

# Introduction

UN Women is implementing the Regional Programme on Improving Women's Human Rights in Southeast Asia programme under the guidance of the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Southeast Asia Programme (SEAP) and supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, Canada (DFATD). The Programme seeks to enhance women's access to justice by raising the awareness and capacity development of government and civil society organizations (CSOs) within the following eight countries:

- Cambodia
- Indonesia
- Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR)
- Myanmar
- The Philippines
- Thailand
- Timor-Leste and
- Viet Nam

UN Women has also been working with the justice sectors of the participating countries to improve understanding of CEDAW among judges and court personnel, and promote its use in courts.<sup>2</sup>

As the first activity involving the justice sector in this new phase of CEDAW promotion and implementation, the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, in collaboration with the Office of the Judiciary of Thailand and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), convened the Judicial Colloquium on Gender Equality Jurisprudence and the Role of the Judiciary in Promoting Women's Access to Justice in Bangkok, Thailand on 4 -5 September 2013. The Judicial Colloquium is intended to enhance regional exchange and learning among members of the judiciary in Southeast Asia.<sup>3</sup>

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 of developments and the evolving role of the law in responding to gender inequality;
- to promote capacity building programmes for a gender responsive judiciary;
- to create a space for judges in South-East Asia to share knowledge, lessons learned, and positive examples of judicial strategies for promoting gender equality.<sup>4</sup>

2. UN Women, 'Concept Note,' Judicial Colloquium on Gender Equality Jurisprudence and the Role of the Judiciary in Promoting Women's Access to Justice in Bangkok, Thailand on 4 -5 September 2013

3. UN Women Press Release, 'UN Women Asia and the Pacific to hold a colloquium to promote women's human rights in the Southeast Asian Judicial System', 4 September 2013

4. Op. cit.