

The 3rd ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC)

“Moving Forward: Building an ASEAN People’s Agenda”

2-4 November 2007, Singapore

The 3rd ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC) shall be held in Singapore on 2-4 November 2007, prior to the holding of the 13th ASEAN Summit of Leaders in the same city on the third week of November 2007. The ACSC is being hosted by the Union Network International-Asia Pacific Regional Office (UNI-APRO) and co-organized by the Singapore Local Organizing Committee led by Think Centre. Regional networks of civil society organizations coming together under the SAPA (Solidarity for Asian People’s Advocacies), as well as participants to the 1st ACSC (Shah Alam, Malaysia in 2005) and 2nd ACSC (Cebu City, Philippines in 2006) are also co-organizers of the 3rd ACSC.

About the ACSC

The 1st ASEAN Civil Society Conference was an initiative of the Malaysian government together with the Center for ASEAN Studies of the Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) in December 2005 just before the 11th ASEAN Summit of Leaders held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The main purpose of the ACSC is to provide a venue for civil society in the region to come together and to engage the ASEAN heads of state during their yearly Summit of Leaders. The first ACSC had the first ever feature of a 15-minute interface between civil society leaders and ASEAN heads of state.

The 2nd ACSC, organized solely by civil society, was held in Cebu City in December 2006 as the culmination of ACSC national consultation processes held from September to November 2006 in seven ASEAN member countries—the Burma-Thai border, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam--where national civil society groups gathered to consider various proposals and views on issues confronting the ASEAN, especially the idea of ASEAN integration and the ASEAN Charter.

The 3rd ACSC, again organized by South East Asian civil society organizations, will be held in Singapore in November 2007. The 3rd ACSC will be mainly an ASEAN civil society/social movement event with interfaces with resource persons from ASEAN Governments, the ASEAN Secretariat, and CSOs and social movements from outside the ASEAN region.

ACSC-3 will have plenaries, concurrent workshops, cultural and multi-media events, a Quiz, a solidarity night and spaces for independent interactions and caucuses. There will be a two-panel plenary on Singapore, to increase civil society understanding of Singapore as a state and Singapore as a society where communities and groups interact on issues similarly faced by communities and groups elsewhere in ASEAN. The plenary seeks to increase dialogue and interaction between civil society groups and social movements in Singapore and the rest of ASEAN.

Among the objectives of the 3rd ACSC are:

1. To enrich and deepen civil society understanding of ASEAN and regional processes
2. To take stock of civil society advocacy and engagement in ASEAN and regional processes
3. To provide a platform to discuss issues of common interest and ways to respond to those issues
4. To provide a space for common strategizing on broadly engaging common issues
5. To get a mandate for the ACSC to be a live process and not just a conference or parallel event to the ASEAN Summit
6. To adopt a common declaration and agenda of action for the ACSC that includes research, advocacy and action
7. To get a mandate for the 4th ACSC Thailand Host Committee for 2008