growing demands for jobs in certain sectors such as health care, domestic work, manufacturing and services, particularly in urban contexts, have also generated more female migration.
- ▶ Statistics indicate that over time women have increasingly participated in socio-economic and political development
- ▶ Militarisation continues to impact the democratic rights of women across the region directly and indirectly.
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RECOMMENDATION

- ▶ Democracy decline requires promotion of multiple strategies
- ▶ Ineffective regional human rights systems require alternative human rights protection responses
- ▶ Cross-border migration and trafficking require effective social protection with the promotion of human rights.
- ▶ Gender equality approaches need to focus on the vulnerable and the disadvantaged
- ▶ Women empowerment approach requires a holistic view