



Empowering women to use law as an instrument of change and promoting women's human rights in the Asia Pacific region.

F RUM NEWS

WHAT'S INSIDE

Nuturing Our Network; A Look at Recent Transformations within APWLD 2 | Making ASEAN Relevant for Southeast Asian Women 3 | Closing in on Critical Mass in PNG Politics: Progress on the Regional Quota Campaign 5 | Insights into the stages of getting the Domestic violence Act implemented in INDIA with specific reference to the State of Uttarakhand 7 | Timor-Leste's First Domestic Violence Law a Step in the Right Direction 9 | The Global Financial Crisis – A discredited economic system rises again 10 | Global Attention Finally Focuses on the Most Isolated and Invisible: Domestic Workers are Workers 12 | Dollar Earners 14 | Grounding the Global: A Look at the Success of APWLD Special Rapporteur Consultations 15 | New Member Profile: Fundasaun Alola 19 | Comings and Goings 21 | Vacancies at the Secretariat 22 | Congratulations 22

Editorial

Dear Readers

Twenty-four years ago APWLD founders had a vision to claim and strengthen women's human rights by using the law as an instrument of social change for equality, justice and development. Today, that vision remains as relevant as it was a quarter of a decade ago.

There is now a real threat of losing hard fought rights for women. Claiming and strengthening women's human rights now means we need to protect against the erosion of rights we have already fought hard to establish. We know that in order to counteract regressive moves we need to work with our membership to identify threats and collaborate with other civil society organisations. To achieve our goals we need to strengthen our movement, our collaboration and our internal operations

As APWLD approached nearly a quarter of a decade of work in Asia Pacific we took a close work at our strength as a regional network. It was obvious; our strength is in our membership – the organisations of grassroots women on the frontlines of the struggle for women's human rights. In order to create a better network, we needed to support and fortify these frontlines. Similarly, we needed these strong voices to be represented in each of the levels of APWLD governance and action.

After consultation with members we decided that our taskforce model needed to be re-considered. The taskforces delivered a lot of impressive work but they also meant that APWLD relied on a handful of active members. A more dynamic model was needed.

The taskforces have now been replaced by Organising Committees. Unlike taskforces, organising committees will not be permanent, constitutionally based groups. They will form around a particular project and exist only for the life of that project. They allow us to involve more of our current members, to grow our membership, and to respond to emerging issues more rapidly. Two focal persons have been identified per programme that will assist secretariat programme officers with programme implementation. The focal persons will also work closely with organising committees.

The General Assembly (GA), Regional Council (ReC), Programme and Management Committee (P&M) and the Thai Association (Board of Directors) are being retained but with some variation to minimize the costs of governance.

We have also mapped out a programme of work for the next three years that builds on our existing work as well as draws on the emerging expertise of our membership. The following focus areas are a direct result of our 2008 evaluation recommending we build on our key strengths and continue to be accountable to our membership.

WOMEN AND POWER

The Women and Power programme aims to strengthen women's political participation and challenge gendered political structures. Through this programme we conduct training on gender and politics; facilitate networking and collaboration of women parliamentarians and other women in government; and conduct research & publication.

FEMINIST LAW AND PRACTICE

This longstanding programme provides training to women lawyers, policy makers and activists who want to advance equality for women. Participants analyse and critique discriminatory laws from feminist and rights based perspectives.

BREAKING OUT OF MARGINALISATION

This programme supports rural, indigenous and migrant women to challenge discriminatory practices and laws. We train and support women to document human rights violations and use national, regional and international fora and reporting mechanisms to instigate change. Working with partner organisations we use participatory research to advocate for climate justice for women. As a core member of the United for Foreign Domestic Worker Rights (UFDWR) we campaign for the rights of domestic workers.

GROUNDING THE GLOBAL

Grounding the Global aims to enhance capacity of women in Asia Pacific to advocate for women's human rights and fundamental freedoms by engaging in regional and international mechanisms. This programme builds on APWLD's existing legacy conducting annual regional consultations with UN Special Rapporteurs and through this programme we co-facilitate the South East Asian Women's Caucus to ASEAN.

Having joined APWLD as the Regional Coordinator in October of 2009, I feel fortunate to be guiding an organisation that is experiencing such renewed energy and purpose. In the first six months I've had opportunities to meet some of our members, partners and human rights defenders from the region. These meetings, and the dedication of the APWLD secretariat, have affirmed my decision to move my family to Thailand to support the courageous and inspiring women who comprise APWLD. Our work both inspires and enrages me. Importantly though it makes me hopeful, hopeful that the work of APWLD and its 180 members will be heard and will fuel the efforts of women and men worldwide to claim and advance women's human rights.

Sincerely,

KATE LAPPIN

Regional Coordinator



ABOUT FORUM NEWS

Forum News is a regular publication of APWLD. FN provides space for the network members to share information on their activities, campaigns, stories and reflections.

The opinion and positions expressed in the articles in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the APWLD network but those of the individual authors.

FN welcomes sharing of articles, statements, photos from the members and network. FN reserves editorial rights. FN also encourages feedback or request for further information from the readers. Feel free to send them to apwld@apwld.org.

APWLD is Asia Pacific's leading feminist, membership driven network. We hold consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Our 180 members represent groups of diverse women from 25 countries in the region. For nearly 25 years APWLD has been empowering women to use law as an instrument of change for equality, justice, peace and development. We use research, training, advocacy and activism to claim and strengthen women's human rights. APWLD's secretariat is based in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

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Making ASEAN Relevant for Southeast Asian Women

Kamala Chandrakirana¹



On Wednesday, 7 April 2010, ASEAN inaugurated its new Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), in Hanoi, after six years in the making. For a regional organization that prides itself in operating by consensus, fulfilling the rights of women and children in accordance to international human rights standards is, in fact, one of the key defining points of an ASEAN-wide consensus, as all ten of its member states have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC). Reading the terms of reference (TOR) on the ACWC, it is encouraging to find specific language which recognizes the protection of victims as a key concern, places the

ACWC squarely in an advocacy role for the most vulnerable and marginalized, and secures collaboration and consultations with civil society as one of its guiding principles. What has perplexed many women's rights advocates in the region is, however, why the ACWC has been 'boxed' into a sectoral position under the Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development, rather than as a cross-cutting concern worthy of the attention of ASEAN's highest leadership.

To make its commitments meaningful, ASEAN would be wise to build on Southeast Asia's long history of women's activism. Women of Southeast Asia have been at the forefront of national and global movements to secure the universality of human rights for all women and men ever since pre-independence times until today. New generations of women leaders continue to emerge and many consider it part of their responsibility to engage with the new ASEAN. Indeed, immediately after the signing of the ASEAN Charter in 2008, a women's caucus was formed within a broader network of women's rights organizations in the Asia Pacific region. Currently, its membership comprises of more than 50 organizations from eight out of the ten countries in Southeast Asia as well as new network members to join from Brunei, Singapore and Timor-Leste (a country expecting to be a member of ASEAN in 2011). ASEAN – through its various bodies, old and

new – need only to open its doors to the women advocates in order to bring in a wealth of experience and insights into its own stated purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Southeast Asia Women's Caucus on ASEAN (or the Women's Caucus) has identified five major issues which are critical for the advancement of women's human rights throughout Southeast Asia and require the leadership of ASEAN to address. They are:

- migration, particularly addressing labor export policies, trafficking and trans-national marriages, as well as the human rights protection of undocumented migrant workers, migrant domestic workers, and refugees;

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Women and ASEAN



Photos from APWLD's, "Women's Consultation on Advancing Women's Rights Advocacy" held in April 2010.

- violence against women, namely all forms of violence against women (from domestic violence to state violence), including addressing the broader causes of gender-based violence, such as militarism, armed conflict and discriminatory cultural practices, as well as women's access to justice and breaking the cycle of impunity;
- political participation and citizenship, including women's freedom of expression, with special concern for ethnic minority women, indigenous women, and women under military regimes;
- economic rights, including women's access to land and natural resources, the empowerment of rural women and women workers (domestic workers, homebased workers, and informal sector workers), particularly in the context of poverty and the economic crisis;
- discriminatory laws, policies and practices, namely discriminatory family laws and moral policing practices, discrimination in the name of traditional/regional values, discrimination against women with disabilities, as well as addressing the reservations to CEDAW by Southeast Asian governments and problematic law enforcement capacities.

