

*Press Release for immediate use:*

## Civil Society from across the Asia Pacific meets for 6<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Consultation on Refugee Rights

BANGKOK, 22 September 2016 – Over a hundred civil society groups, international observers and human rights defenders from across the Asia-Pacific region have finalised a series of action plans outlining their strategies to increase protection spaces for refugees in the region over the next two years.

This commitment was announced today at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Consultation on Refugee Rights (APCRR6). Held over three days at the Ambassador Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand APCRR6 was organised by the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), which collectively advocates for the rights of refugees, the forcibly displaced and stateless persons. The consultation drew together 150 participants from non-governmental organisations, academia, community-based and international organisations from 24 countries in the region including Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Across the globe approximately 65.3 million people are displaced, the largest ever recorded number. Of this number, approximately 3.5 million refugees, 1.9 million internally displaced people (IDPs) and 1.4 million stateless people live in the Asia Pacific region. This includes in camp-based situations such as Nepal and northern Thailand, in addition to ever-growing urban populations in Malaysia and Pakistan amongst many others.

This year's consultation was themed "Building on Positive Practices", and Asmoro Hadiyanto, Secretary General of APRRN, noted, "We are at a critically important juncture where there are great opportunities for tangible changes to be made. We have seen some very promising developments in the region that can be capitalised upon. If we all work together, including governments, UNHCR and civil society, we can begin to institutionalise the rights that refugees deserve and build on some of the positive practices we have seen over the last years."

The consultations also highlighted the resiliency and agency of refugees. "Refugees are an opportunity, not a burden," said Professor Yiombi Thona, Deputy Chair of APRRN. "Time and time again refugees have displayed themselves to be agents of change and positive contributors to society. When legal frameworks and supports exist, refugees are able to flourish."

During APCRR6, participants discussed and strategised around a number of key thematic and geographic focus areas. Other core issues were also addressed including the Rohingya, livelihoods, engaging with governments and working with communities. Speakers from civil society shared positive practices from across the region that could be used as a foundation for similar activities in other contexts. These formal Action Plans will be available on the APRRN website [here](#).

### For more information please contact:

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