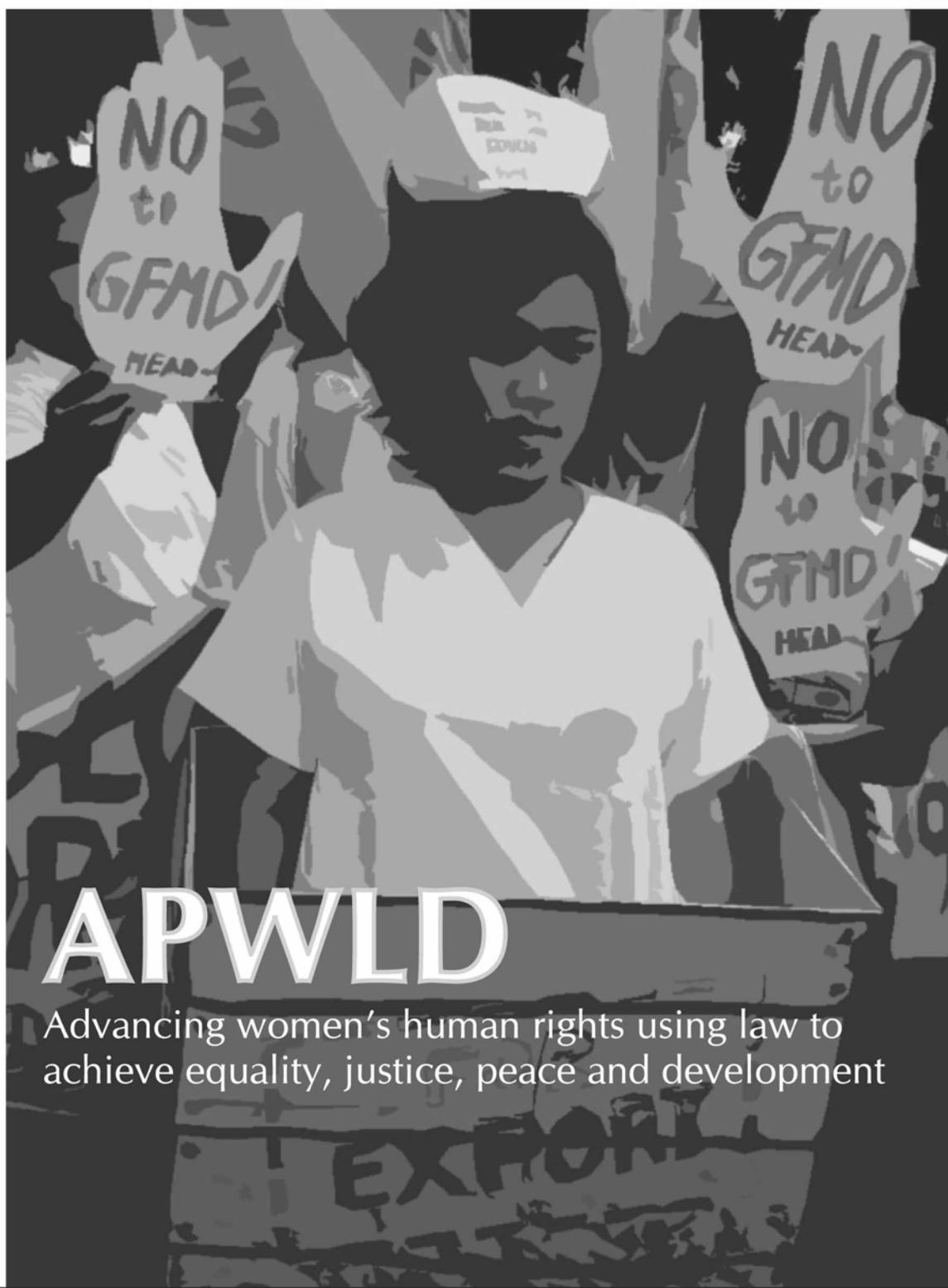


F^{ORUM} NEWS

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APWLD

Advancing women's human rights using law to
achieve equality, justice, peace and development

FORUM NEWS

Forum News is a regular publication of APWLD published three times a year. 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 also encourages feedback or request for further information from the readers. Feel free to send them to the Information Communications Officer Mary Ann Llanza: maeanne@apwld.org. The electronic version of FN is available on our website: www.apwld.org

APWLD is a women's human rights network with over 140 individuals and organisations as members. It is committed to enabling women in the region to use law as an instrument of change for the empowerment of women in their struggle for justice, peace, equality and development. It has a consultative status at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.

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Regional and International Engagements in 2008

Lynnsay Rongokea Francis

Networking and regional and international engagements have always been at the forefront of APWLD's strategy in addressing the challenges and emerging issues within the Asia Pacific region. Among the engagements are:

Peer Review Validation Workshop for the Asia Pacific Judicial Reform Forum

The forum invited APWLD to participate in the Peer Review Validation Workshop to review and provide feedback on the Judicial Reform Handbook-Chapter Two Access to Justice through Judicial Reforms. The forum provided APWLD the opportunity to forge new partnerships for future initiatives and to contribute to the chapter by sharing examples of the work on Access to Justice, customary laws and practice and advocacy for changes to Family Law legislations undertaken by network members and some of the challenges faced. The Peer Review was held 1-2 April 2008 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Gender and Development Pacific Partners Meeting

Held 19-21 August 2008, the Pacific Partners Meeting was organised by the South Pacific Commission. APWLD shared experiences in building women's movements from a regional organisation's perspective, and explored areas of possible collaboration with UNDP/Pacific Centre and UNIFEM Pacific, on training and the consultations with the UN Special Rapporteurs. The UNDP/Pacific Centre committed to collaborate on the 2009 Regional Consultation with the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women its causes and consequences to be held in the Pacific. They also requested a trainer from APWLD for a workshop on International Conventions in October 2008. In response to this request, Eleanor Conda, one of APWLD's lead FLTP trainers conducted the training.

ASEAN

The ASEAN Charter was adopted in November 2007 which was followed by the setting up of the ASEAN High Level Panel (HLP). The mandate of the HLP is to draft the terms of reference for the establishment of an ASEAN human rights body (AHRB), which met for the first time in July 2008. The Women's Caucus for the AHRB was then formed in September. The

Women's Caucus has taken the initiative to ensure that women's human rights concerns are fully integrated into the AHRB and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children. APWLD together with International Women's Rights Action Watch Pacific (IWRAW-AP) are focal points for the Women's Caucus.

Asia Pacific Forum on National Human Rights Institutions

APWLD network members directly involved in monitoring the work of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in their countries are selected each year (one from Asia and one from the Pacific) to attend the annual



Lynnsay Francis at AWID.

meeting of the Asia Pacific Forum (APF) on NHRIs. This year Heisoo Shin, from Korea and Seema Naidu, from Fiji, represented APWLD. Heisoo Shin provided a presentation on “UN Human Rights Treaties and CEDAW” at the session organised by IWRAW-AP. Among the highlighted human rights violations at the meeting were the extra-judicial executions in the Philippines, the vulnerability of human rights defenders after the coup in Fiji and the execution, flogging, stoning, censorship and arbitrary detention in Iran. The issue of human rights and corporate accountability was also discussed. The NGOs presented a joint statement calling for NHRIs and APF to promote the protection of women human rights defenders and provide support towards the establishment of a regional human rights body in the Pacific. The statement was presented during the NHRIs and NGO dialogue session at the APF.

The APF acknowledged the issues raised by the NGOs, particularly in the APF concluding statement. Commitment was made to further consider:

- integrating the issue of human rights defenders into reference topics made to the Advisory Council of Jurists;
- seeking a dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders about how NHRIs can effectively engage with her mandate;
- including the situation of human rights defenders in the annual activity report taking into account the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders;
- strategising to strengthen the role of NHRIs in affording immediate protection against human rights violations at the national level.

Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID)

APWLD Regional Coordinator was invited as a presenter in one of the plenaries at the 11th International AWID Forum – *A Look Inside Our Movements*. My presentation was based on my personal experiences and reflections, working in both the Asia and Pacific region, starting with a waiata, a Maori song about the Kahikatea by Ngahuia Murphy from Aotearoa/New Zealand and its analogy to the women’s movement. The presentation reflected on the hierarchy of personalities and small cliques within organisations and movements, the power play among the handful who make decisions, the need to be more inclusive by opening up spaces for new voices, and for the gatekeepers of knowledge to share with younger women and less experienced, the keys to the storehouse of wisdom.

A separate article in this issue features APWLD’s other involvements at the 11th AWID forum held 14-17 November 2008, Cape Town, South Africa.

Grantmakers Without Borders (GWOB)

GWOB held its eighth annual conference on 8-10 June 2008, San Francisco, USA. APWLD was invited by the Global Fund for Women to participate in the panel discussion on “*Changing the Climate: the Critical Role of Women*” particularly for the Asia and Oceania region. The conference was an opportunity to network, share experiences and raise issues and concerns of both Asia and the Pacific region on the impact of climate change on small island nations. It was also an opportunity to share the results of APWLD’s *Survey of Women’s Human Rights Violations in the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and the 2005 Pakistan Earthquake Aftermath*, which resulted in the publication of the *Guidelines for Gender Sensitive Disaster Management*. GWOB is a philanthropic network dedicated to improving the practice of international grantmaking and increasing funding for international social justice and environmental sustainability.

The 2008 Gyeongnam World Conference on Women’s Human Rights

The province of Gyeongnam is where the democratic human rights movement of Korea started. The conference was to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Held 25-27 November 2008 in Gyeongnam, Korea, an estimated 2,000 delegates from 31 countries, including members of the CEDAW Committee attended. APWLD member Heisoo Shin, who is also a member of the CEDAW committee, was one of the main organisers. The plenary sessions covered a wide range of issues ranging from the elimination of sexual exploitation, violence against women, human rights protection for minority women including in conflict situations, women with disabilities, and the economic empowerment of women. It was an opportunity to network with women and representatives of NGOs from East Asia, to share the Asia Pacific regional perspective on various issues and to identify individuals and NGOs who might be interested in future membership with APWLD.

APWLD acknowledges and appreciates the support of our longstanding partnerships with donors: Sida, Oxfam-Novib, Hivos, Ford Foundation and Global Fund for Women, and collaborative partnerships with other regional and international organisations.

I thank you all for your support and in solidarity wish you all well in realising the challenges of the coming year.

Violence Against Indigenous Women in Asia-Pacific



Participants at the Violence against Indigenous Women Consultation

Misun Woo

"I found the entire consultation very informative. It 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. It was truly an eye opener for new participants. As a country represented for the first time, we have gained so much, we are now equipped and have established linkages with our friends in Asia Pacific, the UNSRs and the world. Now we know how and where to start in leading and representing our indigenous women and indigenous peoples. Thank you APWLD."

Keke Loa
Reva, Motu
Koita
Assembly,
Papua New
Guinea



Indigenous women's voices across Asia-Pacific were raised and heard as they dialogued at this year's Violence against Women Regional Consultation with the theme 'Violence against Indigenous Women in Asia-Pacific'.

Held in New Delhi, India, on 15-16 October 2008, the Asia Pacific Regional NGO Consultation with the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women its causes and consequences (UNSRVAW), Yakin Ert rk and the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people (UNSRIP), S. James Anaya provided a critical forum for the two UN Special Rapporteurs (UNSRs) to engage with Asia Pacific indigenous women and women activists. The UNSRs took up the issues and concerns of the participants to be included in their annual reports to the Human Rights Council (HRC).

Presentations and discussions highlighted the concerns of particular indigenous issues and women's issues, within neoliberal globalisation, militarisation and armed conflict, and fundamentalisms (culture, religion and tradition) and their intersectional impacts on the lives of indigenous women in the region.

Issues discussed were: deprivation of natural resources, alienation from indigenous land, forced migration, trafficking and displacement, sexual violence against indigenous women, increase of armed conflicts in indigenous areas, and different forms of violence under the guise of culture such as forced marriages, honour killings and witch-hunting.

Participants strategised to promote and fulfill human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous women. The collective rights of indigenous peoples should be upheld as a whole without sacrificing women's rights under the name of collectivity. These rights have to be mutually reinforced as enshrined in international human rights instruments.

Specific recommendations are:

For the states: recognition of indigenous peoples; ratification and effective implementation of UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and other human rights instruments; establishment of state-level mechanisms to ensure indigenous women's inclusion.

For non-state actors: to respect indigenous people's rights to free, prior and informed consent and to adopt a human rights based approach.

For civil society: relentless campaigning, networking and alliance-building to engage with international, national and sub-national actors to ensure that the human rights of indigenous women are upheld without fail.

For the two UNSRs:

- a. To conduct joint thematic reports or studies that address the intersectionality of discrimination and violence against indigenous women in order to facilitate bridging the gaps between national and international standards;
- b. To respond to individual complaints submitted by indigenous women;
- c. To jointly conduct an in-depth study and consultation/workshops with indigenous women on their particular experiences of violence and other forms of human rights violations; and
- d. To make concrete recommendations to states and other concerned actors/agencies to effectively address the concerns of indigenous women that were raised at the consultation.

For some indigenous women participants, coming to the consultation sharpened their understanding of their own realities by sharing their issues and challenges with other participants. Many of the participants said they would now engage with the UNSRs as it is an effective mechanism for indigenous women to address violence, discrimination and injustices against them in their countries and communities.

The regional consultation brought together 62 women human rights activists, partners, regional and international NGOs and UN agencies, including 23 indigenous women from 22 countries: Bangladesh, Burma, Cambodia, Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, Guam, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Thailand.

The consultation revealed once more that indigenous women are agents of change in building equitable relations within their families, communities and society at large, rather than just passive victims of violence and exclusion. We must celebrate that the silence of oppression has been broken and that indigenous women are in the forefront in claiming their destiny as women and that of their communities. The insights from

the consultation will prove useful inputs to my reports to the HRC. - Yakin Ertk, UNSRVAW. Extract from the Foreword of APWLD Publication: Defending the Rights of Indigenous Women in the Asia Pacific.



Having just begun my mandate in May 2008, this consultation in New Delhi was a timely opportunity for me to meet indigenous women and those supporting their causes in the Asia Pacific region and to learn more about their key issues.... the consultation enabled me to gain insight into critical and emerging issues peculiar to and affecting indigenous women in the region, and explore effective strategies to address the situation of violence against indigenous women within my mandate. The information that I received will inform my work in the future— whether in the form of communications to governments, country visits, or reports to the HRC. - James Anaya, UNSRIP. Extract from the Foreword of APWLD Publication: Defending the Rights of Indigenous Women in the Asia Pacific.



An Ainu Woman's Reflections on the Violence against Indigenous Women Regional Consultation

Naomi
Shimazaki*
translated by
Tomoko
Kashiwazaki

*Naomi participated at
the Violence Against
Indigenous Women
Regional Consultation.

I learnt from the consultation that despite the diversity and differences in countries, religions, ethnicities, systematic discrimination and violence against indigenous women are universal in the region.

The Ainu women have felt it taboo and shameful to talk about violence against them. We have long been discriminated and somehow, got used to the discrimination. We have denied our identity as Ainu people to protect ourselves and families from discrimination, quietly enduring domestic violence rather than speaking out and claiming our rights. We have had a sense of guilt and fear in asserting ourselves. These are results of the history of colonisation and discrimination against the Ainu people. This fear is also the result of discrimination against women in Japan's patriarchal society that disrespects women and treats women as being incapable. It has been taboo or inappropriate to talk about discrimination and violence against Ainu women. We have not had space in ourselves to think about it because we had to deal with discrimination in our daily lives, employment, marriage, and in raising families. We have had to survive economic disadvantages and poverty.

These ten years, the Ainu women have been learning and expanding solidarity: we were involved in the Durban Conference in 2001; studied the intersectionality of discrimination against minority women; and conducted a research on the situation of the Ainu women.

