

ANNUAL REPORT 2006 APWLD

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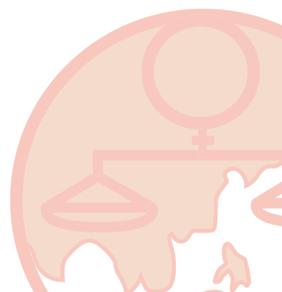


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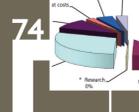
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ACRONYMS

AAHRMD	Asian Alliance on Human Rights, Migration and Development
AMIHAN	National Federation of Peasant Women (Philippines)
APF	Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions
APMM	Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants
APWLD	Asia-Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CWGL	Center for Women's Global Leadership
ESC	Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
EU	European Union
FA	Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum Asia)
FLTP	Feminist Legal Theory and Practice training programme
FTZ	Free Trade Zone
HBF	Heinrich Boell Foundation
HIVOS	Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries
HK	Hong Kong
HR	Human Rights
HRD	Human Rights Defender
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
Inform	Information Monitor, an organisation in Sri Lanka
L&M	Labor and Migration
MAP	Migrant Assistance Programme
NCAV	National Centre Against Violence, Mongolia
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NHRH	National Human Rights Institutions
Novib	Netherlands Organisation for International Development Cooperation
RW	Rural and Indigenous Women

INTRODUCTION

2006 marked the beginning of the 20th anniversary of APWLD. Throughout that time APWLD has met the challenges and is recognised as one of the leading feminist organisations of the women's movement working on women, law and development. It has expanded its network of women's NGOs and individuals throughout the Asia Pacific region and has made significant contributions to the promotion and protection of women's human rights and has remained at the forefront of raising urgent and emerging issues that affect women's access to justice.

Regional Coordinator and secretariat staff and not having a fundraising strategy, sufficient funds had not been secured for 2006, immediate actions had to be taken to address the organisations financial difficulties, donors contacted, which resulted in a roundtable meeting with APWLD's Programme and Management Committee and the Regional Coordinator and a commitment from the donors for their continued support.

Through alliances and partnerships it has helped create opportunities for women from throughout the Asia Pacific region to influence the agenda on women's human rights, gender equality and equity at national, regional and international fora, including the UN mechanisms and the people's movement.

Achievements for 2006 reflected throughout this report are attributable to collaboration between regional organisations and partners and networking with our members throughout the region. It provides insight into the many issues affecting women in the Asia Pacific Region and how APWLD addresses these issues. It would not have been possible without the dedication and work of the APWLD secretariat, governance bodies, network and significant funding of our donor partners: Ford Foundation, Sida, Novib Oxfam, HIVOS, HBF, Mamacash and Global Fund for Women.

It has been a busy and productive year for APWLD but not without its challenges. The Regional Council convened the APWLD General Assembly meeting to review and adopt the strategic plan for APWLD's programme cycle for 2006-2008 and to review the external evaluation report which had been undertaken in 2005 in order to guide the planning for the new programme cycle and improve organisational and financial management. The recommendations from the external evaluation were mainly positive and the directives from the Regional Council for the continuation of their implementation have set APWLD in a new strategic direction to strengthen the organisation for long term sustainability.

I thank you all for your support and in solidarity I look forward to the challenges of the coming year.



Lynnsay Francis
APWLD Regional Coordinator
March 2007

Priority for the year has been on institutional capacity building and development. Due to a transition period with changes of the

Executive Summary

What makes APWLD a unique regional organisation is that it generates capacity for the women's movement in the region to enable it to promote women's human rights at the national, regional and international levels; and to use law as an instrument of social change for equality, justice, peace and development. In 2006, APWLD continued its endeavors through its six programmes to achieve its goal to work on promoting women's human rights as an analytical and strategic framework of engaging with the legal system and encouraging women to use law as an empowering tool for change.

Work with other organisations

APWLD's links with partner organisations, women's group, network and other movements through dialogue and collaborative initiatives, have been important for APWLD since its beginning and continue to be the reason for our accomplishment in achieving the organisation's objectives and implementation of programmes and activities in networking, advocacy, lobbying, training and research.

APWLD continued to facilitate and provide support for network members attendance at national, regional and international fora, including engagement with the UN Special Procedures mechanisms as it provides an accessible and relevant UN mechanism to women's NGOs in the region to engage with UN experts and with national governments to ensure that international human rights requirements are complied within their countries.

At international level

Despite significant achievements over the last decade at an international level in the recognition, protection and promotion of women's human rights and gender equality, women's human rights and equality are far

from being universally recognised and realised as governments fail to take preventive and protective measures by adopting laws, policies and action in accordance with international human rights standards and commitments to enable women to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms.

UN Human Rights System

APWLD like other NGOs has to rethink its strategy in engaging with the UN Human Rights system and has prepared a paper on UN Reforms. The WHR WG has been monitoring and responding to developments and changes to the UN system under the current UN reforms particularly in the establishment of the Human Rights Council and reforms of the 'women's machinery' within the UN. It remains closely involved with the debates on UN reform processes, through dialogue and consultation with its network and partners on how to address the implication of these reforms and has endorsed actions and statement of our partners such as Centre for Women's Global Leadership and WEEDO.

New challenges

The issue of women's human rights and inequalities continues to pose new challenges, the interplay of globalisation, fundamentalisms, increasing militarism and environmental degradation throughout the region reinforces discrimination and inequalities. Women remain severely under represented at all levels of decision making, which hinders their participation and access to opportunities and resources and are denied rights to their basic needs such as food and income security, traditional sources of livelihood, water, housing, healthcare and services. In a lot of instances, women's access to resources and the benefits of development have also been limited by the

non-recognition of their rights. Their lack of legal stature has made them vulnerable to violence and other forms of human rights violations.

Violence against Women

The growing problem of violence against women, and persecution of women human rights defenders and victims of human rights violations remains pervasive throughout the Asia Pacific region. Many of our members live in politically challenging environments, putting them at risk and are experiencing restrictions on freedom of movement, arbitrary detention, threats to their lives, intimidation and harassment for speaking out against violations of women's human rights and advocating for reform; as well restrictions on NGO formations are being implemented. State inaction to redress human rights violations perpetrated by State agents and non-state actors has brought about impunity for these crimes and are a serious concern that needs urgent attention. APWLD maintains its call for state accountability for women's human rights nationally and internationally to help women and communities move towards lives of dignity and security, seeking justice and promoting human rights.

Strategic Objectives:

The year marked the beginning of the new programme cycle for 2006-2008 and the development of a new strategic plan, for the six programmes, approved by the General Assembly and Regional Council, representing APWLD network members. APWLD has continued to adapt its strategies in the pursuit of women's human rights, gender equality and equity to respond to an ever-changing and increasingly complex environment; highlighting the fact that many of the issues we face on the international scene such as natural disasters, globalisation, fundamentalism and militarism are all interwoven with human rights issues.

