



ASEAN-JAPAN SPECIAL YOUTH FORUM FOR PROMOTING THE RULE OF LAW
5-6 July 2023, Tokyo, Japan

Outcome Document with Recommendations

Strengthening youth participation in public policy making and decision-making at all levels, to realize the implementation of [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), including sustainable Development Goal 16 is essential and has been a priority at national, regional, and international agendas. The “Kyoto Declaration” adopted in the 14th UN Crime Congress, re-enforces the importance of involvement of young people in crime prevention efforts and calls for action to “empower youth to become active agents of positive change in their communities to support crime prevention efforts by organizing social, educational, cultural, recreational, sports-related youth programmes and youth forums, as well as by using social media platforms and applications and other digital tools to amplify their voice”.

The "ASEAN-Japan Special Youth Forum for Promoting the Rule of Law” brought together young people from ASEAN, Japan and Timor Leste to discuss a core principle of the Rule of Law, “Access to Justice”, focusing on the role of education, including civic education, in addressing justice literacy and the impact of digital technology on justice, exploring risks and opportunities in securing the fundamental values and principles of justice and ensuring access to justice for all, leaving no one behind.

The "ASEAN-Japan Special Youth Forum for Promoting the Rule of Law”, was held in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation emphasizing the high value of cooperative relations that contribute to regional peace and development. It was jointly organized by the Ministry of Justice of Japan (MOJJ) and the Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ) with substantive support by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). It was hosted by the MOJJ and took place in Tokyo, Japan from July 5th to 6th, alongside the ASEAN-Japan Special Meeting of Justice Ministers.

The two-day Special Youth Forum gathered nearly 70 participants aged 18 to 25, primarily undergraduate and graduate students from ASEAN Member States, Timor-Leste, and Japan. Ten expert advisors from the MOJJ, TIJ, and UNODC facilitated the forum, focusing on the central theme of "Building Justice Literacy for Enhanced Access to Justice - the Key to the Rule of Law in the Digital Era."

Through group discussions and structured plenary sessions, participants exchanged knowledge, cross-cultural perspectives, and experiences, exploring the role of technology in promoting equal access to justice through digital literacy and user-friendly applications of new digital technologies. They also emphasized the significance of enhancing technological transparency and accountability. In addition, participants recognized the importance of education in enhancing justice literacy at all levels, fostering a better understanding of rights, responsibilities, and the rule of law to create a more just, peaceful, inclusive, and secure world.

To amplify youth voices and perspectives, participants developed a set of actionable recommendations for the consideration of policy makers at national regional and international level. The draft recommendations were presented and discussed in a plenary session, moderated by the two youth co-chairs i.e., Ms. Rethida Tek and Mr Tomohito Yasui, and were adopted by all youth delegates.

The final outcomes and recommendations, summarised below, were presented by Ms. Rethida Tek, one of the Co-Chairs of the forum and a youth delegate from Cambodia, were shared at the Closing Ceremony of the ASEAN-Japan Special Meeting of Justice Ministers. These recommendations will also be shared with the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), the UN body responsible for implementing and adopting policies in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Acknowledging the overarching theme of the Special Youth Forum, “Building Justice Literacy for Enhanced Access to Justice - the key to the rule of law in the digital era”, we firmly believe that young people hold a pivotal role in realizing this vision, in particular through providing new ideas and suggestions to address the five thematic agendas of this Forum,

Commemorating the 50th Year of the ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, and emphasizing the high value of cooperative relations that contribute to regional peace and development,

We, the youth delegates of the ASEAN-Japan Special Youth Forum for Promoting the Rule of Law, assembled here in Tokyo, Japan, to amplify our voices, share our perspectives, and with a view to putting forth actionable recommendations that envisions a future that is safer, just, peaceful, and inclusive, hereby recommend the following to the ASEAN-Japan Special Meeting of Justice Ministers for its consideration:

Empowerment and engagement of youth to overcome barriers in achieving equal access to justice for all

1. Recognize and institutionalize youth empowerment as an important governance priority to ensure that youth voices play a positive and significant role in informing the development of legal frameworks that respect access to equitable justice and human rights.
2. Call upon Governments and other stakeholders to provide support for youth-led and grassroots organizations to amplify youth voices and innovative solutions on justice-related issues in sociocultural, economic, and geographical contexts, and broaden justice literacy.
3. Involve public figures and media personnel including social media influencers in enhancing the promotion of quality justice delivery that meets the societal needs of youth and improve dissemination of relevant updates on justice-related approaches.
4. Engage youth as part of national government policy making, implementation and evaluation processes to ensure that all government policies, projects, and programmes are tailored to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

The role of education in building a more just, peaceful, inclusive and safe society

5. Governments should prioritize the integration of inclusive learning about civic rights and justice into formal education curricula at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels to improve justice and legal literacy. This includes teaching on the rule of law and the rights and responsibilities of citizens, including the exercise of such rights and responsibilities on the use of the Internet and other new and emergent technologies. Such initiatives could include interactive activities such as moot courts and model United Nations conferences.