Through this regional consultation with the two UNSRs, we saw the expansion of solidarity of indigenous women in Asia. We learnt the interconnections of patriarchy, religion and indigenous customary laws and practices and their influence on violence against indigenous women. I felt the need for research to reveal this inter-relation of the social systems. I plan to create space to disseminate information on the situation of the Ainu women at the national level. I learnt that it is important to gather information, including various reports on indigenous women, and to conduct survey to identify the real situation and problems the Ainu women are experiencing. It is also important to share information with other indigenous women's groups and generate action.

I have also started teaching Ainu women the Ainu traditional embroidery. I hope the Ainu women, particularly young women, will be proud and confident to be Ainu in mainstream society. The next step will be to strengthen women's economic empowerment and generate income through the skills gained.

Recent years have seen the result of our efforts: the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted in September 2007 and the Ainu people were recognised by Japan as indigenous people in June 2008. We conducted a study workshop on the UNDRIP. Participating from the Ainu perspective, we aim to further advance the realisation of our rights and strengthen the solidarity within the Ainu people and in wider society. Currently, we are preparing a proposal for the government on the rights of the Ainu people.

The Ainu people have reached an important stage. We have to be clear on what we want as Ainu people, we have to strengthen the movement to restore and realise our rights and, expand and strengthen solidarity with other indigenous peoples of the world. Further, it is crucial to advance women's human rights to realise peaceful multi-ethnic societies. We have a long way to go to fully restore the rights of the Ainu people which have been suppressed for 140 years. We are responsible for securing our rights for the next generation. I would like to thank APWLD for organising this event.



15 Years of the UNSRVAW: A Review

25 November 2008, New York, USA - A panel to discuss the preliminary findings of '15 Years of the UNSRVAW [1994-2009]: A Review' was co-organised by the UNSRVAW, the Office of the United Nations Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and the United Nations Population Fund. The event was attended by 100 representatives from the UN, member states and civil society. Madhu Mehra (extreme right in photo), APWLD Women Human Rights Working Group member, presented the preliminary findings of the review she undertook under the supervision of current UNSRVAW Yakin Ert rk (centre in photo). The discussion highlighted some of the emerging issues and challenges faced by women and girls around the world. The publication *15 years of The UNSRVAW* reviewed the mandate including compliance, implementation, accountability, conceptual gains, applying intersectionality in the themes and areas, fuller coverage of issues such as health and reproductive rights, among others. The review was set to guide and contribute to the work of the future UNSRVAW to be appointed in 2009. The full text of the review is available at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/women/rapporteur/docs/15YearReviewofVAWMandate.pdf>.

Joint Regional Consultation with UNSR on Migrants and UNSR on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

Nalini Singh



Irene Fernandez, Tenaganita



Retno, a foreign domestic worker



Participants at the consultation

After listening to the foreign domestic workers present their cases, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, its causes and consequences (UNSR Slavery) Gulnara Shahinian said that no one should be held in slavery. She said slavery and slavery-like situations still happen and it can happen to domestic workers.

APWLD, Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility and Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women co-organised the Joint Regional Consultation with the UNSR on the human rights of migrants and UNSR Slavery held 24-25 October 2008 in Manila, Philippines. The consultation addressed the issue of protection for foreign domestic workers and all women migrants, both documented and undocumented.

The consultation involved more than 60 participants from 26 countries including foreign and local domestic workers, activists, academics, researchers and representatives from UN agencies, national human rights commissions, international and national non-governmental organisations, political parties and trade unions from Asia Pacific and Latin America.

Domestic workers recounted their experiences in all stages of the migration process: recruitment, migration, employment, and return to their home country. The domestic workers gave strong statements on the issues they faced and are continuously facing, particularly human rights violations resulting from gender, class or ethnic discrimination, repressive migration policies, unjust recruitment practices, and a lack of labour laws. Participants discussed the vulnerability of women migrant domestic workers to exploitation especially in countries where domestic work is not recognised as work.

Forty-five strategies and recommendations were identified to: improve the realisation of domestic worker's rights; improve relationships with the UNSRs; and promote, advance and strengthen the implementation of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The recommendations provided concrete areas for future advocacy with governments and at the international level.

The UNSR on migrants Jorge Bustamante emphasised the need to focus on child labour and provide accurate statistics or data on migration issues. He spoke about the European Union Return Directive and the need for a united action from NGOs and migrant workers against the directive. Jorge Bustamante highlighted the extension of detention for undocumented migrants in the directive as a specific concern.

At the end of the consultation, the UNSR Slavery noted that she would include the recommendations at the consultation in her report to the Human Rights Council.

The Joint Regional Consultation report will be published soon.

The Consultation...

"... was useful in terms of networking with other national, regional and international organisations especially as it is important in building stronger movements, sharing experiences and maintaining contacts to help strengthen our strategies on foreign domestic workers..." - Sri Wiyanti Eddyono, Commissioner, Komnas Perempuan, Indonesia.

"...was really helpful and provided a rare opportunity for grassroots organisations to directly bring their concerns to the UN Special Rapporteurs. I strongly recommend that this type of consultation be held regularly for both UN Special Rapporteurs." Daisy Arago, Center for Trade Union and Human Rights & Labour and Migration Task Force member, Philippines.

"... has exposed the issues that we, domestic workers in Hong Kong face such as the two-week-rule and employer levy to the UN Special Rapporteurs..." Soledad Pillas, Filipino foreign domestic worker in Hong Kong.

Strengthening the Rural and Indigenous women's networks - Information and Skill-share Exchange



Tomoko Kashiwazaki

Following the 2007 exchange visits between peasant women from India and Philippines, this year's 2008 exchange took place between fisherwomen from Sri Lanka and Thailand. Six women from Thailand and five women from Sri Lanka participated in the exchange to share information and skills in organising, mobilising, and other strategies of resistance to the different powers controlling their resources and their lives. Host organisations were National Fisheries Solidarity (NAFSO), Sri Lanka and Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF), Thailand.

Participants from both countries shared how they have benefited from the exchange as:

- Established good relationship and linkages between Thai and Sri Lankan fisher women's groups and communities;
- Learnt different strategies related to lobbying;
- Learnt alternative economic activities;
- Learnt different post-harvest practices they can apply in their own communities;
- Established new contacts to widen the NAFSO network;
- Gained an understanding of gender balance and the need for men and women to jointly organise and work together;
- With other communities, participants were able to raise their united voice against government agencies;
- Participants were empowered as they engaged, shared and collaborated with community members.



Rural women exchange: Sri Lanka to Thailand

8th – 14th October 2008

Five women leaders in fishing communities from fisher women's organisation, youth committee, fishery society, and development foundation visited Thailand. Led by RIW TF member UM Geetha Lakmini Fernando from NAFSO, Sri Lanka, they joined the Civil Society Preparatory Workshop and other events prior to the "4SSF Global Conference on Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries" in Bangkok (see related article →). They also visited three villages in Phuket, Thailand.

9 October

The group visited the Yamu, Cuku and Ashu villages. Tourism development without concern for people's livelihood and traditional customary rights is the major problem of every village. A major tourist center is being planned in Yamu village. The livelihood of 52 fisherfolk and farmers were affected with the construction of houses. There were also plans to convert salt water into fresh water.... The people in Ashu village have been affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and some of them are still recovering. As part of the alleged post-tsunami reconstruction scheme, the authorities took the opportunity to seek investors for tourism. In Cuku village, the community explained how the 500 hectares of mangroves belong to the Queen of Thailand. As her subjects, they are bound to protect the area – such is the guiding spirit of the community in driving out investors from the area. All three villages are against these destructive tourism developments.

10 October

Community representatives, fisherfolk, and international delegates who were to attend the Civil Society Preparatory Workshop before the 4SSF in Bangkok went to the advocacy march in Phuket, Thailand. Marchers raised flags, shouted slogans calling for fisherfolk unity, and denounced the role of investors in Phuket and the apathy of the authorities to their plight. Attended by close to 2,000 people, the rally welcomed the women's exchange group from Sri Lanka and invited Geetha as speaker.

DIYAWARA, the NAFSO movement magazine, published a special issue on the experiences of participants at the exchange and the forums.



RIW exchange participants at the civil society events before FAO global conference



Civil Society Preparatory Workshop, 11-13 October, 2008, Bangkok

The preparatory workshop was organised to prepare for the Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) conference, "4SSF"—the "Global Conference on Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries: Bringing Together Responsible Fisheries and Social Development".

