



Women's Caucus on ASEAN is the primary civil society network that engages ASEAN to advance women's human rights in the region. We are an extensive alliance of women's organisations across Southeast Asia, with 100 partners in 11 countries.

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8 May 2014

To
The Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN

Sub: Accept CSOs' Nominations for Interface meeting

Dear Excellencies,

The Southeast Asia Women's Caucus on ASEAN (hereafter Women's Caucus) would like to express its deep concern over the rejection of nominees elected by CSOs as Interface Delegates in the countries namely Cambodia, Malaysia and Singapore. Further disappointment is that the governments in these countries have submitted their own representatives as Interface Delegates.

This goes against the true spirit and purpose of the Interface between the CSOs and the representatives of ASEAN Member States.

The Steering Committee of ASEAN People Forum/ASEAN Civil Society Conference had laid down four principles, including the first principle of 'Self-determination/Self-Selection which celebrates the CSOs autonomous selection for their delegates to the Interface meeting. These principles were also rightfully accepted and agreed upon by Myanmar government, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its Director General for ASEAN.

Although subject to approval of nominations from respective governments, the principle of self-determination still gives CSOs the right to make another selection if the previous nomination was not agreeable to the respective government.

This act of sheer rejection of the CSO representatives, selected through democratic national process, goes against ASEAN's drive towards people-oriented ASEAN, if not people-centered. Without the genuinely selected CSO delegates, the Interface meeting scheduled for 11th May, 2014 will not serve the actual purpose and meaning of Interface meeting. Without democratic participation of its people, ASEAN community building will be meaningless.

Hereby, Women's Caucus would like to bring this to the attention of Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN. Women's Caucus would like to call upon the Governments of Cambodia, Malaysia and Singapore to immediately permit the nominees previously selected unanimously by CSOs, or be allowed to make another selection, or to leave the space vacant.

If you wish to contact us, kindly remember Sunee Singh at sunee@apwld.org.

Respectfully yours,

Sunee
Secretariat
SEA Women's Caucus on ASEAN