

All ASEAN member states are States Parties to the CEDAW, thus it is important to ensure that judiciaries in the region respect the norms and standards stated within the Convention. In other words, judges should be guided by the CEDAW when interpreting and applying the provisions of the national constitutions and laws, including customary law. In order to do so, judges must familiarize themselves with the growing international jurisprudence of human rights and particularly with the expanding material on the protection and promotion of the human rights of women. The CEDAW Committee often recommends in Concluding Comments that State parties implement measures to create awareness about the Convention among judges and judicial personnel, so as to ensure that the spirit, objectives and provisions of the Convention are well known and used in judicial processes.

UN WOMEN'S PROGRAMME

UN Women is implementing the Regional Programme on Improving Women's Human Rights in Southeast Asia (CEDAW SEAP) supported by the Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, Canada (DFATD), covering eight countries - Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam. One of the key focus areas of the Programme is enhancing women's access to justice through awareness raising and capacity development of government (executive, legislative and judiciary) as well as of civil society organizations.

UN Women has been working with the justice sector in participating countries to improve understanding of the CEDAW among judges and court personnel, and promote its use in courts. The Programme intends to enhance regional exchange and learning among judiciaries in Southeast Asia. This judicial colloquium shall be the first activity involving the justice sector in this phase of the programme.

2. Objectives of the Judicial Colloquium:

The objectives of the colloquium are:

- To promote the role of judges in the implementation of CEDAW
- To enhance awareness among judges of the barriers women face in accessing justice
- To provide a learning forum on gender equality jurisprudence and give judges an opportunity to take stock in developments and the evolving role of the law and judiciary in responding to gender inequality.
- To promote capacity building programmes for a gender responsive judiciary
- To create a space for judges in Southeast Asia to share knowledge, lessons learned, and positive examples of judicial strategies for promoting gender equality

3. Expected Results:

At the end of the judicial colloquium it is expected that the following will be achieved:

- Increased knowledge of use of international norms and standards for gender equality in judicial practices and decisions