Attended by more than 100 participants from fisherworkers and civil society organisations (CSOs) from around the world, the CSO workshop focused on the same three themes of the Global Conference. The workshop started with the session on *Developing a gender perspective on rights issues in small scale fisheries and Strategy to track gender issues in the FAO Conference* chaired by Nalini Nayak (ICSF, India) with Geetha as one of the panelists.

The statement from the workshop to the global conference containing the key demands on securing small-scale fisheries was also issued. In the statement, civil society demands:

- ◆ That all governments take their legal obligation seriously and implement international human-rights instruments; and create the environment for fishing communities to fully enjoy these rights;
- ◆ The urgent establishment of independent mechanisms to monitor, and report on, the implementation of human-rights obligations;
- ◆ They call on the FAO's Committee on Fisheries to include a specific chapter in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries on small-scale fisheries, recognising the obligations of States towards them.

During the workshop and the FAO conference, the organisers and participants issued *the Daily Rights*, the civil society newsletter to report on workshop activities and reflections of participants, including reflections on gender concerns. The publication's issues are in four languages: English, French, Spanish and Thai available at <http://sites.google.com/site/smallscalefisheries/>.

Organisers of the civil society preparations are World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF), Southern Fisherfolk Federation (SFF), International NGO/CSO Planning Committee (IPC) and the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF).



Global Conference on Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries: Bringing Together Responsible Fisheries and Social Development, 13 - 17 October 2008, Bangkok Thailand

Attended by some 70 countries, half of the participants are from fisherfolk and civil society organisations, with another 40% from governments and intergovernmental organisations and 10% from the academic community. About half of the participants were from Asia, 15% each from Africa and Europe, 10% from Latin America and the Caribbean, 5% from North America and 2% each from the Near East and Southwest Pacific.

Objectives and Themes

Securing social, economic and human rights – such as inclusion and integration of small-scale fisheries stakeholders in policy and decision-making; gender equality; meeting health and education needs of small-scale fishing communities; ensuring decent and safe working conditions and livelihoods; creating “safety-net” alternatives; as well as promoting basic democratic governance principles.

Securing sustainable resource use and access rights – including access/user rights to fisheries resources, water resources, littoral and riparian areas; legal, practical and local prerequisites and requirements for decentralised and shared management; comprehensive assessments and monitoring underpinning strategic planning and effective management including coastal zone management and the conservation of ecosystems supporting small-scale fisheries; and preparedness, adaptability and resilience to natural disasters and climate change.

Securing post-harvest benefits – including the role of the post-harvest sector in fisheries management, inclusion of fish processors, traders and other stakeholders in commercial, development, and fisheries management groups, and threats and opportunities created by increased (international) demand for fishery products, vertical integration and other market factors including eco-labelling and traceability.

The conference aimed at improving knowledge of the factors supporting social development, establishment of sustainable livelihoods and use of responsible fisheries approaches in the small-scale fisheries sector; and a synthesis of key issues to secure small-scale fisheries and enhance their contribution to food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. Outcomes from this conference will be presented to the 28th session of the Committee on Fisheries – COFI, to be held from 2 to 6 March 2009 in Rome, Italy 2009. (Source: <http://www.4ssf.org/>)

Rural women exchange: Thailand to Sri Lanka

29th Oct. – 4th Nov. 2008

The six participants from Thailand were fisherwomen, farmer, staff from a community organisation and a staff from SDF. They were also mothers, environmental activists, and leaders of women’s groups in their communities.

They visited several fishing villages that NAFSO is working with along the west coast. They discussed how women’s groups were formed, their major activities and the challenges they have experienced.

One of the successful activities that women’s groups had organised at the community level is a collective savings scheme. Big fishing vessels or unpredictable weather conditions cause less harvest for small-scale fishers. The women then came together and initiated the collective savings scheme specifically to assist affected families during difficult times. They said the men are cooperative and happy with the women’s groups that are taking an active role in the community.

30 October. The village conservation work.

There are a total of 159 families in the village. Their primary fishing source is the Angamuwa Lake. In the past, extensive and reckless fishing destroyed the lake and their natural resources. NAFSO met with the village leaders who understood the problems caused by the deterioration of natural resources. They recognised the need to create awareness in the community. Discussions were initiated to create better understanding on the importance of preserving and caring for natural resources. This took time and various forms of advocacies until the community finally acknowledged the importance of natural resource conservation. Activities were carried out together with the community to rehabilitate the lake and its natural resources. The most crucial stage was during the initial phase, when the community had to stop fishing for six months. Some people had to leave the village and work in the city. After six months, the community resumed fishing. They were able to catch more fish, from two kilograms per day to seven kilograms per day. In addition, outsiders were prohibited from coming in to catch fish in the village. This rule was endorsed at the provincial level. (From the journal.)



31 October

Palliwasapaḍuwa is a coastal fishing community that uses beach seine to catch fish. They work together as a group of about 35 families.

Women in this village carry out all fishing-related work, except the actual going out to sea with their husbands. While we were walking along the beach observing their fishing techniques, we noticed that the women were helping the men haul in a very large seine. The women stood at the end of the rope and while hauling in the seine, they were neatly folding it. Once they were done fishing, the women were responsible for the rest of the duties while the men rested, drank and ate. The women separated the fish according to species and divided them up equally. The large fish were sold while the smaller ones were served to the families or processed as salty fish or dried fish. (From the journal.)

1 November. Chevimutti, Women and Youth Groups, Hadokarae and Munnakkaraya Villages

The community once requested the government to provide them assistance in the form of loans and revolving funds especially during the monsoon season, when fishing is difficult. This request never materialised. At the beginning of 2008, there was a hike in oil prices. The community again requested the government to help the fisherfolk. The Director General of the Fishery Department agreed to provide 5,000 rupees per month for each family, but the families only received 4,500 rupees once.

The community then initiated activities on their own. The women got together and started supplementary income-generating activities such as selling goods in the village and growing organic vegetables for household consumption. They also made their own fertilisers and separated wastes for a healthy community. The youth also contributed to community activities and planted mangrove forest. Some of them initiated activities to further their education such as studying English and computer. (From the journal.)

National Fisheries Solidarity (NAFSO) is a membership based fisher folk network with 13 fisherfolk partner organisations around Sri Lanka. Started in 1992, NAFSO now has 12,000 members (7000 women and 5000 men). The movement is spreading coastal, inland & lagoon fishing communities, covering Ampara, Hambanthota, Matara, Galle, Kalutara, Gampaha, Puttalam, Anuradapura, Polonnaruwa, Kurunagala, Trinkomalee administrative districts in Sri Lanka. NAFSO works with national and international farmers / women / workers & other peasant coalitions. For more details: www.nafso.lk

Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF) was established in 2000 to support the 'Danish Cooperation for Environment and Development (DANCED) Partnership Programme Towards Sustainable Management of Natural Resources'. SDF works to strengthen NGO and PO networks by emphasising the development of holistic and integrated visions of sustainability. These visions are derived from local wisdom and involve building partnerships to cooperate in solving community problems which will lead to sustainable development. For more details: www.sdfthai.org/web_pages_sdf/sdf_history.html

Confronting



the Global Food Challenge

Tess Vistro*

“A New Vision for Food and Agriculture” was the message put across by UNSR on the right to food Olivier de Schutter, in his report to the special session convened by the UN Human Rights Council in response to the global food crisis.

Taking the challenge, about 100 NGOs, civil society and grassroots organisations including peasants, fisherfolks, indigenous peoples, and rural women from the four corners of the globe, convened in Geneva for the “Confronting the Global Food Challenge Conference”. Held 24-26 November 2008, the conference discussed issues, views, challenged existing frameworks and debated on approaches and strategies all related to trade, and the challenges of the global food crisis.

Trade rules defile human rights

A powerful assertion at the conference was that existing trade rules under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) undermine human rights and yet make proposals to take the human rights based approach in building a new global trading system that support food systems that protect, promote and fulfil human rights.

In reality, WTO trade policies itself is the problem, and not merely the mess created by the operations of transnational corporations and governments as they implement their commitments to the trade rules.