The strategic objectives of the programme cycle for 2006-2008 are:

1 related to programme: to advance feminist perspectives, knowledge and strategies for the recognition, fulfilment and protection of Women's Human Rights, particularly in the context of globalisation, fundamentalism and militarism.

2 related to membership and network: (a) to establish stronger links with national, regional and international people's and women's movements, and groups working on similar issues, including lobby and advocacy networks; (b) to expand APWLD membership in under represented sub-regions, countries, and groups (i.e. Mekong sub-region, Central Asia, and Pacific and among women lawyers, young women, and lesbian groups); (c) to contribute to the capacity building of APWLD's membership;

3 related to advocacy: to sharpen strategies to influence law and policy change at all levels by advocating for Women's Human Rights;

4 related to institution: (a) to better implement APWLD's policies and procedures through coordinated, accountable, democratic, and transparent processes guided by feminist principles (b) to take steps leading to financial sustainability.

Feminist Leadership principles

Following on from substantive discussions on Feminist Leadership principles and how they inform the structures and work of APWLD in 2005, the regional Council in 2006 confirmed its commitment to actively integrate feminist leadership principles within all APWLD bodies and determined that a discussion on Feminist Leadership Principles

should be a standing agenda item for each body of APWLD. A Feminist Leadership Working Group was established and a Feminist Leadership Dialogues Discussion Paper drafted and circulated for discussion. The paper was used as a starting point to initiate discussion to further enrich our collective understanding of feminist leadership principles and their integration and operation within APWLD.

Women's Human Rights framework and concept papers

The development of a common women's human rights framework approach and concept papers on emerging issues served to build capacity amongst task forces and network members about how to clarify and articulate APWLD's understanding and position on women's human rights and formulate conceptual tools for addressing APWLD's programme issues within a human rights framework and gender perspective to further their advocacy work. It has also assisted in drafting NGO declarations and statements ensuring that these documents reflect women's perspectives.

Regional Consultations

The annual regional consultation with the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Yakin Ertürk, was held in Mongolia back to back with the national consultation and to maximise the reach of the consultations, the VAW TF invited Ms Asma Jahangir, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief to join the Asia Pacific consultation held in Mongolia. Although unable to attend the consultation she participated through a teleconference. The theme of the consultation was on Culture and Violence against Women. During the two day meeting there were rich discussions on the inter-linkages between culture and violations of women's human rights. In many parts of Asia Pacific, the status of women is

linked to the dichotomy of conflicting aspirations for universally accepted standards of human rights and women's human rights in particular and culture and cultural practices of a community. The proceedings of the consultation, provides in depth presentations on different aspects of 'culture' and its effect on women and violence against women and sets out the strategies participants articulated which will be used in their advocacy locally, nationally, regionally and internationally.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrant Workers, Mr J.A. Bustamante, attended roundtable talks on Labour and Migration issues in Asia Pacific held with NGOs in Indonesia, to discuss ways and means to develop a more effective collaboration in highlighting the plight of migrant workers around the world. He also indicated that he would like to work more closely with APWLD and other SR mandate holders on areas of overlap.

Regional participation

APWLD has continued to play a pivotal role at the regional level of developing capacity of national women's organisations by providing training and other forms of technical assistance. Throughout the past year network members from throughout the region have participated in the various programmes, trainings, workshops and exchange visits. The training provides an enabling environment for participants to discuss social, cultural and political issues that affect their lives and enables them to develop the necessary skills for their full participation in local, national, regional and global decision-making, as well as support collective action and is clearly having an impact in terms of performance as well as the ability to access and mobilise resources.

Feminist Legal Theory and Practice Training
APWLD has continued to conduct its annual regional and national Feminist Legal Theory

and Practice training and develop its resource training materials. A major development this year has been the expansion of the FLTP resource trainers to include 16 new trainers from 9 countries. This year in collaboration with the Pacific Regional Human Rights Resource Team (UNDP/RRRT) organised the Regional Feminist Legal Theory Practice Resource Pool Development Training, with 16 lawyers, activities and partners organisations. A workshop was held in Indonesia with the objective of contextualising and adapting the FLTP module to the Indonesian context. In 2007, a resource book on FLTP in the Indonesian context will be developed and pilot tested. This module and process will provide a model for other countries.

Women and Politics

The Women's Participation in Political Processes Task Force members continue to review and refine the current Gender and Politics Training Manual Level I and conducted a Gender and Politics Training Level I Pilot Workshop in Malaysia. The training was conducted by three task force members with 21 aspiring women leaders, academics, activists from Malaysia, Philippines, Kazakhstan, Indonesia and Korea and to test the training manual, and was also aimed at building the skills and capacity of women who want to engage in political processes and advance women's agendas in their respective countries and across the region.

The Women and Food Sovereignty Trainers' Kit
Pilot training on the Women and Food Sovereignty Trainers' Kit was conducted in Indonesia, Philippines, Pakistan, India, and Thailand. The kit was translated into the local languages. A workshop on Feminism and Land Rights was held in Tamil Nadu, Chennai, India, with task force members and 10 participants from India, Nepal, Philippines,

Kyrgyzstan, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. The workshop not only gave theoretical framework on land rights, but also practical solutions as to how to go about claiming their rights.

Women Human Rights Defenders

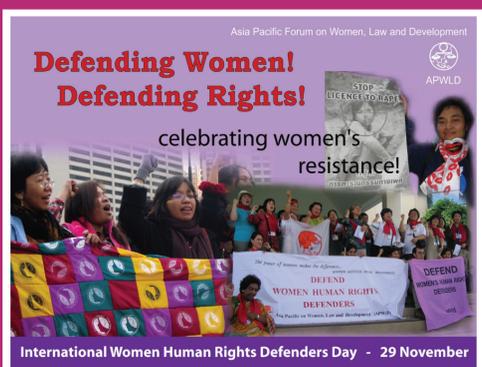
APWLD continues to be the focal point for Women Human Rights Defenders in the region and internationally, and has been developing Women Human Rights Resource Book. A team of international resource persons/contributors to the resource book from national, regional and international organisations working on WHRD issues, including the UNSR on Human Rights Defenders, Ms Hina Jilani, have provided specific inputs into various sections of the Resource Book, which will be completed in April 2007.

Summary

Overall APWLD has achieved most of its specific outcomes for 2006. The six programmes: Women Human Rights Working Group, Violence against Women, Women's Participation in Political Processes, Labour and Migration, Women and the Environment and Rural and Indigenous Women, have implemented various activities, through lobbying, advocacy, training, research, production and translation of publications with the aim of strengthening the technical and institutional capacity of their network members, women's NGOs and partners and are described further in this report.



WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAMME



WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAMME

I. Overview

For women's human rights, the last decade created several milestones at the international level - women have collectively engaged with the international human rights system from all parts of the globe challenging exclusion and neutrality and infusing the human rights system with a gender perspective and gender-specific concerns. While there is a persistent trend of states rolling back on gains made by women over the last decade and slow implementation of international gains at a national level, recent developments in reforms of the UN show promising signs for WHRs internationally. Specifically the recommendations of the Coherence Panel on UN Gender architecture reforms recommend plans which will see a stronger, more coordinated and better resourced approach to women's concerns at the UN level.

The goal of APWLD is to advance women's human rights in the region and while all programmes of APWLD are addressing issues of women's human rights the WHR Programme has played an integral role in generating and integrating an agreed upon understanding and framework on women's human rights into APWLD's programmes with the Task Forces. Moreover, while all Task Forces have members with rich and diverse experiences, international law may not be an area of work of particular Task Force members. The WHR programme has assisted Task Forces with inputs on international law including through the Feminist Legal Theory and Practice Training which is a significant activity of APWLD. The training has grown into a dynamic programme that attempts to bring feminist insights and perspectives into legal practice. In addition, the WHR programme has been developing feminist analysis and critique of

critical emerging issues in the region, which are impacting on women providing a framework for analysis and action for APWLD's Task Forces.

To respond toward addressing these issues, the WHR programme set its objectives for 2006 - 2008 as follows:

- To promote the Women's Human Rights framework in APWLD's programme and among its members and partners, including through institutionalising Feminist Legal Theory and Practice (FLTP) in APWLD;
- To support strategic initiatives for the advancement and protection of women's human rights in the Asia Pacific region;
- To enhance the understanding of emerging issues of women's rights in the programmes of APWLD and among members and partners.

II. Results and Achievements

2.1 Women's Human Rights Framework

When the Women Human Rights Working group (WHR-WG) was created in 2003 one of the specific mandates given to it by the Regional Council was 'to promote and facilitate integration of women's human rights framework in APWLD'. The working group decided an important starting point was the creation of a position paper which outlines the essentials of the WHR Framework of APWLD. The WG has also been discussing and developing further methods and approaches for institutionalising, expanding and developing the FLTP as a programme within APWLD and within the Asia Pacific region.

A women's human rights framework outlining the essentials of the WHR framework of APWLD has been developed and circulated to the task forces. The purpose of the paper is to clarify and articulate APWLD's understanding and position/s on women human rights and formulate conceptual tools for addressing APWLD's programme issues within a human rights framework.

A consultative process was carried out with the task forces and members of the WG to develop further and identify ways in which the framework paper can be used to address the thematic concerns of the various programmes and guide them in their advocacy and lobbying within a women's human rights framework. As a result the paper has been further deepened and enhanced with the incorporation of the experiences of TF members in using a WHR approach. This has enriched the paper and ensured that the paper is a practical and relevant document that will be used by the TFs in their work and activities. For example, the WPPP Task Force used the paper to sharpen concepts and understanding in the Gender and Politics Level I Manual which was piloted in the Gender and Politics Training in December 2006.

Paper on WHRs and Fundamentalisms

The Working Group identified the need to develop a more nuanced understanding on the inter-linkages between gender, diversity and identity politics, women's human rights and fundamentalisms and how these impact on the current situation for women's struggle for these rights. A conceptual framework for deepening our understanding on these issues in the Asia Pacific region and effective strategies used by women's groups in the region to address fundamentalisms has been prepared. Members of the WHR WG have discussed the paper with each Task Force this year to enhance each programmes' analysis of these issues and their specific impacts on

different groups of women as well as enhance and enrich the paper with examples from the various contexts in which task force members are working.

The VAW Task Force used the paper in planning for the UNSRVAW Consultation in September 2006 on the theme 'Culture and Violence Against Women' enhancing conceptual clarity on interlinkages between fundamentalisms and WHR violations in Asia Pacific and enriching discussions on strategies to address this during the Consultation.

2.2 Collaborations with APWLD Task Forces

As well as attending TF meetings through 2006, the WHR WG has collaborated with APWLD TFs on a number of activities through this year supporting and enriching TFs' members work:

WHR WG members assisted the VAW TF in preparation and planning for the Consultation with the UNSRVAW which was held in Mongolia in September. A number of WG members also attended the Consultation and provided significant contributions through their participation, presentations and facilitation deepening discussions and analysis of the intersection of culture and WHRs in Asia Pacific.

The support of WHR WG to the participation of a RW TF member in HR Council session in September and parallel events highlighting the issue of WHRDs;

A member of the FLTP resource pool of trainers attended the WPPP Task Force's Gender and Politics Training in December 2006 to share FLTP methods and approaches and identify intersections between the trainings which may be usefully incorporated into the Gender and Politics Training as well as enrich the FLTP Resource Manual.

2.3 Feminist Legal Theory and Practice Training (FLTP)

Conducted since 1994, the Feminist Legal Theory and Practice (FLTP) training, has grown into a dynamic programme that offers a unique model in the region in so far as it attempts to bring feminist insights and perspectives into legal practice and has become a mainstay activity of APWLD. It is an amalgamation of the three trainings: feminist legal theory, women's human rights and feminist litigation strategies and seeks to challenge the traditional notion that law is a neutral, objective, and rational set of rules, unaffected by the perspective of those who possess the power inherent in the legal institutions.

The FLTP trainings examine how law can be used to facilitate women's human rights and seeks to address the social, cultural and political contexts that shape the legal system in light of both feminist theories informing and critiquing it and legal and political practices. It provides an opportunity for participants to develop a greater awareness and understanding of human rights, gender, discrimination, equality, law and development which are crucial when identifying and discussing issues and dilemmas encountered by women's rights/legal advocates in their use of legal and advocacy strategies to address women's concerns.

The WHR WG has implemented the FLTP programme in collaboration with regional and national partners in a number of activities and processes which have all strengthened the programme and enriched women's strategies for addressing Human Rights and development concerns in Asia Pacific.

The Regional Feminist Legal Theory and Practice Training of Trainers

In October, 2006, the WHR WG partnered with RRRT/UNDP to conduct a Resource Pool Development Training, to develop and expand APWLD's FLTP resource pool with capacity and commitment for the conduct and sustained enhancement of FLTP trainings. The training, held in Chiang Mai, brought together 16 lawyers and activists from Fiji, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Korea, India, Japan, Australia, and Kyrgyzstan.

The APWLD and RRRT team of trainers lead and facilitated the training, which also used four FLTP graduates from the previous Training of Trainer (TOT) held in 2002 to conduct sessions of the training which enhanced their training skills and capability to conduct training on FLTP concepts, perspectives and approaches.