These five core issues of concern to women in Southeast Asia clearly illustrates the imperative need for a special mechanism for women in the region. We can also learn from the evolvement of human rights mechanisms of the UN and of other regional mechanisms where specialised mechanisms for women are developed such as CEDAW Committee, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and African Special Rapporteur on women's human

rights, to name a few. Furthermore, to ensure real progress on the ground, the Women's Caucus strongly believes that the ACWC must work effectively in alignment with the ASEAN Inter-governmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) as the overarching human rights body and with the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW) as Southeast Asia is the world's largest source of women migrant workers. Unfortunately, as it currently stands, the overall architecture for a human rights system within ASEAN is still full of gaps and disconnects.

While AICHR is clearly-defined as the 'overarching' human rights body, there is no articulation of what this means operationally in relation to the ACWC and the ACMW. According to their respective TORs, the AICHR reports to the Meeting of Foreign Ministers while ACWC reports to the Meeting of Social Welfare Ministers. There are certain mandates of the AICHR which require input from women's rights advocates, including the ACWC, such as in the developing ASEAN's human rights declaration, obtaining information from

member states, preparing studies on thematic issues of human rights and developing common approaches and positions on human rights. The mechanisms for this still need to be worked out clearly and openly. Meanwhile, ASEAN already has several declarations relevant to women's rights which need to be securely incorporated into the workplans of the AICHR and the ACWC, namely the ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women signed in 2004, the Declaration Against Trafficking in Persons, Particularly Women and Children also signed in 2004, and the Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers signed in 2007. The first big challenge for ASEAN would be to make all these disconnected entities into a coherent whole in the spirit of the universality of human rights.

Given everyone's sober recognition that ASEAN's human rights system is an evolutionary agenda, then, the question is what would constitute a good beginning today? The leaders of ASEAN need to make a strong commitment to creating a well-coordinated system of human rights in which the ACWC and the ACMW can maintain their institutional integrity while contributing substantively and strategically in the effective implementation and strengthening of AICHR's mandate. Civil society input is critical to making this happen. The Southeast Asia Women's Caucus on ASEAN is ready to engage critically and constructively. Is ASEAN ready?

Closing in on Critical Mass in PNG Politics:

Progress on the Regional Quota Campaign

Nalini Singh and Rohini Ghadiok

This July, just one year after APWLD helped Dame Carol Kidu launch the regional campaign, Furthering Women's Participation in Political Processes: Advocacy for Quotas on Women's Participation in Politics and Good Governance, progress on realising this goal has made its way onto the debate floor of the Papua New Guinea Parliament. In 2009 APWLD and Dame Carol Kidu, PNG's first cabinet minister and current Community Development Minister gathered 30 key women from the region for a discussion on why gender quotas have become important policy tools for increased women's access to decision-making structures in governance. Before the campaign turns one year old, that same case will be read and debated in the nation's parliament.

APWLD members Virada Somswasdi (Thailand) and Nurgul Djanaeva (Kyrgyzstan) joined Sarah Dyer (Solomon Islands National Council for Women) and Veronica Bera (Papua New Guinea Labour Party) in explaining to the participants and the media present the importance of temporary special measures. Article 4 of CEDAW¹ clearly states that quotas are "temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between women and men and shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention."

It is important for women to strive for pro-active measures such as gender quotas to confront certain obstacles to equal representation in governance structures. This advocacy should however be complementary to the broader engagement of women's movements in working for good governance; one that is gender-responsive, democratic, transparent, representative and accountable to women. This advocacy should also contribute to the collective efforts to challenge the pervasive patriarchal, male-dominated, and oppressive structures in politics and society in general.



Dame Carol, Kidu and APWLD members at the Regional Quotas Campaign

Virada Somswasdi explained that APWLD, in continuing its work in calling for and working towards greater women's representation in political structures throughout Asia Pacific, is embarking on a regional-wide campaign to advocate for gender quotas of up to 50 percent women's representation in structures of governance.

Nurgul Djanaeva, speaking from the Asian perspective, said that not having women in parliaments is a violation of democratic rights. It is not only a question of numbers but without women

¹ CEDAW (The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women) is an international human rights agreement, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, which specifically addresses the rights of women and girls. It defines human rights principles, concepts and related standards of conduct and obligations that States Parties to the Convention agree to fulfil.

Women and Politics

in parliaments, democracy is fragile. Women bring to parliament special voices that are not there especially in terms of addressing social issues.

Women's participation in politics is not supposed to be a fight, but it is, said Sarah Dyer. Women need to be in parliaments as it is the venue where decisions affecting everyone are made. Women need to be a part of that process. Temporary special measures are needed as there are significant barriers to women winning open seats. Reserved seats may be seen as discrimination but so is the voting process. Some say that reserved seats are undemocratic but having an all-male parliament is also undemocratic, she relayed.

Veronica Bera mentioned that the Papua New Guinea Parliament has only one woman out of 109 members. Looking at the figures of how many women have stood for elections, there has been a dramatic increase since 1975 with only 4 women who stood for elections compared to the 102 in 2007. But women are still not winning elections. Voter attitudes need to change. Despite having signed CEDAW and the BFPA², the Pacific Island countries are ranked lowest in women's representation in national Parliaments and local governments. The campaign was launched to propose adequate number of seats in the Parliament with an aim to influence change and gender equality in politics.

Despite the Bill being quashed in 2009 by the opposition citing affirmative action as an 'illegal' measure, women's advocacy on the issue held strong and it has since been supported by 20 Provincial Governors, UNIFEM and UNDP in addition to women's rights groups and networks.

In May 2010, as a result of the tireless effort from PNG women, the PNG government tabled the Bill as a Notice, once again proposing 22 seats reserved for women in the Parliament. This Bill will be put up for debate and voting in July 2010 and if it is passed, this will be a turning point for women's rights in the nation's history. The constitutional amendment will ensure close to 20% seats reserved for women, which will amount to a 'critical mass' in influencing decision making processes.

The constitutional amendment is being premised on Section 50, which accords the right to stand for public office and Section 101(1), which accords the right to be a member of the Parliament. For the Bill to become a law, it would require an absolute majority, that is, 83 votes out of a total of 109 seats.

According to the Speaker, the proposed constitutional amendment will, in effect, accord equal participation for women in the areas of politics, economic, social and religious activities. It will further improve the participation and representation of women in Parliament and Provincial Assemblies. It will also create a two-member provincial electoral representation, one of which has to be a woman. A major change in the constitution, in compliance with the second goal of the National Goals and Directive Principles calling for equal participation of all citizens, will be to have at least one elected woman representative out of the two regional members for every province. It is important to note that the woman member will be elected and not appointed as she has been up until now.

Following the Notice tabled by the government, women's rights groups, networks and women parliamentarians have stepped up their lobbying and advocating for the passage of the Bill. They have been advocating with and convincing male MPs who have this time expressed some level of solidarity with the Bill. Dame Carol Kidu admits it will be difficult because the Bill needs a majority vote but with the continuous support of women's rights groups and the UN, the Law should be attainable.

Maria Heyes (President of Women in Politics) and Susan Setae (Papua Hahine) have been calling upon all women to advocate and convince MPs on the benefits of the Bill. Women in PNG are excited with the Bill reaching the Parliament and if passed will enable more women representation, beyond the reservation cap, in national and local level politics.

APWLD supports Dame Carol Kidu and the women of Papua New Guinea as they struggle to increase women's voices in their parliament. We wish them luck and join them in their ongoing fight to achieve gender responsive politics and governance.

² BFPA (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action) adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 affirms the fundamental principle that the human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The Platform requires commitment from all governments and the international community to recognise the need to take priority action for the empowerment and advancement of women.

Insights into the Stages of Getting the Domestic Violence Act Implemented in INDIA with Specific Reference to the State of Uttarakhand

Renu Thakur

ARPAN

“Prevention of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 - PWDVA ”



Workshop with State level stakeholders demanding practical implementation of the Domestic Violence Act

Globally, one in three women will be raped, beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Gender inequality fuels violence against women and the power imbalance it creates is not easily rectified. World over, the struggles carried out by women movements have resulted in at the least recognizing violence against women as a human rights violation.

We cannot change the basic structure of society overnight. But each step in the ongoing effort to eradicate violence puts more pressure on those who condone the violence and allow it to exist. Each step makes it harder to ignore the international agreements to protect and promote women's human rights.