WTO Director General Pascal Lamy defended that accession to WTO rules is largely dependent on the discretion of individual states. He asserted that WTO’s aim of opening up markets and trade is only to the extent seen as beneficial or responsive to the development goals of countries.

However, voices of food producers from Asia, Africa, Latin America refuted his assertion. Chicken farmers in Ghana reported widespread bankruptcy and poverty as local markets opened up. Potato farmers also in Africa reported great reduction in the prices of their produce, that resulted from the opening up of their local markets for imported potatoes. In Kenya, farmers blocked trains transporting imported wheat and maize that were seriously affecting the prices of their products.

These negative effects of trade policies fuelled unprecedented farmers and peoples’ protests and actions to defend their products and markets in various parts of the globe. In many Latin American countries, indigenous peoples and peasants are asserting their rights to their territories, to genuine agrarian reform, and the right to produce, feed and trade locally. There were also struggles against free trade agreements with the US, Canada and the EU in Argentina, Columbia and Mexico. In Haiti, the surge of food prices had sparked food riots and peoples’ protests demanding their right to food.



Photo from the Sri Lanka Rural Women Exchange (see previous story)



Human Rights: a basis for better trade rules

Carin Smaller of the Geneva-based Institute for Agriculture, Trade and Policies, shared how a human rights framework offers a powerful basis for making policies and laws that improve human welfare. Six dimensions of the human rights framework that are worth underlining in relation to global trade rules were outlined:

- 1) universality, indivisibility, and interdependence – human rights equally belonging to everyone;
- 2) human rights as legally binding on all states – obliging all states to uphold and promote and fulfil them to all its citizens;
- 3) equality and non discrimination – nobody can be discriminated against on the basis of sex, race, class, color or religion. Equality means paying more attention to the needs of the most vulnerable, and marginalised;
- 4) participation, accountability and transparency – putting the importance of peoples participation in the realisation of rights;
- 5) human rights transcending international and extraterritorial obligations – at least on the aspect of the creation of a favourable international environment, to enable states to fulfil the human rights of its citizenry;
- 6) human rights as respectful of various ways of organising markets or stimulating economic growth, and not dictating on one economic model.

However, Carin Smaller also stressed that the human rights framework is not all the solution, recognising two fundamental weaknesses. One that it primarily relies upon governments and courts for the realisation of rights and two, the human rights framework does not provide the answers on how to fulfil the rights. She said that how the markets should be managed, how services must be delivered, which agricultural practices must be encouraged, and how to create jobs are not what human rights obligations are about. She hastened to add though that what it can provide is a people centred yardstick against which policies can be measured.

Challenging Trade Rules, Confronting Food Crisis: People's Strategies and Actions

Esther Bett, a woman farmer from Kenya, stressed on the need to educate farmers. She said that if farmers understand the WTO, then they can fight for their rights. Esther Bett has led a successful education campaign in her country about the negative effects of WTO on the livelihood of farmers. Using various fora and strategies such as collecting signatures which were brought to the Parliament and the EU, they were able to make the politicians listen to the farmers' position. The farmers were then able to set the direction of the negotiations. She has also led successful education campaigns among school children using drama and music about the effects of WTO on farmers.

Latin American NGOs and CSOs challenged those present in the conference to maximise the space provided by the upcoming World Social Forum in Brazil. A dialogue with progressive presidents is being planned to present the peoples' agenda.

Beyond the widely divergent political situations of the countries and regions as well as the diversities in the momentum, actions and capabilities of CSOs, NGOs, and grassroots organisations, it was realised that as we are all faced with the same crisis, the need to link up struggles is all the more important.

The participants committed to join the many and varied proposals that came out of the conference and simplify them towards a common goal, as a way of strengthening our movements and organisations. As it is, we have strong movements able to face the challenges of crises rooted as we are to the realities of the lives of the small farmers, indigenous peoples and other marginalised sectors.

If there is anything positive coming out of these multiple crises, it is the strength, resilience and defiance of the rural communities and a people united by a common goal to survive, and the refusal to be defeated by the crises that we face today.

*Tess Vistro,
Rural and
Indigenous
Women TF co-
convenor,
spoke on the
topic *Local
Communities
Confronting
the Crisis.*

APWLD at the 2nd Kartini Conference: 'Future Asian Feminist Confronting Fundamentalism, Conflict and Neoliberalism'

Madhu Mehra and Misun Woo



The APWLD panel on Fundamentalisms with other APWLD participants at the Kartini Conference.

The 2nd Kartini Conference on 'Future Asian Feminism Confronting Fundamentalism, Conflict and Neoliberalism' took place 2-5 November 2008, in Bali, Indonesia.

APWLD's Women's Human Rights Working Group (WHR-WG) held a panel discussion on fundamentalisms on the first day of the conference to share APWLD's work, engagement and perspectives on fundamentalisms, and to continue its dialogue with other networks and fora on this subject.

APWLD was represented by three WHR-WG members: Madhu Mehra (Partners for Law in Development, India), Kamala Chandrakirana (Komnas Perempuan, Indonesia), Zainah Anwar (Sisters in Islam, Malaysia); and one Programme and Management Committee member: Azra Talat Sayeed (Roots for Equity, Pakistan).

The panel had specific objectives of further advancing the understanding of fundamentalisms through comparative country overviews in the region, its impact on women and its relationship with contemporary political and economic developments. The panel also aimed to discuss strategies that best ensure the fulfilment of women's rights in Asia and help resist the development of fundamentalisms.

Madhu Mehra introduced APWLD's feminist approach and presented an overview of trends in fundamentalisms and issues that emerge from our activism, based on APWLD's paper "Fundamentalisms

in Asia Pacific: trends, impact, challenges and strategies asserting women's rights." The interconnection between and among fundamentalisms, militarisation and neoliberal globalisation was emphasised and how these reinforce patriarchy obscuring democracy, women's human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Zainah Anwar presented how fundamentalisms, in particular religious fundamentalism in the context of Malaysia, has constituted new patterns of subordination and oppression of women, particularly Muslim women in the country. Malaysia government is using Islam to encroach on the rights of Muslim women. For example, after the 1999 elections, the government implemented dress codes for women. Post 2008 elections moved towards a more multi-ethnic politics and seemed more human rights oriented, yet the projection of the 'ideal' Muslim woman has become stronger and the impact of fundamentalism and Muslim interpretation on women seems to have grown stronger. Islam is being used as a political ideology by the government to counter the Islamic opposition party and suppress majority of people particularly women by controlling their way of life.

Fundamentalism is being transformed into political power, which justifies everyone's right to debate what is Islamic and what is not in public, for it is used in public policy, not as a faith. The recent fatwa* on tomboys, forbidding girls to behave or dress like boys as it violates the tenets of Islam shows the country's continuous sexist and discriminatory approach towards Malaysian women, especially Muslim women, and



raised particular concerns among the participants. It was stressed that Islam upholds justice and equality for all as enshrined in the Constitution of Malaysia. Women need to speak out if any injustice or discrimination is perpetrated on any group or segment of society and to engage in social transformation, defining religion to be codified and implemented in ways that take into consideration the realities and experiences of women's lives.

Kamala Chandrakirana presented the impact of fundamentalisms on women in Indonesia. The end of three decades of authoritarian military regime, triggered by the 1997 Asian financial crisis, counter-produced a myriad of fundamentalisms in the name of political transition to democracy channelled by radical Islam, oppressing people, particularly women, projecting the notion of the ideal woman and obscuring diversity and debate. This was in response to calls to replace failed secular state with Islamic state. It was different from people's expectation, however.

This 'reform' was, for women, a ground shift, from militarism and state violence to fundamentalism and multiple forms of violence by non-state actors. Many initiatives have been taken by women, including education, re-interpretation of religious laws, active engagement using the constitution for women's rights and mass demonstration. However, the passage of the 'anti-pornography bill' had shown that the government had again politicised morality and religion, using it as a means of retaining power and exercising its control over women's bodies and sexuality. To address these challenges, strategies were shared with participants such as: working with religious communities to confront the intensifying trend of fundamentalisms; and negotiating culture and integrating women's rights into interpretations of religious laws and cultural customary traditions.

