STATEMENT OF FORMER and CURRENT REPRESENTATIVES OF ACWC ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN MYANMAR

March 2021

We, the former Representatives and one current Representative of the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), are extremely alarmed over the military’s coup d’état that forcibly ousted duly elected officials in Myanmar last 1 February 2021. This is a brazen and clear violation of the sovereign will of the Myanmar people to continue the democratic reforms that have been implemented in the last five years.

We are particularly concerned over the arrest and detention of duly elected officials, opposition leaders, journalists, and ordinary citizens, many of whom are young women and men opposed to the recent coup.

We are appalled at the forcible dispersal and arrest of innocent civilians holding peaceful protests resulting in the deaths of more than thirty people. The heavy-handed response of the military to these spontaneous expressions of resistance has only galvanized thousands of Myanmar citizens across the country to continue to voice out their opposition to the return of military rule.

The illegal takeover of power is a clear violation of the principles enshrined in the ASEAN Charter to which Myanmar is a signatory including the adherence to the rule of law, good governance, democracy and constitutional government; and respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We, therefore, urge the Myanmar military:

- To respect the results of the last elections and restore democratic order that have been upheld by the Myanmar people;
• To release immediately and unconditionally all those who are currently arbitrarily detained;

• To respect the people’s right to peaceful assembly and stop using violence, intimidation, and force against protesters and human rights defenders;

• To respect the people’s right to information and freedom of expression by keeping the communication lines open and removing restrictions on accessing the Internet and other forms of online communication.

We also urge the following:

• For the ACWC to fulfill its purpose to promote and protect the human rights and freedoms of women and children, including their right to express their views and participate in peaceful protests without fear of repercussions

• For ASEAN to guarantee that all actions and efforts are for the best interest of children, recognizing that children are always among the vulnerable during any crisis situation

• For ASEAN to ensure that assistance and support from humanitarian organizations are continued without impediment

• For ASEAN to convene a special meeting, in accordance with ASEAN Charter Articles 7.2 (d), 7.3 (b), and 20.4, to discuss the situation in Myanmar and urge an immediate action to resolve the issues peacefully to prevent further deterioration of the situation

Signed by:

Amihan Abueva, former Philippine Representative on Children’s Rights to the ACWC

Aurora Javate de Dios, former Philippine Representative on Women’s Rights to the ACWC
Mae Fe Templa, former Philippine Representative on Children’s Rights to the ACWC

Rita Serena Kolibongso, former Indonesian Representative on Women’s Rights to the ACWC

Taufan Damanik, former Indonesian Representative on Children’s Rights to the ACWC

Datin Paduka Hajah Intan bte Haji Mohd. Kassim, former Brunei Darussalam Representative on Children’s Rights, and Representative on Women’s Rights to the ACWC

Prof Datuk Noor Aziah Mohd Awal, former Malaysian Representative on Children’s Rights to the ACWC

Yuyum Fhahni Paryani, current Indonesian Representative on Children’s Rights to the ACWC