6. Create an online and offline platform that provides open access to legal information and legal services, utilizing simplified language and a user-friendly interface to ensure increased accessibility.
7. Direct specific efforts towards developing and delivering civic and legal rights' education for children in a format that is accessible, comprehensive, personalized and child friendly (e.g. through the use of simplified language, and child-friendly materials).
8. Develop and deliver guidelines and training for all citizens, including children, youth, the elderly and marginalized communities by developing their digital skills and ethical knowledge to identify the difference between credible sources of information, and sources that may be misinformation or disinformation.

Effective measures to build accessible, equitable, and age- and gender-responsive judicial systems for all

9. In partnership with universities in the ASEAN region and Japan, initiate joint research fellowships to build regionally relevant evidence based on various behavioural science topics such as: responding to children in conflict with the law; promoting positive organizational change in the criminal justice system; creating more positive experiences for all individuals involved in court processes; and the need for institutional change in judicial processes in the context of digital technologies.
10. Bolster the quality, availability and accessibility of free legal aid services, in the ASEAN region and Japan. This can include the use of online legal counselling, local counselling centres and community outreach.
11. Strengthen the legislative and policy frameworks, and training for justice officials, to ensure age-appropriate, gender-sensitive, gender-responsive, non-stigmatizing, educational and rehabilitative responses to children in conflict with the law, including by leveraging digital technologies, to promote reintegration and social inclusion.
12. Strengthen efforts to mainstream gender in the national criminal justice system, including by ensuring existence of robust baseline data, regular periodic review, and the formulation and implementation of recommendations to strengthen gender-sensitive approaches within the criminal justice system.

The principled use of digital technology to improve access to justice for all

13. Mobilize public-private partnerships (for research, product and service provision, training and regulation) to harness the productive potential of technology in enhancing access to justice. In doing so, ensure that human rights are upheld, including by providing continuous training to educate criminal justice officials about the risks that the use of such technologies in the administration of criminal justice, may perpetuate inequalities and human rights risks.
14. Rigorously study the implications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as an assistance tool and harness the productive potential of AI for functions such as the provision of legal information and support services; enhancing research and case management search functions in legal education settings; and the provision of digital translation and closed captioning services. Noting however the evidence about discriminatory outcomes of both generative and predictive AI, government should exercise caution in embracing AI in policing, judicial and penal settings, until such applications are demonstrated with periodic evaluation to be beneficial in enhancing access to justice for all, with no discriminatory or counter-productive outcomes.

15. Redouble efforts to bolster digital inclusivity by promoting equitable access to technology infrastructure and Internet connectivity for underserved, vulnerable and marginalised groups, including for individuals with disabilities. Governments, the private sector, and civil society organizations should work together to bridge the digital divide, and ensure that any justice functions facilitated by technology are accessible to all members of society, without discrimination or access barriers of any kind.
16. Strengthen the regulatory infrastructure to mitigate the risks of technology mediated incursions on privacy, including: the unauthorized gathering, processing and sharing of intimate images, biometric data, and sensitive information (such as medical and/or legal information); as well as identity theft, technology-mediated errors/loopholes in identity verification; and breaches of data security.

Potential initiatives to close access-to-justice gaps within ASEAN and Japan utilizing opportunities provided by advancements in technology

17. To ensure robust international cooperation between ASEAN and Japan and to enhance the justice system in the digital era, governments, regional entities and international organizations should forge collaborative partnerships, including for:
 - a. Funding regional youth led organizations that seek to enhance access to justice for all (including the funding of online network initiatives that facilitate information-sharing and justice action among youth from the ASEAN region and Japan, and the development of educational materials and activities i.e. including through (online) conferences, platforms and courses).
 - b. Developing nationally and regionally relevant online awareness-raising and holistic educational campaigns for the public, the government, and all criminal justice actors to promote an understanding of the rights and obligations that individuals have, in both the online and offline worlds, and to instil skills in recognizing the ways that negative stereotypes and discrimination compromise equal access to justice.