Azra Talat Sayeed discussed the inter-connections of US foreign policy with neoliberalism, militarisation and fundamentalisms through which patriarchy is carried out in the context of Pakistan. Imperialist globalisation which includes the intensification of the capitalist paradigm, patriarchal norms, fundamentalisms and militarisation can be described as governments enforcing neoliberal policies and programmes that benefit only a few while majority of the people suffer from poverty, hunger, low wages and

deprivation of social services. It also intensified patriarchal norms and existing power relations. The connection between imperialist global agendas and national developments that have hampered democracy and people oriented development was illustrated in the context of Pakistan with the continuity of US geopolitical interests that have contributed to fundamentalisms in Pakistan.

These influences often result in peoples, in particular women's resistance to which governments and power holders respond with the use of force and violence to stop and suppress such resistance. It has also encouraged conservative elements and the state to invoke religion, morality, tradition and ethno-nationalism, to mobilise, militarise and undermine democracy and development in Pakistan. Since 9/11, the term fundamentalisms and Islam has become interchangeable due to the "US War on Terror" and its policies that deal only with Islamic fundamentalism. However, it was stressed that fundamentalisms should not be confused with religious extremism. Fundamentalisms equal not only conservative religious but economic forces, which are being used to control and appropriate women and people's rights. Religious intolerance with emphasis on "violation" of women's rights has been deliberately encouraged, interconnected with militarisation which increases state violence. It was articulated that neoliberal globalisation and militarism are the tools of imperialism, where fundamentalisms is a tool of capitalism.

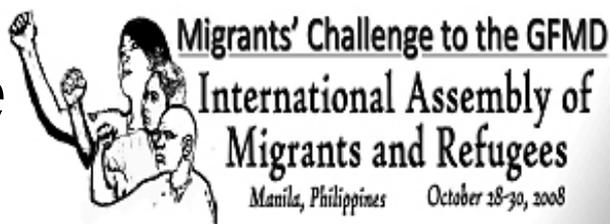
The panel was a culmination of APWLD's dedicated process of dialogue, discussion and sharing, started in the early 1990s, of different forms of fundamentalisms and their specific impacts on women's human rights. Attended by 57 participants (4 male and 53 female) from around 12 countries, this panel was recognised for providing a uniquely comprehensive and clear analysis on the inter-connections of fundamentalisms with globalisation, militarisation and imperialism.

APWLD's paper, now published as a book of the same title was also launched at the conference.

The Kartini conference was attended by around 200 women activists and academics. The conference was organised by the Kartini network, an Asian-European network of women academics and activists.

* *fatwa*: An authoritative religious opinion. Essentially fatwa is advice which is not legally binding. Often, fatwa means citation from an authoritative legal text. Political use of fatwa in modern times has given it a sense of religious call or edict.- <http://www.musawah.org/glossary.asp>

Migrants' Challenge to the GFMD



Nalini Singh

“For many years, many have spoken on our behalf. This time, we will speak for ourselves.”

This concerted voice is the voice of migrant workers from across the globe. Hundreds of migrants, refugees and supporters from all over the world gathered in Manila, Philippines on 28-30 October 2008 at the International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees (IAMR) to speak for themselves. The challenge raised to the GFMD was to: **Stop forced migration, ensure jobs back home, end poverty! Uphold and Protect the rights of Migrants and Refugees!**

Organised by the International Migrants Alliance and Migrante International (Philippines) in cooperation with other regional and national organisations including APWLD, this international gathering the sharing of migrants experiences on how neoliberal globalisation policies have not just driven people into poverty but have continued to enslave them as cheap labour and terrorise them as threats to national security and economy.

Participants from Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Philippines, South Africa, Germany, Mexico, Canada, Argentina, USA, Italy, the Netherlands, among others discussed and critically analysed how the GFMD serves as a device for neoliberal anti-poverty and financing strategy. They learnt from each other's experiences of the struggle for the fulfilment of their rights, and the power of strengthened unities and solidarity among the different sectors of society and organisations worldwide.

The GFMD and the IAMR were held at the same time to highlight that at the GFMD, migrants were the subject and not the center of discussion. At the IAMR, they led and were at the center of the discussions. These two events have far reaching implications on a country such as the Philippines, which is highly dependent on remittances from abroad.





APWLD Co-organised Events at the IAMR:

Migrants Speak-Out: Thousands of women, men and children rallied to the call ‘no to forced migration, no to labour export’, as the Speak-Out for the IAMR kicked off on 29 October. APWLD with Migrant International and CARAM Asia organised the public gathering on the first day of the GFMD.

The Speak-Out had a march-rally in the morning followed by a cultural programme that featured presentations of migrant issues blending with cultural performances by more than 20 artists. Mehan Garden in Manila saw the congregation of over 2,700 women, men and children. Stories of exploitation, slavery-type conditions, maltreatment, low wages, and the lowly state of domestic work were shared by foreign domestic workers around the world. More stories of exploitation were relayed by foreign brides and undocumented migrants. The testimonies interluded with “creatively” angry performances depicting the true state of migrant workers around the world.

The event was designed to catch local and international media and generate public awareness about the plight and challenges of migrant workers particularly women migrants. Media coverage was extensive, not only for the Migrants Speak Out but also for the whole of the IAMR activities, including coverage during the build up activities.

Women’s Workshop on Women’s Migration: The Empowerment Myth was co-organised with Gabriela and APWLD Labour and Migration Task Force (L&M TF) on 30 October as part of the 11 workshops organised for the IAMR. A full house of 50 participants, mainly women, attended. The workshop was premised on the so-called phenomenon of ‘feminisation of migration’, which the United Nations and the International Labour Organization view as having the potential to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Through migration, it is alleged that many women have been able to earn independent income thus have increased their self-confidence and their status within their own family and communities. More

importantly, their remittances and investments as migrants and the new skills they acquired from migration can contribute to poverty reduction. (From the 2004 Survey on the Role of Women in Development, Women and International Migration and the UNIFEM programme for Migrant Women.)

L&M TF members, Rahela Rabbani (Bangladesh) and Undarya Tumursuhk (Mongolia) joined other panellists including a Thai migrant worker in Hong Kong, Indonesian domestic worker in Hong Kong, Vietnamese foreign bride in Taiwan, Latin American activist who presented their stories of struggles and the situation of women migrants.

The workshop discussed that such faulty analysis is premised on faulty assumptions that: 1) migration is voluntary and not forced by economic and political conditions in the country of origin; 2) migration is legal and documented; 3) migrant women work outside the home in the destination country; 4) migration is long-term or permanent and not temporary and; 5) there is more gender equality and less discrimination against women in the countries of destination.

The empowerment myth is debunked by the actual experiences and testimonies of migrants from many sending countries. The reality is that migrant women end up in low-skilled jobs in foreign countries, with low wages, and terrible working conditions. Women migrant workers are subject to discrimination and are vulnerable to abuse.

Migration of women cannot possibly result in empowerment given its current context under globalisation. Out-migration of women is a result of desperation for work unavailable in their home countries and governments of sending countries promote migration to deflect its failure to provide jobs.

Participants were united in their recommendations: governments should create jobs that could absorb the labour force and enforce liveable wages; and governments of sending countries must address their fundamental economic problems. The participants agreed that there is a need for women migrant workers to organise themselves and act against globalisation and its resulting export of women.



APWLD at the Global Forum on Migration and Development

Nalini Singh

The Philippine government hosted the second **Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)** from 29-30 October 2008. The GFMD is an initiative of the international community to address migration and development interconnections in practical and action-oriented ways. It marks the culmination of more than a decade of international discussions on the growing importance of these linkages, and the acknowledgment of the need to address the policy implications and responses in a multilateral framework.

The **GFMD Civil Society Initiatives** held from 27-28 October 2008 preceded the high level governmental dialogue. Daisy Arago, Labour and Migration Task Force member, Philippines, participated as APWLD representative. She joined over 220 delegates from 60 countries from around the world to consider the rights and protection of migrants, the expansion of legal avenues for migration and the challenge of coherence within nations and across borders. The civil society delegation tackled the very themes that the governments discussed at their meeting such as sharing the responsibility in the protection of the rights of migrants, empowering the migrants and diaspora to contribute to development and regional consultative processes at the interface of migration and development.