In the Indian context, the women's movement has launched campaigns to prevent violence against women since the 1980's, beginning with legislative reforms of rape laws, dowry deaths and campaigns against bride price and domestic violence. Domestic violence had always been considered as a "personal matter" or "household affair" and proverbs like "plates in a basket will rattle" are used to explain violence. It took a decade to have domestic violence recognised as a violation of a woman's human rights and not a household matter. After a long

struggle and much hard work on drafting the law, Women activists within the women's movement were successful in having it enacted as the "Prevention of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005".

The first task for us all was to disseminate the real spirit of the law – explaining for whom, what and how it was intended. To achieve this, massive campaigns were carried out at different levels using diverse strategies. Workshops, trainings and seminars were held from village levels to National levels. Institutions like Lawyers Collective, International Centre for Research on Women, Center for Budgeting, Governance and Accountability and individuals like Advocate Indira Jai Singh can be credited with setting the stage for framing of the law and struggling to make it a success.

At the grassroots level, organisations and networks worked hard to sensitise communities, women in distress, government machinery and media on the different aspects of the law. This was important as it is a central law and every State has the right to implement it as per its discretion. In my State – Uttarakhand it came into effect in 2007. Since then we have been lobbying and advocating for its effective implementation through different means including, signature campaigns, stakeholders meetings and studies on the status of the law. We then presented these materials to the Government and delegations to the head's of Government – both political and bureaucratic. In addition to our outward advocacy, we were simultaneously strengthening our collaborative efforts and empowering ourselves, women survivors and like minded institutions with information and knowledge.

Domestic Violence Laws in the Region

One of the key areas for empowerment was to equip ourselves with knowledge of gender budgeting tools and facilitation. This allowed us to incorporate gender perspectives at each of the stages of our strategy; planning, policy making, programme formulation, assessment of needs of target groups, allocation of resources, implementation, impact assessment, and reprioritization of resources. We then held a stakeholder's workshop where we presented a draft budget for implementation of the PWDVA to the State Government. After the submission, we applied further pressure tactics with constant follow up. Finally the Government allocated Rs. 50 thousand for implementation of the Act under Gender Budgeting for the years 2010 -2011.

Today we are celebrating this small success. The real success will come when women can start to lead dignified lives, being treated as equals. This is when violence against women will truly start to decline. The biggest challenge we faced was not changing laws, it was in changing minds. We have made some valuable inroads but within the patriarchal social system one only has to scratch the surface to find those who still believe women are second-class citizens. Today we should celebrate this success, and build our energy for the long road still to go.

Lessons Learned:

- It is possible to have a law passed but this does not mean that violence against women will automatically end.
- PWDVA has yet to gain the desired level of social acceptance and women still find themselves waging a lonely battle.
- The socio-cultural norms and values based on religion prevent women from speaking up until she is thrown out of the house.
- Patriarchy breeds power for men, and they are not prepared to let go.

Highlights on PWDVA:

PWDVA is an Act to provide for more effective protection of the rights of women guaranteed under the Constitution who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Woman can go to any of the following services for protection under the Act:

- Appointed Protection Officer – PO (Women & Child Department Official)
- Directly to the Magistrate (who deals with cases of domestic violence)
- Service Provider (SP) – a designated NGO staff.

DIR – Domestic Incident Report is filed after talking to the woman survivor and submitted to the Magistrate through the PO. The Magistrate has to send the summons to the respondent within 3 days and the case has to be solved within 60 days. In addition, there is provisions for counseling to solve domestic matters.

Orders that can be passed by the Magistrate:

- Right to reside in a shared household
- Protection order
- Residence order
- Monetary relief (food, clothing etc.)
- Custody order (to keep her children)
- Compensation order (medical etc)
- Power to grant interim and ex parte orders

To date, 500 cases have been filed under PWDVA in the Uttarakhand State. In around 60% of the cases women have been able to access justice by having orders passed and implemented or have been able to access counseling and achieved settlement.



Uttarakhand State in India

Timor-Leste's First Domestic Violence Law a Step in the Right Direction

Secretariat Report by Philippa Smales

Eight years after the initial drafting, the first domestic violence law in Timor-Leste was finally passed by the national parliament in May of this year. It was in the 2002 National Development Plan that Timor-Leste first identified the priority of having a law against domestic violence. Although technically a crime under the Penal Code since 2009, the new law clearly defines the crime and mandates associated services such as medical and victim support.

This move is an important step in recognizing the rights of women in a country where traditional practices such as paying a bride price, defined women as the property of their husbands and fathers. Domestic violence cases were often resolved by mediation or by the perpetrator paying the victim's father a fine, in the form of money, animals or cloth. Opponents of the law argued that the law goes against the traditional culture and definition of the family in Timor-Leste, but the votes were overwhelmingly in support of the law, with 30 votes in favour, three abstentions and no one voting against it, illustrating that patriarchal views are beginning to change.

With the passing of this law, domestic violence will no longer be a private concern settled between or within families. "Police will be bound to investigate domestic violence crimes and victims will, under law, have access to emergency medical help, shelter, psycho-social and legal support services," states Pornchai Suchitta of the UN Population Fund. Any fines payable will go to the victim rather than the father and they will receive emergency government funds when necessary.

Government obligations under the law include measures to combat domestic violence and gender stereotypes including: public awareness campaigns, providing training of village leaders, research, developing a national action plan, and promoting and supporting the establishment of victim support associations.

The law also requires education on domestic violence to be included in school curriculum, to change the traditional views on domestic violence. Fifty-one percent of women surveyed by the International Rescue Committee in 2003 strongly agreed that "a man has good reason to hit his wife if she disobeys him". Judith Ribiero do Concacao, of the local NGO, Forum for Communication for Women in Timor-Leste (Fokupers) confirmed that, "If it happens once or twice, they think that it's normal, that it's just the way husbands and wives live together". While there is no comprehensive data on incidents of domestic violence, there was an increase in reporting after it was included into the Penal Code, with 400 cases registered in 2008.

The next challenge for Timor-Leste is implementing the law. "We want people to understand that domestic violence is a crime and that violence in the family hurts families", Armando da Costa, of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI). Timor-Leste's new legislation is an undeniable important first step to protecting and empowering women, but it will require legal instruments as well as the will of entire communities to achieve justice for women in Timor-Leste.



Young Women and Men attending Life Skill Training provided by APWLD member, Alola Foundation

The Global Financial Crisis – A discredited economic system rises again

Kate Lappin

A year ago the world was reeling after the extent of the global financial crisis was revealed and governments responded with what appeared to be interventionist policies. Condemnation of multinationals with their fingers in the speculative stocks pie was heard from all corners of the globe. The gendered nature of big business was questioned with suggestions that the crisis was 'man-made' and unlikely to occur if women played a larger role in oversight of corporations. Commentators even began to question the prevailing economic orthodoxy that laissez-faire globalised markets are the best form of development and governance.

At that time there was hope that a new economic order could arise, an economic order that did not privilege a tiny minority of obscenely wealthy people at the expense of poor labour. Banks were being nationalised, car manufacturers in the US were majority owned by government and the workers unions, governments were talking about stronger regulation and more scrutiny of corporate wages and excesses and it seemed glaringly obvious that responsibility for the crises sat with speculative stock markets. Most surprising was that a leaked IMF document revealed the IMF supported the introduction of some kind of tax (commonly referred to as a 'Robin Hood' tax) to reduce the size and risk of the financial markets.

Economists started talking about alternative ways of measuring economies. A panel of economists, lead by Nobel prize winners, Joseph Stiglitz and Amartya Sen, argued that economic metrics were inherently flawed and valued only corporate profit, not public good. Gross domestic product (GDP), the most common indicator of economic development, excluded the economic benefits of publicly owned health and education, for example. Whereas the impact of development that is detrimental to society – developments that deplete resources and devastate the environment, developments that contribute nothing to the community and send profits off-shore, developments that render people landless and homeless and developments that exacerbate gender inequalities are not counted. The report even supported what feminist economists had argued for years – that women's labour, particularly home-based labour is excluded from traditional economic indicators but clearly adds to the overall wealth of the nation.¹

On June 1st, 2009 it was announced that one of the flagships of capitalism – Citigroup Inc - would be removed from the Dow Jones Industrial Average in the US due to significant government ownership. The nationalisation of banks would have been unthinkable in the past 50 years in 'free-market' economies, let alone one of the banks at the forefront of the neo-liberal globalisation. Citigroup had famously advised its investors that economies in the US, Britain, Australia and Canada would continue to grow despite signs that the majority of people had less money because they are effectively plutonomies – economies based around the wealthy; "We think that global capitalists are going to be getting an even greater share of the wealth pie over the next few years, as capitalists benefit disproportionately from globalization and the productivity boom, at the relative expense of labor"² they exalted. "We expect the global pool of labor in developing economies to keep wage inflation in check, and profit margins rising", this lead them to conclude that investments in luxury goods companies are preferable.

