Christian Conference of Asia
Ecumenical Women's Action Against Violence (EWAAV)

Southeast Asia Consultation
Strengthening Ecumenical Action for Women's Dignity and Rights

14 - 16 October 2026 | Manila, Philippines

Communiqué

We, the 33 participants from Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Thailand, gathered in Manila, Philippines, from 14 to 16 October 2026, as women and members of the ecumenical movement in Southeast Asia, listened, reflected, and discerned our shared response to the violence, discrimination, and inequalities that continue to undermine women's dignity and rights.

Our biblical and theological reflections reminded us that God sees and hears those whom society overlooks. In the story of Hagar, we encountered a God who does not abandon those who experience suffering and exclusion. In the story of the daughters of Zelophehad, we were reminded of the importance of women's voices, agency, and rightful participation in decisions that shape their lives and futures. These stories challenge us to examine the structures that perpetuate inequality and to embody a faith that upholds justice, dignity, and the fullness of life for all.

We listened to the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples whose ancestral lands and communities are threatened by development aggression, placing them at risk of displacement and further marginalisation. We condemn the continued dispossession of Indigenous peoples, the erosion of their dignity, and the systematic denial of their fundamental rights. We also listened to migrant women, whose testimonies expose the realities of exploitation and violence, as well as the unjust systems and structures that perpetuate these conditions. We recognise the urgent need to challenge systemic oppression, defend the rights of marginalised communities, and advance a just and dignified future for all.

Through our sharing, theological reflections, and engagement with church-based initiatives and advocacy efforts for women's rights, we recognised the courage and faith of women who continue to speak, organise, and act amid difficult circumstances. Their witness calls the churches and the wider ecumenical movement to embody faith, nurture hope, and move beyond words to translate our shared convictions into sustained, transformative action.

Therefore, we commit ourselves to moving from listening to action.

We Commit:

- To speak and act prophetically against gender-based violence, human trafficking, exploitation, discrimination, environmental destruction, and the displacement of communities.
- To promote the dignity, and overall well-being of survivors through accessible, culturally sensitive, and survivor-centred psychosocial support for survivors, their families, and affected communities.

- To strengthen solidarity across borders and generations by building networks among churches, women's organisations, civil society organisations, and affected communities.
- To sustain collective action through advocacy, practical support, mutual learning, collaboration, and accountability.
- To promote accessible and inclusive education, awareness-raising, and capacity-building that empower women and children, strengthen women's leadership and meaningful participation in decision-making, and equip communities to address social and environmental challenges.

We Call on Churches:

- To establish and strengthen gender desks and other appropriate mechanisms to address gender-based violence and discrimination.
- To review and implement safeguarding and gender-just policies that protect women, prevent abuse, and promote institutional accountability.
- To create safe and inclusive spaces, including digital spaces, where victims are treated with dignity, protected from further harm, accompanied with compassion, and empowered.
- To institutionalise mental health programmes and strengthen pastoral care and support systems, including appropriate referral mechanisms and access to psychosocial support for survivors.
- To ensure women's meaningful participation and leadership in church governance, decision-making, and ministries.
- To strengthen education, theological reflection, dialogue, and advocacy that challenge gender inequality and harmful structures within the church and society.
- To build and sustain ecumenical partnerships with women's organisations, civil society, and affected communities to advance women's dignity and rights.

We Call on Governments:

- To uphold women's dignity and rights through effective laws, policies, and measures that address gender-based violence, human trafficking, exploitation, and discrimination.
- To ensure access to appropriate, culturally sensitive psychosocial support and other essential services for survivors, their families, and affected communities.
- To strengthen protection and prevention mechanisms to address violence, exploitation, and abuse and safeguard against further harm.
- To ensure that laws and policies are effectively implemented and that institutions responsible for protecting women's rights are held accountable.

As women of faith from Southeast Asia, we affirm that the pursuit of women's dignity and rights is an integral part of our Christian witness and ecumenical calling. We are called not only to proclaim justice but also to embody it in our relationships, institutions, and communities.

May our shared faith strengthen our courage, our solidarity sustain our commitment, and our actions bear witness to a more just, peaceful, and inclusive society where all can live with dignity, freedom, and hope.