

FOREWORD

UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, is mandated to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, empower women and achieve equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action, peace and security. The present study entitled "Gender Assessment of National Law-Making Mechanisms and Processes in selected Southeast Asian Countries: A CEDAW Perspective" is thus part of UN Women's efforts to achieve these goals. This study is a combination of desk reviews and on-site interviews. Information was gathered on how the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is mainstreamed in legislation from the time it is conceptualized to its drafting, discussion in the committees, deliberation on the floor and finally, enactment to law.

Responsibility for translating gender mainstreaming into practice is system-wide and rests at the highest levels. It does not only encompass the process of understanding the nature of the political system or assessing legislation from a CEDAW perspective; noting the political environment and its underlying legislative processes through a gender perspective is just as crucial. The study presents detailed information on the legislative structures and processes in targeted programme countries, and provides a review of good global practices of gender mainstreaming in legislation. It highlights successful strategies and approaches and gives concrete recommendations to improve the effectiveness of capacity-development initiatives among lawmakers on the integration of gender in national legislation. The study serves as a baseline and reference guide to programme countries, and will help UN Women identify strategic institutions/mechanisms to target capacity-development support for gender-based legislative reviews. At a side event during the General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) held in Lombok, Indonesia, in September 2012, the findings of the study were introduced to 50 members of the Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA). This was the first joint activity held by WAIPA and UN Women, and established a regional partnership for enhancing national-level work.

The study looks at gender mainstreaming in existing global practices and legislations; reviews the legislative structures and processes of the seven CEDAW Southeast Asia programme (SEAP) countries including Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam; provides findings on capacity developments and sets of recommendations. These are aimed at increasing skills and knowledge of government officials and civil society gender experts on CEDAW compliance in the development and monitoring of the new and revised legislative framework. The study of the global practices serves as a model for CEDAW SEAP countries for government institutions in initiating and drafting legislation, committee deliberation, and approval and enactment into law until the oversight of implementation.