We knew then that despite the headlines about the billion dollar losses of corporates and billionaires the crises would most impact on the poorest – women of the global south. The UN acknowledged that women in the Asia Pacific region, with the highest ratio of working women but with 65 per cent in vulnerable employment, would be most negatively affected. The economic crises also meant a shrinking aid budget with corresponding cuts to the development sector in the region.

But now a year on the hope that we might see a new economic model prevail seems premature. Instead, in hindsight, we can see that most governments embraced the socialisation of debt but not of wealth. Public money was used to prop up failing multinationals while people lose their homes, face poverty and migrate in search of unregulated, lowly paid and unregulated employment.

While initially many governments increased spending to boost their economies we now see large scale public spending cuts across the world. The crisis is now being used by many to justify further neo-liberal policies. Countries faced with the need to obtain IMF approval face familiar conditions - cut wages, cut public spending, open up markets, decrease regulation. When Pakistan sought to borrow money it took the extraordinary step of replacing an elected Finance Minister with an 'adviser', Shaukat

Women and the Economy

Tarin. Shaukat Tarin worked for Citibank for more than 20 years. Needless to say he implemented the kind of policies that would please the IMF; cuts to government spending, devaluation of the currency and privatization (Pakistan even has a privatisation minister).

So it was widely acknowledged that women suffered the consequences of the economic crisis and they will now be the expected to shoulder the 'medicine'³. For years now, research conducted by APWLD and others show that unconstrained neo-liberalism exacerbates the gap between rich and poor⁴ and leads to the further feminization of poverty⁵.

While the World Bank encourages mass migration of workers, reduced tariffs and specialized commercial production of goods and crops⁶, women see disproportionately little of the capital gain. Instead we are likely to see:

- Small-scale or subsistence farmers, the majority of whom are women⁷, are rarely able to compete with the large economies of scale of multinational farming corporations. Cuts in farm subsidies, reductions in tariffs and the influx of cheap imported agricultural products into domestic markets make it difficult for women, already likely to have smaller plots and less fertile soil, less access to credit or legal title than men⁸, to profit. Women, as manual labourers, are likely to be hired on a seasonal basis only for harvesting mono crops. Women's roles in small-scale farming are replaced by new technology which men are more likely to access. With reduced local crops available fresh food becomes expensive making it difficult for women to provide for their families.
- These decreasing agricultural opportunities combined with economic imperatives and policies designed to encourage migration may force unskilled women to migrate to big cities or other countries. They become a cheap

source of labour as domestic workers⁹, assembly workers and more vulnerable to human trafficking syndicates.

- Free-trade zones or export-processing zones (EPZ), established to attract foreign capital, are attractive to transnational corporations because of access to cheap, largely unregulated female labour. Freedom of association is often curtailed, labour regulations are reduced and women are dislocated from their families¹⁰. These factors increase women's vulnerability to exploitation and violence¹¹.
- While labour migration is encouraged as economically beneficial, narratives of 'security' make it increasingly difficult for poor, rural and indigenous¹² women to obtain visas and work permits to work abroad as governments set more "(a) restrictive immigration policies focused on national security and (b) narrow construal of economic interests"¹³. These converging discourses render women more vulnerable to human trafficking¹⁴.
- The privatisation of social and health services, infrastructure and education shifts the costs of services from government to the poor with particularly deleterious effects on women¹⁵.

World over, instead of giving priority to the systemic human rights disasters caused by unregulated market driven economies, most governments¹⁶ are returning to the discredited economics that caused the crisis. Small regulatory policy changes, a slightly more active role for central banks and promises that corporates will return to private ownership appear to be sufficient for most. The only way to change this picture is to have the people most affected – women from the Global South – at the centre of policy dialogues, debates and campaigns. The work of APWLD and the global women's movement is as essential as it has ever been.

1. The report was commissioned by the French government who established the International Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress.
2. Citigroup internal industry note Equity Strategy: Revisiting Plutonomy: The Rich getting Richer, March 5 2006.
3. Naomi Klein revealed in *The Shock Doctrine* that neo-liberal economists use the notion of a curative medicine to justify the erosion of human rights – the right to organize labour, to basic economic rights, to political participation. Shaukat Tarin employed this strategy to justify these policies in Pakistan arguing people need to take 'bitter pills' in the interests of an improved economy.
4. Scholte, Jan 'The Sources of Neoliberal Globalization', Overarching Concerns Programme Paper Number 8, UN Research Institute for Social Development, October 2005.
5. A study conducted by UNESCO concluded that 'the poverty-inducing nature of neoliberal restructuring has been especially severe on women' and they single out South Asia as the area where the impact is particularly feminized. Moghadam, Valentine M. *The 'Feminization Of Poverty' And Women's Human Rights*, Gender Equality and Development Section, UNESCO, 2005.
6. The World Bank, *World Development Report 2009* concludes that countries "do well when they promote transformations along the dimensions of economic geography: higher densities as cities grow; shorter distances as workers and businesses migrate closer to density; and fewer divisions as nations lower their economic borders and enter world markets to take advantage of scale and trade in specialized products." And that "the transformations along these three dimensions of density, distance, and division are essential for development and should be encouraged". The report, however, lacks an analysis of the human rights impact of mass migration of workers, cash crops and reduced tariffs.
7. While gender disaggregated data in Asia is scarce, the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) contend that women produce between 60 and 80 per cent of food in the developing world. <http://www.fao.org/FOCUS/E/Women/Sustin-e.htm> accessed 01 Nov 2009.
8. FAO Focus, Women and Food Security, Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations, <http://www.fao.org/FOCUS/E/Women/Sustin-e.htm> accessed 01 Nov 2009.
9. Asian women domestic workers number in the millions with many forced to migrate to gain low paid, poorly regulated and vulnerable work. *Domestic Workers Far From Home*, United Nations Population Fund (UNDP), *State of the World Population*, 2006.
10. Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, 'Economic and social policy and its impact on violence against women' (E/CN.4/2000/68/Acc.5), 24 February 2000. para. 31,
11. Oloka-Onyango, J and Deepika Udagama, *Globalisation and its impact on the full enjoyment of human rights*, Commission on Human Rights, Geneva, E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/13, 15 June 2000, para 35.
12. See Nathan, D & G Kelkar, 'Globalization and Indigenous Peoples in Asia: Changing the local-global Interface' Sage Publications 2004 for extensive examples of Indigenous peoples poverty levels and development indicators in Asia.
13. Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, 'Political economy of women's human rights' (A/HRC/11/6), 18 May 2009. Para. 84
14. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), forced labour is most widespread in Asia and the majority of trafficked people are from Asia. Of those the majority are women and girls with a large proportion trafficked into the sex industry. B. Andrees & Belser, P (2005) *Forced Labor: Coercion and exploitation in the private economy*, ILO, Switzerland.
15. Razavi, S. *Shifting Burdens: Gender and Agrarian Change under Neoliberalism*, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and Kumarian Press, 2002. Also see Jayati Ghosh, 'Assessing Poverty Alleviation Strategies for their Impact on Poor Women: A Study with Special Reference to India', UNRISD, 1998.
16. There are some interesting exceptions. Iceland, one of the most affected European countries, now has a feminist lead government with 42 per cent women parliamentarians.

GLOBAL ATTENTION FINALLY FOCUSES ON THE MOST ISOLATED AND INVISIBLE: DOMESTIC WORKERS ARE WORKERS

Secretariat Report by Philippa Smales

A 16 hour work day, without holidays or days off, without benefits or minimum wage protection; a working day that includes abuse, harassment, intimidation and isolation is not a reality of decades past. Infuriatingly, this job description applies to what is now the most common occupation for women in the region, and numbers are increasing. This is the reality for millions of domestic workers in the region and worldwide. Moreover, for domestic workers, 90% of which are female, there is almost no access to the labour protections provided by union organising. Despite being an essential support system and crucial cog in the families, communities and national economies they support, domestic workers remain isolated, invisible and undervalued. This year however there is potential for employers, governments and the international community to finally begin to recognise and respect the work of the most vulnerable workers.