The trainers facilitated the learning process by introducing a number of training skills in both the formal and informal sessions, ranging from case studies, role plays, a moot court session and preparing a case on how to apply feminist litigation strategies using human rights conventions. It provided an opportunity for participants to develop a greater understanding of gender, discrimination, equality, law and human rights through sharing their own examples of feminist litigation and advocacy strategies that could be used to challenge discriminatory laws and practices in their own countries.

As a result of the training, APWLD's FLTP Resource Pool has expanded to include 16 new trainers from around the region. Participants committed to undertake the following FLTP activities:

The three participants from Indonesia attended the FLTP TOT to build their capacity to contribute to a workshop in November 2006 to design a resource manual for National Indonesian FLTP Trainings. This has been completed and is outlined below.

The participant from Kyrgyzstan will be conducting a national FLTP training in partnership with APWLD and APWLD members in Kyrgyzstan in 2008.

Participants from the Pacific Islands plan to conduct a regional FLTP training in 2008.

Participants from Malaysia will be using the FLTP framework in their work on the new Islamic Family Law Act.

RRRT, members of APWLD's Resource Pool of trainers in Fiji, conduct trainings for the Fijian judiciary and groups of lawyers in Fiji each year and apply the FLTP framework in this work.

As a result of attendance at the FLTP Regional Training in October 2006, APWLD members and partners from Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Korea used the FLTP framework in their work and activities. In November, 2006, two national trainings and one regional presentation were conducted:

Legal Awareness and Leadership for Lawyers in Bukit Tinggi, Bentong, Pahang (Malaysia); with over 20 students identified as future leaders of the Bar. Conducted session on 'Gender Perspectives to the Law' using the FLTP manual as a resource.

Writers for Women's Rights Programme (WWRP) Ptaling, Jaya, Selangor (Malaysia): the training was for 13 women writers including lawyers, activists and students aged between 18-30. The objective was to encourage more women to write on social justice issues with a feminist perspective and to highlight the critical issues in Malaysia and to analyse these from the perspective of how women are affected. Using the intersectionality approach contained in the FLTP Manual the following issues were identified: violence, equality, secularism, globalisation and corruption as pressing issues.

Feminist Legal Theory and Practice: Making the Law Work for Women: Seoul, Korea: made a presentation on FLTP outlining the core elements of FLTP and advocating the FLTP as a dynamic framework and political strategy for addressing women's human rights concerns in Asia Pacific current context.

Several requests for FLTP training were received, including in Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan and APWLD has responded to this by assisting members in Indonesia to develop a National FLTP Training Module and testing in 2007 and planning a National FLTP training in Kyrgyzstan in 2008.



FLTP participants, Chiang Mai, 2006

FLTP has given me new understandings and perspectives on domestic law and international human rights law. I have used the FLTP framework and materials in a book which I co-authored on economic rights of rural women; in my work on a project on Human Rights of Muslim Women and Children in Detention and in all the training I conduct on the law introducing a feminist critique of law including at the University and the bar association of Philippines. FLTP has opened 'new vistas' for learning for me which I actively share wherever I can.

Ma. Luz S. Ranese-Raval
Integrated Bar of the Philippines
Philippines, 2006



FLTP has been really useful to me personally and professionally. It has helped my work immensely to be able to analyse issues using a feminist lens. I now also identify myself as a feminist. I have used skills obtained in FLTP to write submissions, campaign and advocate such as for the Fiji Family Law Bill to improve the law for women and fight discrimination and inequality. For the Employment Relations Bill I have used skills learnt in FLTP to analyse the bill and see its impact on women such as maternity allowances, equal employment and equal pay, sexual harassment and equal employment opportunities and then decide on appropriate strategies. I am currently working on submissions on reforms to the Penal Code on sexual assault. I have also implemented a capacity building programme for my staff called 'Gender Forum' whereby staff bring a reading which they collectively analyse using a feminist and WHR lens and I have integrated the FLTP framework into the Young Women's Programme of FWRM. As I have now participated in the Resource Pool Development Training I will organise an FLTP training for FWRM.

Vivisila Buadromo
Director of Fiji Women's Rights Movement
Fiji, 2006



Indonesia National FLTP Training Preparation Meeting, November 2006

APWLD's new FLTP trainers from Indonesia were able to apply their knowledge and new skills at a two day workshop in November, with a small group of 15 Indonesian alumni of FLTP and local trainers experienced with feminist legal thinking. The participants composed of women's NGOs as well as women lawyers in mainstream law associations as well as academics carry out training projects for the law enforcement agencies. The objectives of the workshop were to identify lessons learnt from existing training strategies on HR and feminist legal thinking and to contextualise and adapt the FLTP module to the Indonesia context. As a result of the workshop:

- a 'resource book' on FLTP will be developed in early 2007 which will include a model module on conducting FLTP trainings in Indonesia and will also provide the means for users to adopt the principles, framework and materials in a variety of different ways. This 'Resource Book' will be pilot tested in collaboration with APWLD in a national training on feminism and the law in 2007.

- For the long term, Komnas Perempuan aims to implement an education strategy that is responsive to the regional diversity of the country and the new opportunities coming up from mainstream organisations reforming themselves in 2008.

- Komnas Perempuan was requested by the national legal aid organisation which, for the past decade, has been the source of human rights training for progressive lawyers in Indonesia to engage with them on re-developing their curriculum to better incorporate the gender perspective and will be doing this in early 2007.

This initiative in Indonesia will be used by the WHR WG as a model/pilot for implementing similar national strategies in other countries in the region.

Inter-linkages between FLTP Training and Gender and Politics Training of the APWLD WPPP Task Force

A member of the FLTP resource pool of trainers participated in the Gender and Politics Training of the WPPP Task Force in December, 2006 with the aim of sharing FLTP methods and approaches where useful for the Gender and Politics Training and identifying intersections between the trainings which may be usefully incorporated into the Gender and Politics Training as well as enrich the FLTP Resource Manual. This collaboration between the training programmes of APWLD greatly enriched both trainings.

The FLTP Manual and Materials

The FLTP Manual sets out the broad FLTP framework to guide trainers in conducting FLTP trainings. The content (including methods) are designed to be flexible and can and should be updated, enriched and deepened, especially in relation to critical issues being addressed or evolving, relevant theories and frameworks being articulated, and strategies being adopted by women's rights activists, feminist and related groups and movements.

The FLTP Manual was used to conduct the FLTP Resource Pool Development Training which took place in October 2006. As a training of trainers, this particular training created a unique opportunity to trial the Manual using the Manual to conduct the substantive sessions of the training with a group of seven trainers from Fiji, Philippines,

Malaysia and Australia. The training surfaced many new points and insights on the substance of the training, such as the need for the Manual to nuance the section on 'sex' and 'gender' to reflect that both sex and gender are a spectrum rather than a dichotomy to encompass fully the discussions on different gendered identities such as trans-gender and intersect persons; as well as new methods for conducting sessions of the training.

