EVENT RECAP: 2023 ASEAN GOOD GOVERNANCE BY C4 CENTER IN PENANG, MALAYSIA

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On 5-6 December 2023, our Junior Researcher, Naletha G. E. Pangemanan, was invited to attend the two-day conference on ASEAN Good Governance held by the *Center to Combat Corruption and Cronyism Center Malaysia (C4 Center)* in Penang, Malaysia on behalf of the *Institute for Asian Crime and Security (IACS)*. Taking place at Bayview Beach Resort Hotel in Batu Ferringhi, the conference served as a platform for civil society organizations in the region to exchange knowledge, best practices and ideas in addressing urgent regional transnational crimes and cross-border corruption; with a total of around 30 participants representing CSOs from ASEAN region, India and Timor-Leste.

The first day of the event was structured around several keynote speeches, comprehensive presentations and discussions to set out the context, objectives and agenda of the overall conference. The opening of the event was marked by remarks from the *C4 Center* and the *Royal Malaysia Police*. Several presentations and a panel discussion were also conducted regarding the preliminary reports of the *C4 Center* on several key security issues in the region: illicit trades, cross-border corruption and illegal migrants. The presentations particularly highlighted the causal relations between poor governance (corruption and collusion) and various transnational crimes such as smuggling, tax evasion, money laundering, terrorism as well as illegal migrant workers in Malaysia and the ASEAN region. The presentations were followed by a panel discussion featuring key speakers echoing similar messages in country and company-level contexts, as well as presentations from each participant on their respective country and organization's works in related areas. The event also featured a refreshing solidarity night in the George Town area, Penang as a networking event to end the first day.



The second day's activities featured a brief recap of the first day's activities and a comprehensive workshop on United Nations Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), especially pertaining to the review & engagement tools of NGO stakeholders. Delivered by the *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC),* the workshop provided a detailed presentation on the UNTOC Review Mechanism, its relations with the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and facilitated a group discussion on the UNTOC relevance in the ASEAN context. The workshop enabled the participants to identify the main challenges in addressing transnational crimes in their countries as well as the potential solutions to address those challenges, by highlighting the causes, and stakeholders involved, as well as the tools and potential opportunities that civil society might tap into.



Not only was it very insightful, but the event was also highly collaborative and participative in nature by facilitating interactive discussions and group projects that enabled CSOs in the region to voice out their concerns, opinions and ideas in combatting transnational organized crimes. As one of the key results, the event successfully served as a facilitator of a first step in building a regional network of CSOs as part of the strategic initiatives to combat such issues. The importance and inclusion of CSOs as strategic stakeholders in the advocacy of the policy-making against cross-border corruption and transnational crimes in ASEAN countries were highly emphasized and promoted during this event. We sincerely thank the *C4 Center* for inviting us to this event as we are looking forward to participating in its future events.



(All documentation can also be accessed in here.)

Images credit: Naletha G. E. Pangemanan