2010 and into 2011 are crucial years for the recognition of the rights of domestic workers at the international, regional and national level. At the 99th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) this June, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) will be proposing a draft instrument(s) on domestic workers. NGOs and workers organisations are calling for a binding convention supplemented by a recommendation, and according to the responses from the recent ILO questionnaire, most governments are also supportive of this form of instrument. In 2011, the draft instrument(s) will be adopted by the ILC and then the focus will move to the national level and the process of ratification by member states. NGOs, workers organisations and unions will campaign to include domestic workers in legislation and recognise their contribution to the country. At the regional level, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is drafting a Declaration for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, which when signed, will have an impact on the millions of migrant domestic workers in the Asian region. These developments and campaigns have already had a positive affect on domestic workers in that an awareness of their plight has come to light in the international arena.

To strengthen our campaign, the core members of the United for Foreign Domestic Workers' Rights (UFDWR) held a meeting in Chiang Mai in late March. Present were representatives from Migrant Assistance Programme (MAP), Mekong Migration

ILC time line:

2nd -18th June 2010

99th International Labour Conference (ILC) of the ILO. The form of the draft ILO instrument(s) is decided.

August 2010

A third report is released containing the draft instrument(s)

End November 2010

Deadline for submission of comments on the third report

March 2011

Two reports released: one examining the submissions, and the second containing the text of the revised draft instrument(s)

June 2011

Second discussion at the ILC. A instrument will be discussed and adopted or rejected by the ILC

Woman and Work



Network (MMN), Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility in Asia (CARAM-Asia), Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), as well as Centre for Asian Women (CAW), Homenet Thailand and the APWLD labour and Migration organising committee. It had been two years since a meeting was held and all agreed it was long overdue. During the meeting updates were given of past member activities and planning for the next couple of years was achieved. The focus of the meeting was not just on the events at the ILO, but on securing rights of domestic workers at the national and regional level. The meeting allowed the group to plan, draft a proposal for funding and move forward in our united objectives. The four themes of the campaign were reaffirmed, including One paid day off weekly, Ensured access to health services and protection of health-related rights, Ensured access to justice and redress and the right to organise.

The right to organise is an important right, which is connected to and will help advance, the three other rights the network is campaigning for. It is especially connected to the right to a paid day off weekly. It is necessary for domestic workers to have regular time off to effectively organise and have collective representation; it also needs to be paid so that they can afford to have the time off. As part of advancing this right, APWLD has written a briefing paper on the national laws and the right to collective representation in the ten Asian countries of Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Thailand¹. There is a particular focus on women, who are the majority of domestic workers, and on those who migrate to wealthier Asian countries for employment as domestic workers. The paper highlights the lack of inclusion and thus recognition of domestic workers in the national legislation and the lack of protection of basic labour rights.

The focus of the briefing paper recognises that an integral part of enabling women to protect their rights is the participation, and representation of women domestic workers, in unions and organisations. Women domestic workers may face the obstructions of low education, illiteracy, the patriarchal system, gender discrimination, lack of information and power imbalances; migrant women domestic workers face additional prejudice, as well as language and cultural barriers. Collective representation may help to overcome these hurdles. Workers organisations and unions are essential for the promotion and protection of rights of workers, especially in the struggle for justice against the employer and for recognition by the government. Being a part of an association or union is important for assistance in understanding an employment contract, reliable legal information, advice and action for when violations occur, or simply as a contact for isolated migrants. The restrictions on organising and on registering domestic worker unions in each country is outlined in the briefing paper, but there are also some cases of what domestic workers have achieved when they are able to organise.

The statement and recommendations from the briefing paper were circulated in advance by the UFDWR network and well over one hundred organisational endorsements were collected. The statement, recommendations and endorsements were subsequently used for a handout that folds out into a colourful and informative poster. The handout is being used as campaign and lobbying tool for the ILC, the "Asia Pacific Conference of Migrants Service Providers on Undocumented Migrants and the Current Global Economic Crisis" in South Korea, and other future events and conferences. The handout will also be useful as an information tool for UFDWR members and other organisations advocating for domestic workers in the region, and as such it is already being distributed in Hong Kong by Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM).

	Included under national labour legislation	Basic rights protected under labour legislation	Migrant domestic workers have labour rights ²	Right to form registered unions under national legislation
Bangladesh	✗	✗	✗	✗
Hong Kong (SAR)	✓	✓	✓	✓
India	✗	✗	✗	✗
Indonesia	✗	✗	✗	✓
Japan	✗	✗	✗	✓
Malaysia	✓	✗	✓	✗
Philippines	✓	Some	✓	✓
Sri Lanka	Some	✗	✓	✓
Taiwan	Some	✗	✗	✗
Thailand	Some	Some	✗	✗

1. The briefing paper will be available from the APWLD website in July(?) or email philippa@apwld.org for a copy.

2. For the destination countries listed this refers to whether migrant workers have equal labour rights under the national law, and for countries of origin, if they have labour rights protections for their workers who are employed overseas. India and Thailand do not have labour rights or protections for migrant domestic workers as a country of origin or destination.

Woman and Work

DOLLAR EARNERS

Taken away to their troubles
by the vagaries of the wind.
What's left is their cold hearts;
freezing at the break of day.

With the little thought of the pain,
though the back can no longer bend,
i'll go- i'll go- , they say in their minds
though their heart shouts: "retreat!".

A moment in the shade of the night
filled with sighs and cries.
Courage as thin as a rake
knock'd by the bunch of aches
whose agony was five million fold more
than the salary's might provide for.

Their dreams speeds like meteors,
on an open sky they soar.
Leaving their mothers, fathers and sisters,
and worse, their six months old.

They travelled the prickly path
in the core of the night, darkling
with hope of better life in a distance sparkling—

Lucky are They who reach their dreams,
Get back home with a lovely smile.
but for those who break their limbs,
silent is their screams of pains.

For the future of their beloved husband;
who sit happily on his mistress' lap,
for their sons and daughters dreams;
who spent their times on drugs and friends—

It's a crashed flight returning home.
Pity are They whose blood flows backward
in hopes of holding prosperity at sunset
yet still rub the mud off on their hands
after a long years of working as dead minds.

And will only considered as heroes
When their breath comes to an end.

Airyn R. Lentija, of Philippine heritage, is a domestic helper in Hong Kong. Her life, like with many foreign domestic workers, has been full of responsibilities, poverty, hardships. Many of her dreams, as for advanced education, have not been realized. Her poetic talents have been recognized and published in several countries.

21 Career Opportunities

Wanted: Domestic Worker:
Excruciating workload, 16-18 hours a day, no days off, no holidays, salary much lower than minimum wage and often withheld, no benefits, frequent harassment, occasional sexual abuse, intimidation, isolation, documentation and ID withheld, threats of deportation. No legal rights to organise or gain union protection. Millions of positions available.

**PROTECT THE MOST VULNERABLE WORKERS:
RECOGNISE DOMESTIC WORKER RIGHTS TO ORGANISE**

To Support the Campaign to Demand an International
Convention for Domestic Worker Rights visit:

UFDWRs
United for Foreign Domestic Workers Rights
www.ufdwr.org

APWLD
www.apwld.org

CARAMASIA
www.caramasia.org

Grounding the Global: The Success of APWLD Special Rapporteur Consultations

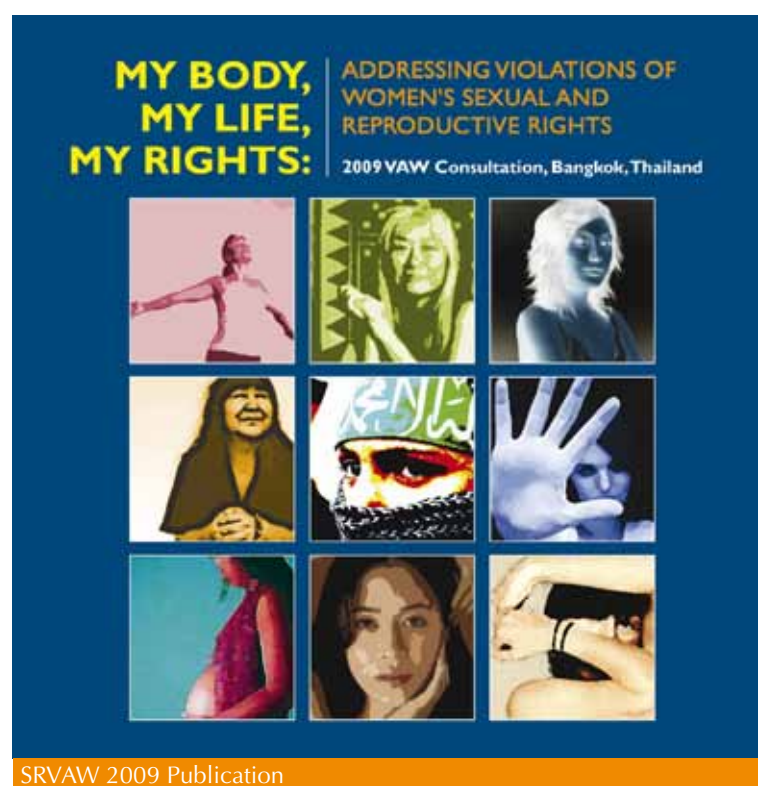
Secretariat Report by Misun Woo

APWLD began holding regional consultations with the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (SRVAW) in 1995, a year after we successfully lobbied for the creation of this important mechanism within the UN system. We began with an intention to facilitate the flow of information between women from Asia Pacific and the SRVAW. The annual consultation has since evolved into a space for women in Asia Pacific to have direct interaction with the UN Special Procedures mandate holders, including but not limited to the SRVAW, a space to document emerging trends and concerns of women and a space to strengthen women's advocacy, networking and voice.