Throughout 2006, the WG has updated the materials for the FLTP trainings including the 'reading materials' and visual aids (such as films) as well as developed a strategy for their continual update and development. The FLTP materials are an integral resource for both participants and trainers which will accompany the FLTP Manual as a resource package for trainers.

2.4 Women Human Rights Defenders

APWLD has pioneered the work on WHRDs with its integral role in working with the UN SR HRD to bring recognition and visibility to WHRD issues since 2003 with the first Consultation on Women Human Rights Defenders with the UN SR HRD. The WHR WG recognised the importance of continuing this work in 2006 by coordinating the production of a Resource Book on Women Human Rights Defenders. The Resource Book intends to be a resource for women human rights defenders, to be a tool to build capacity of WHRDs to understand their rights, identify and document the violations and risks of WHRDs and the environment that impedes their ability to carry out their work.

Komnas Perempuan, Indonesia:

- has used knowledge gained through membership of APWLD (including the FLTP framework) to initiate and support institutional reforms in the judicial sector and the institutionalisation of women's police desks in the organisational set up of the national police force.

- has engaged in capacity building of judges, prosecutors, police and lawyers in human rights with gender perspective, with particular focus on VAW and gender-based crimes against humanity.

- has also initiated the development of new mechanisms and instruments to advocate for women's human rights in Indonesia, including the setting up of a national 'Special Rapporteur' mechanism (modelled after the UN special Rapporteurs)

"Komnas Perempuan's exposure to the UN Special Rapporteur system has been totally due to its membership in APWLD and the first two National Special Rapporteurs that Komnas Perempuan has set up addresses VAW and discrimination experienced by displaced women in post-tsunami Aceh and VAW in an armed conflict situation in Poso, Central Sulawesi."



Kamala Chandrakirana, Komnas Perempuan, Indonesia

The Resource Book on Women Human Rights Defenders

A team of international resource persons/contributors to the Manual from national, regional and international organisations working on WHRD issues are providing specific inputs into various sections of the Resource Book based on their area of expertise including: Amnesty International (AI), International Service for Human Rights (ISHR); Human Rights First; ISIS-WICCE Uganda; BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, Nigeria; Working Group 'Women and Armed Conflict in Colombia'; World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT); Forum Asia; Komnas Perempuan, Indonesia; INFORM Sri Lanka; North-East Network, India; Women's League of Burma; the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders, Hina Jilani.

The commitment of these international organisations and the presence of the UN SR HRD herself in the resource meeting demonstrate the credibility that APWLD has gained through its pioneering work on WHRDs in the region and internationally.

Resource Group Meeting, 30 November - 1 December: This group of resource persons met to refine the purpose and objectives as well as the substance of the draft Resource Book. The UN SR HRD also attended a morning of the meeting and shared her enthusiasm and support for this initiative which she strongly endorsed as a very important contribution to further the promotion and protection of WHRDs. Consultations on the Resource Book will be held early 2007 with women from South Asia and Middle East/South-East Asia in collaboration with these international organisations.

The report of the UN SR on Human Rights Defenders (Hina Jilani) notes the significance of the international campaign and consultation of WHRDs, which brings recognition and legitimacy to the work of WHRDs within the broader Human Rights community.

Asia Regional Human Rights Defenders Forum with the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders, Hina Jilani, 28-29 November 2006, Bangkok, Thailand

APWLD and Forum Asia co-organised a two day Consultation with the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders Hina Jilani on the theme "Towards Full Implementation of the UN Declaration on HRDs in Asia - Strengthening the Role of HRDs", was attended by more than 180 participants from Asia and other continents, and representatives of regional and international NGOs, Asian and other governments, national human rights institutions, UN Staff from Geneva and the region engaged in dialogue with the UN SR HRD, Ms Hina Jilani. They shared in discussions on the challenges facing human rights defenders in the region and the role of various actors in promoting and protecting the rights of defenders.

The forum paid tribute to human rights defenders who had laid down their lives for the cause of human rights, as well as defenders who have been, and continue to be, subjected to threats, harassment and attacks due to their human rights work. In the discussions, participants shared about the continued reprisals they face at the hand of both state and non-state actors, such as arbitrary executions, arbitrary detention, torture, disappearances, and restrictions on freedoms of expression, association and assembly. Participants and presenters also



Asia Regional Human Rights Defenders Forum with the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders Hina Jilani, 28-29 November 2006 Bangkok, Thailand

highlighted the specific vulnerabilities and risks faced by defenders living in exile, in addition to women, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender defenders.

After a multilateral dialogue in plenary as well as in breakout sessions, defenders urged national human rights institutions and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in particular, national field offices and sub-regional focal points to strengthen the role of protecting human rights defenders. Defenders called on governments to implement the recommendations of the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders, and to cooperate with the Special Representative.

Human Rights Defenders at the Forum committed themselves to the full implementation of the UN Declaration on the Human Rights Defenders at the end of the 2nd Asian Regional Human Rights Defenders Forum. They expressed commitments to strengthen mutual cooperation and support amongst each other, as well as to constructively engage with governments, the United Nations and

national human rights institutions. They agreed upon a set of commitments - 'Bangkok Commitment'. The Forum underscored the importance of the UN Special Representative on HRD Mandate as an important mechanism for the protection and recognition of HRDs and issued a collective statement in support of the renewal of the mandate from the Forum.

Importantly, the HRD Forum also gave an opportunity for APWLD to organise caucuses between the UN Special Representative on HRD, Hina Jilani and WHRDs from countries where HRDs are facing particular challenges and risks. This included caucuses with WHRDs and HRDs from Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Burma. As a result of the meeting with HRDs from Philippines the UNSR HRDs agreed to try to visit Philippines for a sub-regional Consultation to meet with HRDs to report on the current situation in the Philippines and other countries in South-East Asia. Furthermore, APWLD members from Indonesia who have been instrumental in making the Indonesian government agree to the UNSR HRDs making an official visit to Indonesia and the HRD Forum provided an opportunity for them to meet the UNSR

HRD to brief her on the country situation and plan for her interaction with HRDs during her visit in 2007.

Celebrating Women's Resistance on International Women Human Rights Defenders Day

APWLD was the focal point for the global call to action on 29th November under the Centre for Women's Global Leadership's website and fact sheets and coordinated activities among our members to mark International WHRD Day, including in Philippines, Nepal, Indonesia and Thailand. These events marked the first International Women Human Rights Day on 29th November 2006 which has been chosen as a day within the 16 days of activism at the International Consultation on WHRDs in November-December 2005.



