Environmental Justice is Queer Justice

A Queer Feminist Manifesto

October 2026

We, the people of Southeast Asia, working across LGBTQIA+, feminist, human rights, and environmental justice movements, are deeply concerned by the environmental destruction that does not stop at borders—including the recent hazardous transboundary haze affecting communities across the region.

We offer this manifesto as a declaration of our rights, our collective power, and our place in the struggle for environmental justice. The climate crisis is no longer a distant threat; it is already unfolding across Southeast Asia. From devastating floods in Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand to recurring forest fires, transboundary haze, prolonged droughts, and extreme weather events across the region, our communities are already experiencing the consequences of environmental destruction and climate change. These disasters are an urgent wake-up call to ASEAN, its Member States, corporations, and all stakeholders: delayed action costs lives, destroys livelihoods, deepens existing inequalities, and disproportionately affects communities already marginalised by discriminatory systems. We cannot afford to wait for another disaster before taking meaningful action. Prevention, climate adaptation, environmental protection, and accountability must become immediate regional priorities. We stand together across borders to demand a region where the rights, lives, knowledge, and futures of all people—including those most marginalised—are recognised, protected, respected, and valued.

Environmental injustice is interconnected and structural.

Environmental harm does not affect everyone in the same way, nor are its impacts gender-neutral. Women, LGBTQIA+ people, and other marginalised communities often face disproportionate and distinct impacts due to existing inequalities and systemic discrimination. These impacts are shaped by who holds power, who controls land and resources, whose knowledge is valued, and whose lives, identities, and families are recognised.

LGBTQIA+ people are not inherently vulnerable. We are made vulnerable when our lives, rights, and knowledge remain unrecognised by laws, institutions, and systems of decision-making. Discriminatory laws, patriarchal and heteronormative institutions, economic inequality, exclusion from public services, and violence against those who challenge these systems further deepen this vulnerability. As a result, our communities can face greater barriers to safe shelter, health care, humanitarian assistance, livelihoods, land, legal protection, and meaningful participation in decisions that affect our lives.

Environmental injustice extends beyond the climate crisis. It includes the destruction of ecosystems for profit, pollution that harms communities, extraction imposed without consent,

and development that displaces people from their homes, livelihoods, and territories. It includes environmental harms caused or intensified by armed conflict, authoritarianism, and the use of military power against communities. It also includes violence, criminalization, judicial harassment, and other reprisals against environmental human rights defenders.

These harms are rooted in systems that treat nature, territories, and human lives as resources to be controlled and exploited. Colonialism and extractivism continue to move wealth and natural resources away from communities in Southeast Asia for the benefit of powerful states, corporations, and elites. Patriarchy, heteronormativity, racism, class inequality, and other systems of oppression determine whose losses are ignored and whose interests are protected.

Environmental destruction does not stop at national borders. Pollution, forest and ocean degradation, climate impacts, extractive supply chains, and the loss of biodiversity affect communities across Southeast Asia. Governments cannot use borders or divided jurisdictions as excuses for inaction. Environmental justice requires cooperation, shared responsibility, and accountability across the region.

Yet we, the people of Southeast Asia, are more than the injustices we face. Particularly those who are unrecognised by the system such as LGBTQIA+ people, who are rights-holders, knowledge-holders, researchers, organizers, caregivers, environmental defenders, and leaders. Our communities have built networks of mutual aid and solidarity in the face of exclusion. Our experiences, knowledge, and leadership are essential to creating environmental solutions that protect both people and the planet.

Environmental justice must protect rights and transform systems.

We value inclusion. Every person has the right to live with dignity in a clean, healthy, safe, and sustainable environment, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics, race, ethnicity, class, citizenship, disability, or other status.

We value collaboration. Our different identities, experiences, and forms of knowledge strengthen our ability to care for our communities and the environment. Those most affected by environmental decisions must have the power to shape them.

We value care for the environment. Land, water, forests, oceans, biodiversity, and other parts of the living world must be protected and governed for the well-being of present and future generations, rather than exploited for private gain.

We value collective care. We look after one another, defend our communities, and build solidarity across identities, movements, and national borders. No person or community should be abandoned during environmental crises or excluded from the decisions and resources needed to recover.

We affirm the rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination, customary territories, lands, waters, and resources. Indigenous knowledge, practices, and governance systems must be respected. No project, policy, or environmental intervention affecting Indigenous Peoples and their territories should proceed without their free, prior, and informed consent.

We affirm the universality of human rights to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment in the UN Resolution 76/300. Clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a human right to all, including people who are displaced, undocumented, or stateless. People forced to leave their homes because of climate impacts, environmental destruction, conflict, or development projects must receive protection and have equitable access to services, assistance, livelihoods, and justice.

