

FORUM-ASIA commemorates International Women's Day 2018 in solidarity with women's rights and feminist movement

(Bangkok, 08 March 2018) - The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) joins the international community in commemorating International Women's Day 2018 and celebrating the fundamental principles of equality and non-discrimination.

We express solidarity with all women's rights and feminist organisations and movements in Asia and beyond. We salute them for their courage to challenge the structural causes of gender-based violence and discrimination, and for their resistance against injustice and inequality that has been perpetuated by unequal power relations.

Globally, it is undeniable that gender inequality exists in various areas like political participation, economic status and education opportunities. Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) in Asia face severe challenges which can be life-threatening in some cases, as they are confronted by additional barriers not only due to the hostile political climate towards human rights defenders, but also because of patriarchal norms and the systematic discrimination against women in the region. They often need to deal with gender-based harassment and discrimination, facing greater risks involving themselves, their families as well as their communities.

Despite the challenges, these women stand up to speak out and fight against the injustice and repression they encounter, and it is this determination and bravery that assures that they have and always will be the driving force for change. On this special day, FORUM-ASIA pays tribute to all the courageous women who have contributed to the advancement of human rights around the world. The struggle of women exemplifies the pivotal role they play all over Asia and beyond in the human rights movement. Without their involvement and actions, efforts to challenge authoritarian regimes and repressive system would not stand a chance.

As the world joins hands together to celebrate, support, and promote women's rights around the world, FORUM-ASIA calls upon all Asian Governments, institutions, private sectors, family members to create a safer space for women to express themselves and take control over their active agency without any fear of shame, persecution and discrimination and halt all kinds of harassment towards WHRDs. Today more than ever, FORUM-ASIA expresses its continuous support and solidarity to all women's rights and feminist movements, and stands with women and men striving for a more just, equal, and sustainable society.

About FORUM-ASIA:

FORUM-ASIA is a regional human rights group with 58 member organisations in 19 countries across Asia. FORUM-ASIA has offices in Bangkok, Jakarta, Geneva and Kathmandu. FORUM-ASIA addresses key areas of human rights violations in the region, including freedoms of expression, assembly and association, human rights defenders, and democratization.

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