At the Asia Regional Human Rights Defenders Forum, APWLD initiated this tribute to Hina Jilani (APWLD founding member) to show our appreciation for her work promoting and protecting HRDs during her two terms as the UN Special representative on Human Rights Defenders

Furthermore, on the 29th November afternoon, APWLD organised a special event to mark the first International Women Human Rights Defenders Day. During this event, participants of the HRD Forum listened to testimonies of women from various Asian countries on their struggle and visions for moving forward and songs of resistance of women. The need for special attention and protection mechanisms for women defenders was highlighted in the event. The event also paid tribute to Hina Jilani, UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders, and her contribution to the recognition and protection of WHRDs and HRDs in her role as Special Representative and as a WHRD in her own right, who has been at the fore for women's human rights advocacy and suffered reprisals as a result. The participants recognised the mandate as a key protection tool for their rights and called on governments to strengthen the mandate.

Guidelines for the Gender-Sensitive Implementation of the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders

In collaboration with members of the former International Coordinating Committee for International Campaign on WHRDs including Amnesty International (AI); Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum Asia); Centre for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL); Front Line; Human Rights First; International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH); Information Monitor (INFORM); International Service for Human Rights (ISHR); Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights (UAF); and World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) guidelines for the gender-sensitive implementation of the EU guidelines on Human Rights Defenders were drafted and launched on International WHRD Day simultaneously around the world. The guidelines are an important mechanism for HRDs in Asia Pacific not just as a precedent setting mechanism for State responsibility and accountability but as a protection mechanism in itself. Under the guidelines UN missions are mandated and given responsibility to intervene where HRDs are at risk and the guidelines suggest practical means to support and assist HRDs. Given this, ensuring the gender-sensitive implementation of these guidelines and ensuring the guidelines are inclusive of the needs and interests of WHRDs is very important.

The guidelines were launched at the Asia Forum on Human Rights Defenders in Bangkok which was co-organised by APWLD and Forum Asia and included a number of EU governments. It also enabled the HRDs in the forum to learn about the EU guidelines and our recommendations. Members in Nepal also launched the guidelines by giving and endorsing them to all European

Embassies in Nepal. The initial response to these initiatives has been positive with the - Austrian Presidency of the EU welcoming the recommendations.

Advocacy at the Human Rights Council on WHRDs

APWLD made two joint statements at the HR Council in September on women human rights defenders issues:

- The first was a joint statement issued by APWLD and Forum Asia under the interactive dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur in Extra-Judicial Killings on 19 September in which APWLD highlighted the high levels of cases in Sri Lanka and Philippines. The Philippines government exercised its right in response to APWLD/FA statement during which the government denied that all the killings are HR violations, and stated that those killed are not HRDs; that some may happen in the course of security forces fulfilling their duties; and that it is important to separate violations of state and non-state actors.

- The second statement was made in conjunction with the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (OMCT-FIDH), Pax Romana and Forum Asia during the interactive dialogue with the UN SR HRDs highlighting many of the pressing issues in the region including in the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan bringing exposure and pressure for government accountability to stop the harassment, intimidation and killings of defenders.

Parallel event at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, September 19, 2006. APWLD co-organised with Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), Centre for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL), INFORM Human Rights Documentation Centre (INFORM), International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) a workshop on women human rights defenders attended by 50 people, including Hina Jilani, UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders (and a member of the APWLD WHR WG), as did Sunila Abeysekera (also a WHR WG member) and Tess Vistro (RIV TF) from the APWLD, with the aim of both continuing the momentum gained on the International Campaign on WHRDs and highlight the need to bring further visibility and recognition to the needs of WHRDs. The workshop successfully brought visibility and focus to the issue of WHRDs at the newly established UN HR Council and reaffirmed the importance of the UN SR HRD mandate. The workshop also reaffirmed the strength of APWLD's relationship with the international organisations at this important international forum.

The 11th Annual Asia Pacific Forum (APF) of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI)

took place in Suva, Fiji from 31 July to 3 August 2006. The APWLD was among more than 20 NGOs present at the APF, including many APWLD members and partners: International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), Asian Forum for Human Rights (Forum Asia), National Federation of Peasant Women, Philippines (AMIHAN), Women's Rehabilitation Centre Nepal (WOREC), Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM), Women's Action for Change (WAC) and Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC).

The APF serves as the only regional forum for monitoring, promoting and protecting human rights in Asia Pacific, as there is no regional mechanism for the protection and promotion of human rights. APWLD joined with other NGOs present at the APF in drafting statements on the role and effectiveness of National Human Rights Institutions and NGO engagement with NHRIs and the APE. Further, the specific focus of the APF agenda in 2006 on human rights defenders' gave space for NGOs to present reports on HRDs in the region and make recommendations to the APF for measures to ensure their greater protection in Asia Pacific.

Statements included calls for NHRIs to take necessary measures to secure their independence; stressed the need for Human Rights Institutions to work in greater collaboration with NGOs and civil society at a national as well as regional/APF level ensuring sustained equal participation of all human rights defenders including women human rights defenders at all levels; and recommended various modes for cooperation at the national, regional and international level. Statements on human rights defenders highlighted the specific risks and vulnerabilities faced by women human rights defenders across Asia (as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and intersect defenders) and made recommendations for:

- NHRIs to play a proactive role in protecting and supporting the work of human rights defenders in close partnership and consultation with civil society and NGOs

- including specific recommendations of mechanisms for protection and promotion of WHRDs at national, regional and international levels.

Due to these coordinated efforts, the message went across very strongly to the APF members of the need for them to create better HRDs protection mechanisms. As a result, in the APF concluding statement¹, paragraph 26, the APF has decided:

"Heard presentations from representatives of international, regional and national non-governmental organisations on the rights of human rights defenders. The Forum Council affirmed the complementary roles of national institutions and non-governmental organisations as defenders of human rights and as human rights defenders themselves. It recognised the particular responsibilities of national institutions towards human rights defenders and visa versa. It requested the secretariat to explore how the members of the Forum can protect and promote the rights of human rights defenders more effectively at regional and national levels."

In follow up to the APF meeting, APWLD joined other regional and international NGOs who attended the APF meeting to discuss possible follow-up as well as mechanisms for coordination among NGOs for the next APF meeting which is to be held in Sydney, Australia. It was decided that an NGO convening group should be created to facilitate NGO participation and APWLD was requested to join this group.