We envision a just transition that changes how power, resources, risks, and benefits are distributed. Environmental action must secure dignified livelihoods, social protection, accessible public services, and fair opportunities for affected communities. We, the people of Southeast Asia, including LGBTQIA+ people must be able to participate in and benefit from green jobs, sustainable livelihoods, environmental financing, and decisions about the transition.

We call for the precautionary principle to guide environmental decisions. Governments, corporations, and financial institutions must act to prevent serious or irreversible harm even when scientific knowledge remains incomplete. Communities must not be used as testing grounds for unproven interventions.

We demand climate finance justice grounded in historical responsibility and equity. Wealthy nations and major polluters must pay their fair share for decades of emissions and environmental destruction. We reject debt-based climate financing that burdens the Global South for a crisis it contributed least to. Climate finance must prioritise transparent, accessible, and accountable grants for the most affected communities, particularly in the Global South. Climate finance is not charity; it is a matter of justice and accountability.

We reject false solutions that claim to protect the environment while reproducing extraction, displacement, inequality, or corporate control. We reject greenwashing, rainbow-washing, Global South-washing and the use of marginalized communities' voices to wash and legitimize harmful agendas. Environmental action must respond to the causes of injustice, not conceal or profit from them.

We stand for peace. Communities cannot exercise environmental rights where violence, conflict, and militarization silence opposition and restrict civic space. Environmental governance must protect life, dignity, participation, and community safety.

We commit to strengthening solidarity among LGBTQIA+, Indigenous, environmental, feminist, labor, disability, youth, and other rights and justice movements. We will share knowledge, support community-led action, and stand with those defending their lands, waters, livelihoods, and rights.

We commit to examining our own practices. LGBTQIA+ and environmental movements must exercise due diligence in accepting funding and partnerships. We must refuse support that allows corporations or other actors to hide environmental destruction, discrimination, or human rights abuses behind public displays of inclusion.

Environmental justice requires regional solidarity and accountability.

We direct these demands to the institutions and movements with the power and responsibility to act.

To ASEAN and its Member States:

- **We demand queer-inclusive environmental governance.** The ASEAN Declaration on Environmental Rights and its Regional Plan of Action must explicitly recognize LGBTQIA+ people as rights-holders and leaders and ensure meaningful participation, access to information and justice, and public accountability.
- **We demand regional cooperation on transboundary environmental harm.** Member States must work together to prevent and remedy damage affecting shared ecosystems and communities across borders.
- **We demand protection for environmental and human rights defenders.** States must end violence, criminalization, judicial harassment, and other reprisals against defenders, including LGBTQIA+ and Indigenous defenders.
- **We demand rights-based environmental action.** States must uphold Indigenous Peoples' self-determination, customary territories, knowledge systems, and free, prior and informed consent; apply the precautionary principle; and advance a just transition grounded in dignified livelihoods, social protection, and equitable access to opportunities.

To corporations, high-polluting industries, and financial institutions:

- **We demand an end to business as usual** that drives extraction, environmental destruction, biodiversity loss, and the climate crisis.
- **We demand accountability and remedy.** Those responsible for pollution, extraction, displacement, and ecological destruction must prevent further harm, disclose their impacts, respect community decisions, and bear the costs of restoration and redress.
- **We demand an end to attacks against communities and defenders.** Corporations and their partners must not use threats, judicial harassment, criminalization, or security forces to silence opposition.
- **We reject false solutions, greenwashing, rainbow-washing and Global South-washing.** Environmental and LGBTQIA+ inclusion, as well as Global South voices, must not be used to conceal destructive practices or legitimize externally driven agendas and interventions that reproduce extraction, inequality, and dispossession.

To environmental, climate, and LGBTQIA+ movements:

- **We call for solidarity and shared leadership.** LGBTQIA+ people must be included as rights-holders, knowledge-holders, and leaders, while our movements stand with Indigenous Peoples, displaced and stateless communities, and environmental and human rights defenders.
- **We call on our movements to confront injustice within our own spaces.** We must challenge green capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy, heteronormativity, authoritarianism, militarization, and economic inequality, and exercise due diligence in accepting funding and partnerships.

We make these demands as part of our shared struggle to transform the systems that harm our communities and the environment.

We believe another future is possible: one where our rights are recognized, communities determine their own paths, defenders can act without fear, and environmental decisions place life and dignity above profit and power.

We will continue to build coalitions across communities, identities, movements, and borders. We will protect one another and the living world we share. We will resist systems that treat people and nature as disposable.

Our solidarity is our strength. Our knowledge matters. Our leadership must shape the future of Southeast Asia.

There can be no environmental justice without queer justice.