The consultations have reinforced the special procedures mechanism by providing critical information on women's political, social, cultural and economic realities as well as firsthand testimonials from specific cases in the Asia Pacific region, not otherwise available to the special procedures. The consultations give women a rare opportunity to have their voices heard at the UN by having direct, face-to-face access to the mandate holders. It has become an integral aspect of the work of the SRVAW and has been lauded as a model for other regions to engage with the special procedures.

“Having direct contact with the UNSRs is a powerful agent of change and hope for indigenous women. We were heard, our issues and concerns were tabled in the presence of UNSRs and regional leaders. As a country represented for the first time, we have gained so much. We are now equipped and have established linkages with our friends, the SRs and the world. Now we know how and where to start in leading and representing our indigenous women and peoples.”

A participant to the 2009 consultation
from Papua New Guinea



SRVAW 2009 Publication

Woman and the UN

Recently, APWLD has engaged with other Special Rapporteurs whose mandates intersect with the annual theme of our consultations. This collaboration has resulted in the expansion of gender and women's human rights concerns into other mandates.

Some of the notable successes of APWLD's consultations with the Special Procedures mandate holders include:

1. The recognition of specific forms of violence against women as human rights concerns including:
 - o *Honour Killings* - 'Honour killings', an extreme form of violence against women and girls, were addressed in the report of the SRVAW (1999) with critical information provided by women's groups from Pakistan through the consultations. Women's rights groups in Pakistan used the findings of the report in support of their existing campaign to raise public pressure internationally and nationally. The inclusion of honour killings in the SR's report strengthened international reference points for the local campaign and aided in putting it on the global women's rights agenda.
 - o 'Comfort women' – since the early 1990s, survivors of Japanese military sexual slavery, or "comfort women" have come forward to bear witness and mobilise international public opinion, asking for an official apology and reparations. Networking with women facilitated the SRVAW's visit to Asia to thoroughly investigate the situation by collecting evidence as well as by hearing the testimonies of various women. The SRVAW's report to the Commission on Human Rights which urged the Government of Japan to comply with its responsibilities under international human rights and humanitarian laws and provide reparations to the survivors itself was an important form of rehabilitation to those who were being silenced for so long.
2. Joint consultations with the SRVAW and other mandate holders contributed to the recognition of an intersectional approach to address multiple forms of discrimination:
 - o The consultation with the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing (2004) led to mandate holder including the impact of gender-based discrimination and violence against women on women's equal right to adequate housing in Asia Pacific in his report. It assisted in broadening the normative content of the right to adequate housing by integrating substantive equality and non-discrimination principles enshrined in CEDAW.
 - o Substantial work with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders established a framework for understanding and articulating the specific risks and vulnerabilities faced by women human rights defenders (WHRDs). It brought international visibility and momentum for gender-specific redress and protection to WHRDs.
- o The joint consultation with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people (2008) revealed the importance of adopting an intersectional approach (particularly gender, poverty, class/caste, rural location and nationality) to address violence against indigenous women.
3. National laws and policies have been altered as a result of the consultations:
 - o *Indonesia- Domestic Violence Act (2004)*
As a result of the media attention given to the consultation and the SRVAW's recommendations to government, Indonesian women's organisations were able to lobby the government to push through the Domestic Violence Act, which was enacted in late 2004.
 - o *Thailand – Criminalisation of marital rape (2007)*
As a result of the Consultation, the Minister responsible for women's affairs declared that he would push to amend legislation in Thailand to criminalise marital rape. Marital rape has been criminalised in Thailand since 2007.
 - o *Mongolia – National Action Plan on Combating Domestic Violence (2007)*
Following the consultation, the SRVAW met with Mongolian government representatives who made a commitment to adopt a National Action Plan on combating domestic violence. This plan was adopted and approved on 12 September 2007. The SRVAW's visit to Mongolia also had an impact on the Judiciary's implementation and interpretation of the new Domestic Violence Legislation.
 - o *Thailand – changes to immigration detention centre policies (2009)*
Following the consultation, participants had a meeting with a Commissioner from the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand to address the issues of sexual harassment and violence in immigration detention centers. As a follow up action, the Commissioner initiated a meeting with Thai NGOs and representatives from the Immigration Office, which resulted in a commitment to place women assistants in replacement of the current male assistants to the Immigration Officers. It is expected that this action will lead to the reduction of rights violations including sexual violence in immigration and to develop gender-sensitive policies in immigration detention centers.

Woman and the UN

4. Consultations have led to the formation of important networks and institutions:

- o *Indonesia- establishment of the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan)*

APWLD facilitated the first SRVAW's visit to Indonesia in 1998. Local women's groups translated and popularised the report of the SRVAW, which addressed the use of rape as an instrument of torture and intimidation by certain elements of the Indonesian army in Aceh, Irian Jaya and East Timor, to publicise human rights violations of the Indonesian government and its military troops nationally and internationally. This led to the establishment of the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan) which remains a vital institution to address violence against women as a form of discrimination against women.

- o *International Campaign on women human rights defenders (WHRDs)*

In 2003, APWLD, together with Amnesty International and International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific, organised a regional consultation with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on the situation of human rights defenders, where the issue of women as human rights defenders was first introduced and discussed. In 2005, the International Campaign on Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) was launched, with November 29th designated as International Day for WHRDs in recognition of their important role in advocating for human rights and fundamental freedoms of all.

APWLD Regional Consultations with UN Special Procedures mandate holders

Year	Place	Theme
1995	Colombo, Sri Lanka	UNSRVAW's first report
1997	Colombo, Sri Lanka	State Violence and Violence Against Women in Situations of Armed Conflict / Trafficking
1998	Colombo, Sri Lanka	State Policies in Relation to Domestic Violence
1999	Colombo, Sri Lanka	Trafficking, Social and Economic Policies that Constitute or Contribute to VAW / Honour Killings
2000	Colombo, Sri Lanka	Women in Armed Conflict / Trafficking in Women
2001	Colombo, Sri Lanka	Women in Armed Conflict, Family Violence and Cultural Forms of Violence
2002	Colombo, Sri Lanka	Violence Against Women: Developments in the Asia Pacific Region, 1995 – 2002
2003	New Delhi, India	Interlinkages between Violence Against Women and Women's Right to Adequate Housing * Joint consultation with the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing
2004	Jakarta, Indonesia	Sexuality and Violence Against Women
2005	Bangkok, Thailand	Access to Justice: Holding the State Accountable for Violence Against Women by Non-State Actors
2006	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	Intersection between Culture and Violence Against Women
2007	Manila, Philippines	Political Economy, Globalization and Militarisation
2008	New Delhi, India	Violence against Indigenous Women * Joint consultation with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people
2009	Bangkok, Thailand	Women's Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Our December 2009 Consultation, 'My Body, My Life, My Rights: Addressing Violations of Women's Sexual and Reproductive Rights' was the 14th consultation done by APWLD and the SRVAW. The Consultation was held in Bangkok, Thailand and attended by 54 women's rights defenders (including one man) from 23 countries. We also worked with members throughout the year to strengthen their capacity for effective engagement with other UN Special Procedures to enhance collaborative impact. This year, the corresponding publication was released entitled, 'My Body, My Life, My Rights' which details the discussions at the Consultation. This document will not only be used as a tool for advocacy by the participants in national context but will also be provided to the UNSRVAW to aid and assist in her overall report to be submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in June 2010.