Training Seminar for Human Rights Defenders, Suva Fiji, 31 July and 4-5 August 2006

APWLD jointly organised in conjunction with the International Service for Human Rights, Asian Forum For Human Rights, Fiji Human Rights Commission, and the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, a training seminar parallel to the

11th Annual Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions in Suva, Fiji on 31 July and 4-5 August 2006. Approximately 35 representatives of NGOs attended the training seminar, including APWLD members and partners: Tess Vistro from AMIHAN (Philippines), Virisila Buadromo from Fiji Women's Rights Movement (Fiji), Renu Rajbhandari from WOREC (Nepal) and Noelene Nabulivou from Women's Action for Change (Fiji). The training seminar aimed to promote practical knowledge about international and national mechanisms for the protection of human rights defenders in the Asia Pacific region and to explore the role that national human rights institutions can play as protection mechanisms for human rights defenders, to encourage regional discussion regarding human rights defenders and discuss collaboration between national human rights institutions and NGOs, to identify areas of cooperation and specific steps to improve the protection of defenders in the region. The training equipped participants with new knowledge and tools to address abuses of WHRDs in their different contexts.

Training on WHRDs in Philippines (22-24 November 2006)

APWLD co-organised with International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) and AMIHAN (RIW TF member) a workshop on 'Women Human Rights Defenders and Protection Mechanisms' for 40 members in the Philippines, from both rural and urban areas. The training enabled participants to understand the current context in Philippines and identify the attacks against women activists as violations of the rights as WHRDs. Most importantly, the training explained the legal framework and international mechanisms for the protection of WHRDs in Philippines.

As a result of this training, members in Philippines have drafted and submitted reports to the UN SR HRDs and the UN SR on Extra-Judicial Killings on the violations in Philippines reporting particular cases for their urgent action. These cases are currently with the UN Special Representative and Rapporteur and will be reported in their next thematic report to the UN HR Council.



Elisa Tita Lubi, a member of APWLD's Programme & Management Committee. She is a Member of the Philippines National Council of BAYAN, the National Women's Council of the Gabriela Women's Party and a Board Member of Selda. She was on Arroyo's list of 51 people accused of rebellion in 2006. Tita presented a paper on Philippines HRDs campaigns and strategies at the Training on WHRDs in Philippines, November 2006

2.5 United Nations Reforms

Over the last year the APWLD WHR WG has monitored developments in the UN reforms, particularly in the establishment of the Human Rights Council and reforms of the 'women's machinery' within the UN.

The recommendations from the Coherence Panel on reforming the UN's gender equality architecture incorporate many of the suggestions made by women's organisations and networks. APWLD will continue to engage in the development of these processes and to advocate and lobby for their implementation and adoption at the UN as many Governments are renegeing on their commitments to international human rights agreements.

APWLD has been active in making recommendations on the reforms to UN and Government bodies as well as endorsing actions and statements of our partners such as Centre for Women's Global Leadership and WEDO. The WG has also circulated information on the reforms to APWLD TFs and members keeping them up to date on developments and the possible impact on our advocacy strategies. APWLD has also been monitoring the establishment of a regional HR mechanism - ASEAN Women's and Children's Commission.

2.6 Other Achievements

APWLD has supported the advocacy efforts of our members across the Asia Pacific through providing information, support, strategies and tools to advances WHRs in their national contexts. Some of the achievements this year include:

Marshall Islands acceded to CEDAW in March 2006

Cook Islands acceded to CEDAW on 11 August 2006

In South Korea, the national machinery on women was expanded to Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2006). Gender equality and gender mainstreaming are now firmly established as national goals.

1. http://www.asiapacificforum.net/annual_meetings/eleventh/concluding.htm

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN PROGRAMME



Participants of the Asia Pacific NGO Consultation on "Culture and Violence against Women" with the UN SR VAW Yakin Erturk, Mongolia, September 2006

the challenges for addressing violence against women posed by the existence of parallel legal systems (page 15);

the failures of the human rights discourse that has remained blind to structural inequalities and

the complex and intersecting relations of power in the public and private spheres of life that lie at the heart of sex discrimination (page 13).

The report also took up many of the issues reflected in discussions on the challenges and limits of applying the due diligence standard to address VAW in Asia Pacific as well as recommendation on how it can be used in lobbying and legal recourse. The inclusion of these issues in the report of the UNSRVAV to the UN Human Rights Council brought visibility to Asia Pacific women's experiences and needs at the international level and strengthens women's claims at the national level.

2.2 The Asia Pacific Regional NGO Consultation with the UN Special Rapporteur (UNSRVAV) on Violence Against Women, Dr Yakin Erturk, on "Culture and Violence Against Women", 11-12 September 2006

The Consultation was held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia and brought together 35 women from 22 countries including Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Burma, China, Cook Islands, Fiji, India, Iran, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Korea, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey and Russia.

The theme of 'Culture and Violence against Women' is the focus of the UNSRVAV's 2007 thematic report and a critical issue for women in Asia Pacific. The 2007 Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women reflects many of the critical discussions and issues raised in Mongolia as well as many of the strategies put forward in addressing the relationship between culture and violence against women, including the following statement:

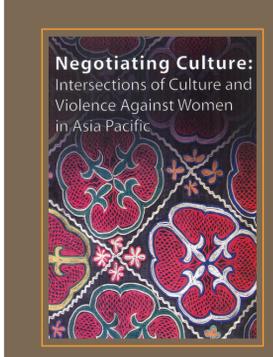
*"Regional consultations with civil society organizations working on matters related to my mandate have become an integral aspect of my work. From 11 to 13 September, I attended the Asia-Pacific NGO Consultation, organized in Ulaanbaatar in cooperation with the Asia Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development (APWLD). The Asia-Pacific consultation, which has become institutionalized and offers a model for other regions, focused on regional trends with respect to culture and violence against women."*³

The Consultation provided a critical forum for the UNSRVAV to engage with Asia Pacific women activists and lawyers to discuss critical and emerging issues relating to the theme and strategise on ways to address the problems identified. The Consultation provided an opportunity for women's groups from the Asia Pacific region to inform the Special Rapporteur of the critical issues relating to Culture and VAW in the region as well as inform the Special Rapporteur's articulation of the scope of women's rights based on the local and national experiences of women in Asia Pacific. Specifically, the Consultation surfaced a more nuanced understanding and articulation of how

³Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Yakin Erturk Intersections between culture and violence against women (A/HRC/4/34) 17 January 2007, page 5-6.

Participants noted that the Consultations provided them with new strategies and mechanisms for addressing violence against women in their own contexts and many said that they would now engage with the UNSRVAV mandate as an effective mechanism for women's human rights and addressing VAW in their countries and communities. The UNSRVAV also provided very positive feedback on the Consultation noting that it was a very relevant and useful discussion for her mandate and report writing. She expressed her willingness to continue engaging with APWLD in these Consultations and her hope that APWLD can continue to facilitate these exchanges.

