

**ASEAN Consultation Meeting on Sexual and Gender Based Violence  
2-3 May 2018, Grand Kemang Hotel, Jakarta**

Opening remarks by Sharon Armstrong  
Director and Counsellor (Development), Indonesia and ASEAN Programs  
Mission of Canada to ASEAN

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- Mr. Vilayphong Sisomvang, ACDM Co-Chair for the Working Group on Prevention and Mitigation;  
Representatives from ASEAN member states and ASEAN Secretariat;  
Colleagues from IFRC and UN Women;  
Distinguished guests;  
Ladies and gentlemen;
- On behalf of the Government of Canada, together with our partners, welcome to the ASEAN Consultation Meeting to discuss the results of the ACDM-IFRC Joint Study on Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response Before, During, and After Disasters in Indonesia, Lao PDR, and the Philippines.
- Canada is delighted to have funded this work through our CAD \$6.1 million Strengthening Community Resilience to Natural Disasters in Southeast Asia, or Regional Resiliency Initiative Project in partnership with IFRC and CRC.
- First, let me begin by thanking the ACDM and the IFRC for organizing this workshop, and for their collaborative effort on this important study.
- This is a great example of the successful collaboration between IFRC and ACDM in supporting ASEAN's efforts to integrate gender equality considerations in disaster management.

- This is an important workshop as it provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the findings of the research, and explore ways to ensure that the recommendations of the research can be carried forward.
- This builds on Canada's past support to the implementation of CEDAW in ASEAN in partnership with UN Women. We are pleased to note that our colleagues from UN Women are here with us today.
- In recent years, we have been witnessing an increase in the scale and intensity of many types of humanitarian crises and natural disasters, including those exacerbated by climate change and rapid urbanization.
- All too often, it is the vulnerable groups such as women, children and the elderly, who are disproportionately impacted by these disasters due to subsistence-based livelihoods and limited access to safety nets, savings or insurance.
- And research has also shown us that when large-scale humanitarian crises and natural disasters occur, there is a heightened risk of gender-based violence, especially when people are in temporary housing.
- We need to definitively ensure that even in times of chaos, that vulnerable people, especially women and children, are protected, and that their tragedy does not lead to violence, exploitation, trafficking or assault.
- We recognize that mitigating risks and reducing vulnerabilities is far more effective than responding after the fact so we are pleased to support ASEAN's efforts in this area.
- Our support is fully aligned with our new international assistance policy.
- In June of last year, Canada launched its Feminist International Assistance Policy, which set out six priority action areas, for example, human dignity,

gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, the environment and climate action as well as peace and security.

- This new Policy recognizes the distinct risks and challenges often faced by women and girls during humanitarian crises.
- That is why Canada will advocate for humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law, including by shining a light on the ways in which humanitarian crises present unique challenges for women and girls.
- Through our new feminist international assistance policy, Canada is also committed to strengthening sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response strategies in humanitarian settings.
- We are therefore very pleased to support this workshop.
- This joint IFRC-ASEAN Research on Sexual and Gender Based Violence is long overdue in giving prominence to a critical issue that has often been overlooked.
- To carry this important work forward, let's build on this momentum and find ways to ensure the findings and recommendations of the research are sustained over the long term.
- As the research demonstrates, more needs to be done by governmental and non-governmental humanitarian actors alike to improve their gender-based violence prevention and response mechanisms, multi-sectoral coordination and community-based programming to address the needs of survivors.
- So how do we do this?
- How do we harness the power of regional cooperation to prepare?
- How do we name the problem, plan for it, mitigate it, and prevent it?

- How do we engage men and boys?
- These are not easy questions to answer, but they are key to enhance the protection of the millions of women and girls before, during and after natural disasters.
- Past experiences have shown that it is often about assigning adequate resources to ensure a gender-based approach. It is also about ensuring women are represented in response teams.
- These are just some considerations and we hope that through this workshop, you will be able to identify effective ways to addressing this important issue.
- On behalf of the Government of Canada, I would like to thank you again for taking the time to participate in this important workshop. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with you as we work to build more resilient communities across the ASEAN region.