The participants strongly voiced that voluntary migration can contribute in important ways to development, but it must be realised that migration is not and cannot be used as a substitute for development policy. In an increasingly integrated world, migration can carry benefits for both origin and destination countries as well as for those who migrate out of choice. Governments are to create laws, policies and institutions that allow these to be realised.

Some key recommendations made by the civil society representatives to the governments included:

- * All governments are urged to consider the benefits of migration and resist the temptation to cut migrant numbers in the current economic circumstances;
- * Governments are asked to recognise the need for the development of global architecture to ensure a rights-based approach to migration. The United Nations (UN) is urged to bring the GFMD back within its formal mandate;
- * Governments should re-affirm their commitment to development through realising the Millenium Development Goals by providing full employment and decent work. This must be the priorities in their development agenda.

Daisy Arago reported the biting absence of migrants at the civil society discussions. *"The very sector that was under discussion was not there to provide their input... I continued on as a former migrant worker who had much to say, and [to] listen."*



Daisy Arago

Engagement with the GFMD civil society discussions is a step to better understand how the people, institutions and organisations including businesses who work on migration issues, think, behave and plan, without involving the migrants themselves. If the GFMD will be reverted back into the UN system, perhaps the rules of engagement may differ. Meanwhile engagement with the GFMD is a worthy endeavour to study its impact on migrants and migrants' protection.

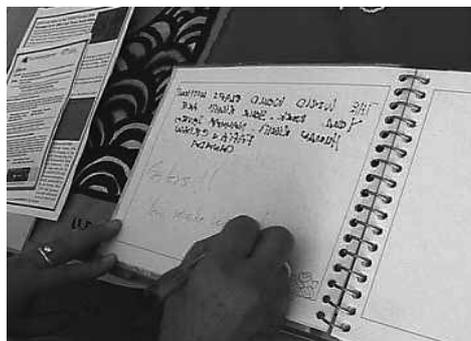
"The very sector that was under discussion was not there to provide their input..."

Our Messages in Tea Towels: United for Foreign Domestic Workers Rights (UFDWRs) Regional Campaign



Recognise Domestic Work as Work!

Nalini Singh



In recognising that foreign domestic workers represent one of the most vulnerable category of workers and are excluded from legally protected occupations, most women domestic workers are isolated from mainstream labour, social and health protection laws and policies; this campaign was initiated in 2007 by the five core campaign partners, APWLD's Labour and Migration Task Force, Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM), Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility (CARAM Asia), Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) and Mekong Migration Network (MMN).

Pink, blue and white tea towels representing our campaign colours were distributed to foreign domestic workers in Thailand, Hong Kong and Malaysia. Foreign domestic workers wrote their messages to governments and other decision-makers to **recognise domestic work as work!** The goal is to give an alternative platform to the voices and demands of foreign domestic workers as it is difficult for them to take time off work, much less travel to advocate for the protection of their rights.

A total of 50 messages were received in a span of a few months.

The tea towels were first displayed at the Joint Regional Consultation with the UNSR on the human rights of migrants and UNSR on contemporary forms of slavery (24-25 October 2008, Manila, Philippines) with more than 60 participants from 26 countries.

The tea towels were then displayed at the Women's Workshop on Women's Migration: the Empowerment Myth at the International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees (28-30 October 2008, Manila, Philippines) with a full house of 50 participants.

Then the messages travelled to Cape Town, South Africa for the 11th AWID International forum (14-17 November 2008) with 2,000 women's rights leaders and activists from around the world.

Through the tea towel display, voices of foreign domestic workers are being heard and their messages are being brought forward and relayed at the consultations and events despite their absence.

Solidarity messages resonated with the success of the tea towel display as women across the globe called for the recognition of domestic work as work. This campaign will continue on to 2009.

Building the capacity of Central Asia Women in Politics

Nalini Singh

There is great diversity in the republics of Central Asia including socio-political differences. However, a commonality in terms of low number of women in parliament or decision-making positions persists throughout the republics.

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan was the venue for the 2008 Central Asia Sub-Regional Gender and Politics Training Level 1. Held 17-19 October 2008, twenty-seven women from four countries of the Central Asia region: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan attended the training. The training workshop is an annual activity of the Women's Participation in Political Processes Task Force (WPPP TF). The training has placed a special focus on enabling women in decision-making positions to incorporate women and women's issues within mainstream decision-making processes and political institutions.

Forum of Women's NGOs Kyrgyzstan (The Forum) hosted the training workshop facilitated by four members of the APWLD training pool and WPPP TF: Rashila Ramli, Junaenah Sulehan, Bermet Stakeeva and Nurgul Djanaeva.

The training has been structured to address areas of: advancing conceptual and theoretical knowledge of political systems and their impact on women; identifying barriers to women's political participation; building practical skills and strategies to overcome the barriers and how women can become part of the solution; and developing a women-centred concept of politics and the set of values and ethics required to engage in transformative politics.

The participants, who came from women's and other NGOs, the business sector, academia and political parties,



had tremendous experiences working on women's issues but were unfamiliar with the academic understanding of the issues and how it related to their work on the ground. By the end of the training the participants relayed that they found the training very relevant to their work. One aspect for this positive feedback was due to the fact that all workshop materials were translated into the Russian language and all the sessions had simultaneous translations.

Special guest speaker Hon. Gulnara Derbisheva presented her experiences during the discussions on successful strategies used by women to get into politics. Hon. Derbisheva is an alumna of WPPP's Gender and Politics training and was elected to the National Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2007. She is part of the 'Fifty Women in Parliament Project', an initiative of The Forum which had seen the election of three women to the National Parliament.

The WPPP TF wishes the participants the very best in their aspirations in the political arena.

CEDAW- Empowering Kyrgyz Women to Demand Their Rights

Nalini Singh

Kyrgyzstan acceded to CEDAW in 1997. Despite a number of advancements in making equality between men and women a reality, the country is now seeing a significant backsliding in the government's commitment to implement the action plan/policy on achieving gender equality by 2010. The conservative political forces are attempting to curtail the policy on achieving gender equality to reinforce patriarchal values and roles to disguise women's contributions into the development of society.

In October 2008, the Kyrgyz government presented its third country report to the 42nd session of the CEDAW Committee. Seizing this as an opportunity to hold the government accountable in the implementation of CEDAW in Kyrgyzstan, several women's groups came together to write the Kyrgyzstan Shadow CEDAW Report. Facilitated and coordinated by The Forum of women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan (The Forum), the Shadow Report covered the period 2002-2007. It analysed the status of violence against women and women's participation in political processes. It provided an analysis of how effectively the provisions of CEDAW are being implemented and highlighted the government's violations or non-compliance of the convention.

The Women's Participation in Political Processes Task Force supported the participation of Sveta Saiakbaeva, Director of the Tendesh Crisis Centre, which monitors the situation of women in the province on behalf of The

Forum, to be part of women's representatives presenting the Shadow Report in Geneva. Prior to leaving for Geneva, Sveta had taken part in trainings on how to do effective presentations at the CEDAW session.

Sveta Saiakbaeva participated in formal and informal meetings with the CEDAW committee members and effectively lobbied to the members. She presented to the committee the case of a young unemployed woman who is a victim of regular brutal domestic violence and of the authorities and the community's inaction. This lobbying resulted in the inclusion of reforms of current legislations, and enforcement of existing laws in relation to domestic violence in the 18 point recommendation to the committee.

This was the first time that a local provincial NGO participated as part of the Kyrgyz delegation. Sveta related that her participation enabled her to gain first hand knowledge and skills in using international law such as CEDAW and its monitoring body, and contributed to a better understanding of the importance of monitoring international laws.

Upon her return, Sveta Saiakbaeva assisted in organising two roundtable discussions at Bishkek and Naryn provinces to inform other network members of the Shadow Report and Concluding Comments from the CEDAW committee.