Report entitled "Negotiating Culture: Intersections of Culture and Violence against Women in the Asia Pacific". This report details the proceedings of the consultation and provides in depth presentations on different aspects of 'culture' and its effect on women and violence against women as well as sets out effective strategies for addressing culture at the community, national and international level. The report also sets out the recommendations for the UNSRVAV and her report arising from the Consultation discussion. It was an essential resource for the UNSR, informing her work and her 2007 report to the HR Council (see below) as a resource for the women's movement in Asia Pacific and globally. The report has been published and distributed widely in November 2006.



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN PROGRAMME

I. Overview

Undoubtedly the last decade has seen some important developments in the struggle to make women's lives free of violence, including the creation of international standards and mechanisms to address violence against women perpetrated by both state and non-state actors; the recognition of violence against women as a form of discrimination; and the recognition of the multiple forms of violence. Despite this, violence against women continues with impunity in many parts of the region and continues to be one of the most visible manifestations of the unequal and unjust power relations between men and women in our societies.

While the root cause of VAW is patriarchy, macro trends such as neo-liberalism, militarisation and fundamentalisms have heightened women's vulnerability to VAW, and at times created situations that directly cause VAW. An examination of these forces enhances and nuances our understanding of hitherto unrecognised (or less recognised) forms and manifestations of violence against women. There is diminishing enforceability of women's human rights and opportunity for women to access justice as they are further marginalised at all levels of decision-making. Furthermore, there is a revival in strength of informal justice systems operating in the region often with the endorsement of the state. Combined with pressures on democracy caused by the interplay of globalisation, fundamentalisms and militarism, women's ability to access justice for VAW is further eroded today.

To respond toward addressing these issues, the VAW programme set its objectives for 2006 - 2008 as follows:

1 To strengthen effectiveness of human rights mechanisms to address VAW, specifically through the Special Rapporteur mechanism and new UN Human Rights Council;

2 To build capacity of women's groups to advocate for the elimination of existing and emerging forms of VAW in the Asia Pacific;

3 Enhance conceptual clarity among NGOs working on VAW, on feminist and WHR perspectives towards addressing recognised and unrecognised forms of VAW and their causes and consequences.

II. Results and Achievements

2.1 Strengthening the UN Special Rapporteur Mechanism

The VAW programme has continued to strengthen the UN Special Rapporteur mechanism in demanding State accountability for VAW through regional and national consultations. The UNSRVAV focused her 2006 thematic report to the UN Human Rights Council on the topic of 'Due Diligence' (an international legal standard which holds States accountable for the prevention, protection and punishment of violence against women by both State and non-State actors)². Her report included numerous references to APWLD's 2005 Consultation and report entitled "Realising Our Rights: Holding the State Accountable for Violence Against Women in Asia Pacific Region," including:

² The Due Diligence Standard as a Tool for the Elimination of Violence Against women, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Dr Yakin Erturk, E/CN.4/2006/61, 20 January 2006

despite the fluidity and contestability of cultural norms, oppressive elements of culture, which invariably reflect and reinforce patriarchal power relations, gain dominant representation. Strategies on how a women's human rights agenda can be advanced in this context, including effective strategies for addressing harmful cultural paradigms through engaging with international, state and non-state actors for both the women's movement in Asia Pacific and for the UNSRVAV for inclusion in her recommendations to States and other actors were articulated.

Specific experiences from the region were shared in addressing culture and violence against women and these included engaging with law and the legal system, monitoring state commitments, awareness raising within the community, engaging religious leaders, sharpening our advocacy strategies, using media effectively and building a support/solidarity network for women challenging our cultures from within who face serious risks including that of being silenced.

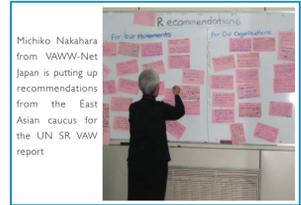
The two days saw rich discussions on the inter-linkages between culture and violations of women's human rights in Asia Pacific. In many parts of Asia Pacific, culture and cultural practices, including religion, continue to be privileged over universally accepted standards of human rights and women's human rights, in particular. Discussions surfaced how culture, of which religion is one aspect, is used by individuals, communities and governments alike to condone violence against women and to justify inaction in bringing perpetrators to justice and ensuring appropriate remedies for the survivors of violence against women. Discussions examined how dominant cultural norms and interpretations get established,

and how culture has been used as a forceful tool for "othering," or exclusion, and focused on the importance of cultural renegotiation by women as a critical form of resistance to patriarchal interpretations of culture, and one which women have used in all contexts and times and continue to use.

Participants collectively brainstormed on what we need to do within our own organisations and within the women's movement to address the challenges identified. They defined the challenges and recommendations to end patriarchy in all forms and at all levels and to eliminate structures and institutions that reproduce VAW, such as militarisation and development aggression. Concrete recommendations, including specific sub-regional recommendations, were also drawn up for the UN Special Rapporteur's report.



Central Asian caucus drafting recommendations for inclusion in the UN SR VAW report



Michiko Nakahara from VAWW-Net Japan is putting up recommendations from the East Asian caucus for the UN SR VAW report

The UNSRVAV's 2007 report to the Human Rights Council reflects the issues raised in the Consultation. The UNSRVAV's feedback and reflections on the Consultation were very positive affirming the Consultation's direct use and relevance to her report writing and framing of the issues as they impact on Asia Pacific women. The UNSRVAV reaffirmed her commitment and desire to continue engaging with APWLD through these Consultations. The UNSRVAV also brought to the fore many of the issues arising from the Consultation at the UN General Assembly meeting in November 2006 specifically mentioning her participation in the Consultation as a significant and important event that year and increasing visibility of issues facing women in Asia Pacific at the international level.

This was the third Regional Consultation on violence against women APWLD has organised since I took up my mandate in 2003. These Consultations have offered an invaluable opportunity for engaging in a fruitful dialogue with women and women's groups working on violence against women in the Asia Pacific region. Henceforth, I was able to gain insight into the critical and emerging issues in the region and explore, with the participants, effective strategies for enhancing women's human rights and combating all forms of violence. I have shared the APWLD Regional Consultation model with organisations in other regions as a blueprint for organising similar events. Asia Pacific (through APWLD) is the only region that has institutionalised this mechanism of holding consultations with the UNSRVAV and I am grateful to APWLD for that.

The 2006 Consultation responded to the topic of my next thematic report to the Human Rights Council which will address the intersections of culture-based discourses and violence against women.

...Many of my insights from the Consultation will prove useful for the articulation of the issues in my next report to the HR Council as well as the particularities of women's specific experiences in this region.

I thank APWLD once again for organising the Consultation and look forward to continuing this fruitful relationship.

Yakin Erturk
United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women
Extract from Foreword to APWLD Publication Negotiating Culture: Intersections Between Culture and Violence Against Women in Asia Pacific
October 2006