It is a unique forum for local NGOs and individual women to directly engage with the UNSRVAW and share their lived realities in a safe environment. At this year's consultation, participants were able to examine laws and policies pertaining to sexual and reproductive rights and whether they are sufficient or not as it stands. Information provided by participants also allowed a database of laws and policies specific to women's sexual and reproductive rights in 21 Asia Pacific countries to be collated. The consultation provided an opportunity for women's human rights defenders to identify the gaps between international and national laws and develop strategies to ensure the implementation of laws and policies to hold perpetrators accountable for rights violations. It also enabled new and emerging violations in relation to sexual and reproductive rights to emerge.

Woman and the UN

This year's consultation also enhanced the capacity of women to engage with national, regional and international human rights mechanisms. Participants were not only equipped with the knowledge on the UN mechanisms but were empowered to use them. These include the individual complaint mechanisms of the Special Procedure; shadow reports to different treaty bodies; and reports and advocacy during the Universal Periodic Review. Enhanced knowledge and access to UN Special Procedures mechanism has indeed contributed to empowering participants to use law to promote women's human rights in the region.

In early March of 2010 APWLD brought the voices of the consultation participants directly to the United Nations Headquarters. In a parallel event to the 54th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), APWLD launched the consultation outcomes publication, "My Body, My Life, My Rights" as well as hosted a panel discussion with consultation participants and the UN Special Rapporteur on VAW. The event was very well attended and served to further inform the UN Special Procedures. In her report to the CSW, Rashida Manjoo (SRVAW) made direct reference to the APWLD consultation as it contributed to "her mandate to keep abreast of regional and domestic trends, and establish direct contacts with women organisations, academics and victims".



SRVAW 2009 Consultation



Fundasaun Alola - Alola Foundation

“Feto Forte Nasaun Forte - Strong Women, Strong Nation”

HOW WE MET

APWLD was first introduced to Fundassaun Alola after learning of their research on Maternal Mortality, Unsafe Abortion and Women’s Reproductive Rights in Timor Leste. We invited Fundassaun Alola to participate in our 2009 annual consultation with the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, “My Body, My Life, My Rights; Addressing Violations of Women’s Sexual and Reproductive Rights”. Following the consultation we received a membership application from the Foundation with comments that their involvement had inspired and motivated them to extend their work in the women’s movement. APWLD is thrilled to have a new member that is working on such important issues in Timor Leste.

“The consultation was very inspiring and I really want to bring back what I have learnt and share with other women’s organisations in my country. It has also motivated me to be more actively involved in women’s networking and promote women’s rights in all aspects of life in Timor-Leste.”

Veronica Correia, Fundasaun Alola, Timor-Leste

ABOUT ALOLA FOUNDATION

Fundasaun Alola is a not for profit non government organization operating in Timor Leste to improve the lives of women and children. Founded in 2001, the organization seeks to nurture women leaders and advocate for the rights of women.

Fundasaun Alola was originally created to raise awareness of the widespread sexual violence against women and girls in Timor-Leste during the militia attacks of September 1999. Though this is still a key issue for Fundasaun Alola, today we also provide a wide range of vitally important support programs for the women and children of Timor-Leste.

Working with community groups and individuals, our programs aim to improve maternal and child health, create employment, promote human rights, strengthen community development, and improve the status of women. Now employing over 100 staff, Alola is committed to developing strong women who will be the leaders of the future in Timor-Leste. All Alola programs support the Government of Timor-Leste to achieve the National Development Goals.

THE VISION OF ALOLA FOUNDATION

Our vision is Women of Timor-Leste have equal status in ALL aspects of life (access, participation, role in decision making, enjoyment of benefits of development) through education, economic development, health and community leadership.

- To promote women’s rights and increase women’s leadership capacity
- To improve health status of women and children
- To increase access and quality of education for women and children
- To strengthen women’s small enterprise at grassroots level

PROGRAMMES OF ALOLA FOUNDATION

Alola is made up of 4 divisions:

The Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Department was established in 2003 to respond to the health needs of women and children in Timor-Leste. Originally tasked with promoting exclusive breastfeeding and good breastfeeding practices under the directive of the National Breastfeeding Association and The Ministry of Health, the MCH

New Member Profile

department's activities have expanded immensely since then. The maternal and child mortality rates of Timor-Leste are one of the highest in the region of South-East Asia. The department continues to successfully implement programs that help to improve child health and safe motherhood.

The uniqueness and the strengths of the MCH department are based on the fact that the team is comprised of mostly national staff. This enables the national staff to identify and implement MCH programs in culturally appropriate and effective ways for Timor-Leste.

The Education Department was established in 2001 to expand educational opportunities for children, especially in remote areas of Timor-Leste. The education team has been working collaboratively with other organizations in Timor-Leste, Ministry of Education and international partners to develop useful resources for better and more effective teaching and learning processes in schools.

Our Education team works directly on the ground in the community whether it is in the capital city of Dili, districts or the most remote area across Timor-Leste. The idea of better educational support is to give opportunities for leadership, and provide and develop best practices models, which covers active learning that is integrated across all subjects. We also emphasize independent learning and effective teaching methods. In addition, the Education team also works on developing resources, such as books and teaching materials. In 2010 we plan to establish the Education Resource Centre with programs that will support teachers and students capacities in teaching and learning, and creating resources by using local (natural and recycled) materials.



The Advocacy Department's main mission is to give opportunities for women to develop their leadership skills for self-improvement and to serve their communities. We also engage in campaigns for women's rights, provide humanitarian assistance through associated networks, and provide opportunities for young women's development through our Women's Resource Center.

Economic Development program is aimed at improving the status of women in Timor-Leste in the area of poverty reduction, access to health services and education by increasing skills through handcrafts production, quality control and marketing. The Economic Development division works closely with local women through the formation and an ongoing support of producer groups. Product quality is ensured through trainings on quality control, which cover topics such as identifying dye plants, marketing strategies (facilitating the fairs, product management and production of goods).

The trainings ensure that the producer groups know how to plan their production cycles and are able to create products of high standards. In addition, producer groups obtain a thorough understanding of fair price, transparency, accountability, and of occupational health and safety practices.



WORK WITH ALOLA FOUNDATION

Vacancies available for Timorese nationals:
Deputy Administration & Logistics Manager
Maternal & Child Health Project Officer

CONTACT

+670 (country code) 332 3855
info@alolafoundation.org

Visit Alola Foundation's new website: www.alolafoundation.org

The Other HR – Human Resources at the Secretariat

With new structures and new faces we wanted to make sure you, our members, know the women that are working for you. In addition to new energy and ideas on staff, the Secretariat in Chiang Mai benefits from over 25 years of combined experience with APWLD. We're here to facilitate your involvement with the network and handle the day to day operations that you drive.



New Energy and Experience Leading the Secretariat

Regional Coordinator, Kate Lappin brings with her more than ten years of high profile experience in human rights advocacy. With a double major in Legal Studies and Women's Studies from LaTrobe University, Kate has fought for human rights in her work

with trade unions, within a state human rights commission and as a lecturer in human rights, law and advocacy at Victoria University. Before joining APWLD Kate was the National Campaign Coordinator of Amnesty International, Australia. The APWLD family welcomed Kate and her family to the Secretariat in Chiang Mai in late 2009.



Interning in Labour and Migration

Philippa joins APWLD via Australia where she recently completed her PhD in Applied Ethics at Melbourne University where she also lectured in philosophy and business ethics. Philippa earned her undergraduate degrees in Law and Philosophy with honours at Otago University in her

home, New Zealand. Last year, Philippa toured Southeast Asia for three months before returning to Chiang Mai to intern with APWLD and gain some practical experience in women's human rights. For the next year, Philippa will be focused on the labour and migration activities of APWLD with specific focus on coordinating our domestic worker agendas.



New Information on Communications

After completing a degree in Political Science and Women's Studies from Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada, Tina Lee has honed her communications skills across private and union sectors, political campaigns and non-profit communications. Tina brings with her grassroots experience

from Malawi and most recently, Ethiopia where she spent 18 months defining and managing communications for a new NGO. She is excited to back to her activist roots in her role as APWLD's Information and Communications Officer.



The Woman Working on Women in Power

After working in rural communities on women's human rights for seven years in India, Rohini Ghadiok identifies herself as a South Asian citizen. Her work has focussed on gender-based violence and democratic politics and specialised in training,

specifically in grassroots communities. Rohini credits her Masters in Sociology with enabling her to critically analyse socio-cultural realities as social constructs and not facts. Together with her personal and professional experience she feels her education has helped her understand issues of marginalisation, vulnerabilities, exclusion, development, identity politics and so on as human rights issues and not just as economic tools. Joining the team in May, Rohini is the newest member of the APWLD family.

Missed at the Secretariat

After four years at APWLD, first as Assistant to the Regional Coordinator in 2004 and then as our Programme Officer for Labour and Migration and Women's Participation in Political Processes in 2005, Nalini's friendship, camaraderie and passion for migrant women's issues will surely be missed. We wish her the best in her future endeavors.

Farewell Mae-Ann Llanza. As APWLD's Information and Communication Officer, Mae-Ann's creativity and warm heart touched all of her work. Her commitment to local activism and passion for video-documentation was a welcome asset in her year and a half with the Secretariat. Best wishes to you and the newest additions to your family.



Secretariat members during a staff development workshop

Comings and Goings

Vacancy for Programme Officer

APWLD is currently inviting women from ASEAN countries with relevant experience and skills to apply for the position of Programme Officer. This is an exciting position that would allow the successful applicant to be part of a strong movement of women engaging with and shaping ASEAN structures and policies.

Please see the "Opportunities at APWLD" page on our website, www.apwld.org for the detailed position description, selection criteria and information on how to apply.

Applications should be received by 30th June 2010.

Congratulations

Heisoo Shin

APWLD proudly congratulates the achievement of Heisoo Shin in her election as a member of the UN's ECOSOC Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Dr. Shin has been a lifelong advocate of the women's human rights movement and has substantially contributed to the struggle to end violence against women in the region. A sociologist from the Republic of Korea, Dr. Shin has served as an expert of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for 2001-2008, as well as a commissioner of the National Human Rights Commission in Korea for 2005-2008. She is the representative of the National Movement for Eradication of Sex Trafficking as well as adjunct professor at the Graduate School of International Studies at Ewha Woman's University. In her many years as a member of APWLD she has been an active and important contributor to our work.

On behalf of women across Asia Pacific, we are inspired to see a fellow activist reach an important new level of influence and scope in her work. The next four years will see critical decisions made and formative policies initiated. We look forward to continuing to support Dr. Shin in her role and the potential it holds for the promotion, protection and realisation of women's human rights.

Forum News wants to hear about women in our network who are being recognised by their peers, send us your 'congratulations' to apwld@apwld.org

THE WOMEN OF APWLD

REGIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Nijera Kori

Khushi Kabir
Bangladesh

Fiji Women's Rights Movement

Virisila Buadromo
Fiji Islands
www.fwrm.org.fj

Fiji Women's Crisis Centre

Edwina Kotoisua
Fiji Islands
www.fijiwomen.com

The Mission for Migrant Workers (MFMW Limited)

Cynthia Ca Abdon-Tellez
Hong Kong, Peoples Republic of China (our ECOSOC status requires us to recognise UN states)
www.apmigrants.org

Partners for Law in Development

Madhu Mehra
India
www.pld-india.org

Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia

Titiek Kartika Hendrastiti
Indonesia

Komnas Perempuan

Kamala Chandrakirana
Indonesia
www.komnasperempuan.or.id

Mikiko Otani

Legal advocate
Japan

Feminist League

Yevgeniya Kozyreva
Kazakhstan
www.women.kz

Korea Women's Associations United

Cho Young Sook
KOREA

Rural Women's NGO "Alga"

Olga Djanaeva
Kyrgyzstan

Sisters in Islam

Malaysia
www.sistersinislam.org.my

Centre for Citizens Alliance

Zanaa Jurmed
Mongolia
www.cca.mn

ROOTS for Equity

Azra Talat Sayeed
Pakistan

Elisa Tita Lubi

Gabriella
Philippines

Innabuyog

Vernie Yocogan-Diano
Philippines

Virada Somsasdi

Founding Member
Thailand

Phanomwan Yoodee

Thailand

Calendar of Activities 2010

JANUARY

18-20	Bangladesh/Indonesia	Annual Exchange of Women Members of Parliament
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FEBRUARY

25-26	Bangkok	Regional Consultation on the Rules and Procedures of ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR)
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MARCH

8 Mar	Worldwide	International Women's Day
1-12	New York	54 th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)
1	New York	Panel Discussion at CSW: "Addressing and Reaffirming Women's Sexual and Reproductive Rights"
17-18	Chiang Mai	Workshop to Develop a Training Module on the Documentation of Human Rights Violations
29	Bangkok	Special Meeting with Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG) on Violence against Children (organised by UNICEF)
1-26	Geneva	13 th Session of the Human Rights Council
30	Chiang Mai	United for Foreign Domestic Workers Rights Meeting
31	Chiang Mai	Labour and Migration Workshop on Domestic Workers

APRIL

1-2	Chiang Mai	Workshop to Develop a Training Module on the Documentation of Human Rights Violations
7-9	Hanoi	Interface Meeting with ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children
8-9	Hanoi	16 th ASEAN Summit
20-22	Cochabamba, Bolivia	Peoples Conference on Climate Change
21-23	Bangkok	15 th Workshop of the Framework on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia Pacific Region (organised by OHCHR)
24-26	Jakarta	Regional Women's Consultation on Advancing Women's Rights Advocacy
27	Jakarta	A meeting with ASEAN Secretariat/ Southeast Asia Women's Caucus on ASEAN Coordination Meeting
29-30	Bangkok	Strategy Workshop on the Human Rights Council (HRC) 2011 Review (organised by Forum Asia)
TBC	Penang, Malaysia	Asian Rural Women's Steering Committee Meeting

MAY

1	Worldwide	Labour Day
1-2	Hong Kong	Preparatory ILC Meeting
22	Worldwide	International Day for Biological Diversity
29-30	Hanoi, Vietnam	1 st Preparatory Meeting for the 3 rd ASEAN People's Forum (APF)

JUNE

May 31- 18 June	Geneva	14 th regular session of the UN Human Rights Council
2-18	Geneva	99 th Session of the International Labour Conference- APWLD Advocacy on Domestic Workers
5	Worldwide	World Environment Day
26	Geneva	Consultation with the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders
June 28- July 2	Geneva	17 th Annual Meeting of UN Special Procedures Mandate Holders
7-10 June	Malaysia	Regional Gender and Politics, Level 2 Pilot Training Workshop
TBC	TBC	Regional Consultation on Development / CSO Effectiveness

Calendar of Activities

JULY

12-14 TBC	Philippines	Asia Pacific Research Network Women's Conference, APWLD workshop
13-14	Hanoi, Vietnam	3 rd ASEAN Forum on Migration and Labour
16-17	South Korea	Asia Pacific Conference on Undocumented Migrant and the current global financial crisis
TBC	Hanoi, Vietnam	2 nd Preparatory Meeting for the 3 rd APF

AUGUST

TBC	TBC	APWLD Annual Exchange of Women Members of Parliament
9	Worldwide	International Indigenous Peoples Day
13-16	Montreal, Canada	International Women's Conference, APWLD workshop
TBC	Thailand	Feminist Legal Theory and Practice (FLTP) training for programme members and APWLD Secretariat Staff

SEPTEMBER

TBC	Chiang Mai	Gender and Politics, Level 2 Training of Trainers (ToT)
18-19	Manila	Fifth Conference of Lawyers in Asia - Pacific (COLAP V)
TBC	Hanoi, Vietnam	3 rd ASEAN People's Forum/ ASEAN Civil Society Conference
25-27	Sri Lanka	APWLD Regional Training on Documenting Human Rights Violations

OCTOBER

TBC	Vietnam	Advocacy and Workshop at ASEAN People's Forum
TBC	Thailand	Asia Pacific Regional Feminist legal Theory and Practice (FLTP)
15	Worldwide	International Rural Women's Day
16	Worldwide	World Foodless Day
17	Worldwide	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
29-31	Hanoi, Vietnam	17 th ASEAN Summit

NOVEMBER

TBC	Thailand	Thai Association Annual Meeting
29-30	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Regional Consultation with the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences
8-9	Mexico	Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) CSO days
25	Worldwide	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
29	Worldwide	International Day for Women Human Rights Defenders
Nov 29- Dec 10	Mexico City, Mexico	Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
30 – 2 Dec	Senegal	Caritas International conference on migrant women and development

DECEMBER

1	Worldwide	World AIDS Day
1	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	National Consultation with the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences
10	Worldwide	Human Rights Day
18	Worldwide	International Migrants Day

Network Members, Send us your events for our next Forum News Calendar of Activities
www.apwld.org