Mongolia Women Activists Lead Human Rights Monitoring and Protection

Undarya Tumursukh and Nalini Singh

In July 2008, Mongolia experienced serious incident of electoral violence and massive human rights violations. The first in its post-socialist history, the incident was reminiscent of the 1930s Stalinist repressions. The State of Emergency was announced without sufficient justification in response to perfectly preventable violence. It sanctioned mass arrests, torture and inhuman treatment, instigating fear in the hearts of the people. In this context, predominantly female Mongolian human rights activists mobilised to protect human rights and document human rights abuses at significant personal risk. The work has been ongoing, taxing the women activists' limited resources, time and energy while their personal security remains at risk.

Context

On June 29, 2008, Mongolia held its 5th regular election to the national parliament – State Great Khural. It was held in the context of significant criticism of the Election Law adopted in 2005 and amended again in 2007. The constitutionality of the law itself was questioned, and many of the provisions were contested on the grounds of being undemocratic and unjust. The law was tailored specifically to benefit the two main political parties by raising barriers for third parties, independent candidates and women. During the election campaign, numerous cases of vote-buying and other violations were reported but no steps were taken to hold the perpetrators accountable and no candidate was disqualified. The election took place without proper guarantees to ensure fairness.

Some television news channels reported gross violations of the electoral law during the counting of the ballots. In one district, an election committee member simply transferred thousands of votes from an opposition candidate to a candidate of the ruling Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP). In one of the rural districts, a ballot box was replaced with a

pre-arranged ballot box. As voting results announcing victories for MPRP candidates come in, thousands of voters were convinced that they were once again cheated.

Electoral violence and state of emergency:

The evidence of massive electoral fraud committed with impunity by the moneyed and powerful, caused the eruption of voters' anger and frustration accumulated in the last 18 years due to deepening political corruption, poverty and social inequities. Thousands of voters spontaneously gathered on the main square of Ulaanbaatar in protest and marched towards the MPRP headquarters to demand accountability and justice from Mongolia Prime Minister S. Bayar who is also chairperson of MPRP. Voters were met with policemen in full riot gear. In the conspicuous absence of any proper effort to manage the conflict, the confrontation between unarmed citizens and the police quickly grew violent.

At midnight, the President announced a state of emergency for four days, which opened the floodgate to police brutality against unarmed citizens, many of whom were teenage boys and some of whom were pregnant women and people with disabilities. Firearms were used against citizens and caused injuries and deaths. Over 700 people were arrested, many of whom had nothing to do with the election protests. The arrested were transported and detained in cruel, degrading and inhumane conditions, subjected to severe beating and torture, interrogated without lawyers at the detention sites and forced to admit to having committed crimes such as treason and arson.

The main leaders of the key opposition party that came from an anti-corruption movement were arrested as authorities claimed they organised the riots and 'attack' on the MPRP. Civil society activists who organised a silent sit-in protest were also arrested and detained for two weeks.



Human Rights Monitoring and Protection:

Women human rights activists began their action on the night of 1 July when it became clear that violence was about to take place and that government action will lead to serious human rights violations. They approached Eagle TV, possibly the most democratic and professional channel, and were granted airtime. Two of the women leaders presented the position of human rights NGOs on the current affairs and urged all political forces to join efforts to resolve the electoral dispute non-violently in the best interests of the people. The activists were the last civil society representatives to speak on television, before the state of emergency was announced and all television channels were shut down with the exception of the national public television.

The following day, the activists mobilised and demanded that the National Public Television maintain balance and fair reporting, and stressed that biased and incomplete information would exacerbate rather than mitigate violence and distrust. Civil society organisations issued another statement addressing all political forces, and urged them to resolve the current conflict in a rights-based, fair and non-violent way.

Women activists led the establishment of the Human Rights Monitoring and Protection under State of Emergency Coalition composed of human rights NGOs, lawyers and other interested individuals. With financial support from the Open Society Forum, the coalition carried out a campaign to document human rights abuses and provided free legal assistance and relevant information to the arrested and their family members. Coalition lawyers and volunteers interviewed 71 arrested people and 126 family members, put many of them in touch with each other, and subsequently succeeded in releasing on bail several dozens of the arrested.

The coalition played a crucial role in focusing public attention to the human rights violations perpetrated by the state. The results of the human rights documentation were presented to the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Human Rights. This was also announced through a press conference as soon as the four-day state of emergency was lifted. Coalition members' effort to inform the international community of the human rights violations in Mongolia was critical.

Women human rights activists have expanded their coalition to include other civil society actors. They continued to provide free legal assistance to those arrested during the state of emergency while actively leading advocacy and awareness-raising on civil and political rights of human rights defenders, demanding fair trials, the release of political prisoners, and accountability of the government.

Defending Women Defending Rights!

In November 2008, as part of the 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women, small actions to raise awareness on Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) and initiate the development of security strategies for WHRDs were organised by the National Network of Mongolian Women's NGOs (MONFEMNET) with support from the Labour and Migration Task Force.



Women activists were and are still being harassed and threatened for working on domestic violence, women's political rights and electoral reform issues. This was clearly demonstrated during the NGO action to document and monitor human rights abuses by the police and the government during the four-day State of Emergency in July 2008.

Mongolian women activists do not have a safety code or security strategy to lower their risks and the general public has no understanding of the costs women bear in their work for human rights.

MONFEMNET took the opportunity to conduct: a survey on risks and costs to WHRDs, a roundtable discussion among WHRDs and their allies to initiate a discussion and develop security strategies for WHRDs, a press conference to inform the public about human rights of WHRDs and a greeting card campaign to encourage WHRDs.

All women, without exception, said their rights have been violated due to their status and activism as human rights advocates. They reported abuses such as being stalked by strangers, harassment through phone calls, threats, harassment by government officials, and physical assaults. Most women did not take any measures in such cases. One woman repeatedly reported to the police and intelligence office and, after persistent attempts, was able to secure their protection for a period of time. Several of the women also reported being pressured by the family to quit their work, which caused them additional stress.

The WHRDs noted the need to improve NGO mechanisms for taking care of their employees, enhance public understanding of the work and challenges faced by WHRDs and improve government support to NGOs. Many stressed the importance of stress management activities.

These small actions initiated an important process of discussing safety and security of WHRDs in Mongolia and generated many important ideas, which can be followed up in the future.

"MONFEMNET, in cooperation with APWLD, shall continue its efforts to improve the status and safety of WHRDs in Mongolia and elsewhere."- Undarya Tumursukh

***Undarya is the Asian Focal Point for the International Civil Society Forum for Democracy, the National Coordinator of MONFEMNET and member of the Labour and Migration TF.**

APWLD AT “THE POWER OF MOVEMENTS”

Nalini Singh

The Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID) International Forum is one of the largest international summits on gender equality outside of the UN system and one of the most important global meetings on women’s rights. The AWID Forum offers delegates an unparalleled opportunity to develop strategies, share ideas, build skills and provide support to advance the goals of gender equality and social justice.

Held from 14-17 November 2008 in Cape Town, South Africa, the Forum saw the biggest ever participation of over 2,000 women and men in four days of plenary speeches, interactive sessions, workshops, debates, and creative sessions all geared towards powerful thinking on gender equality and women’s human rights. There were also informal caucuses, gala events, cultural activities, and social and political events set towards global and regional networking and alliance-building.

Tok Talk: Nourishing an Asia Pacific Feminist Movement

The AWID Forum provided an excellent opportunity to further the feminist dialogues that have been happening in Asia and the Pacific. Fiji Women’s Rights Movement (FWRM) and APWLD partnered in organising the session: *Tok Talk- Nourishing an Asia Pacific Feminist Movement*. The session built on the intergenerational dialogues APWLD and FWRM have been part of such as FWRM’s Emerging Leaders’ Forum, the Pacific Young Feminist Advocacy Training, and the 10th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women. The most recent discussion included the women law and development network not

only of Asia and the Pacific but also of Latin America and the Caribbean with the *Comite de America Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer*, and of Africa with the *Women in Law and Development Africa*, during the *Women, Law and Development Network’s* 20th anniversary in November 2007.

The idea: Women have always come together over food to discuss their lives and dreams. *Tok Talk* was a virtual feast of ideas where feminists were given a chance to address some of the key questions facing Asia-Pacific. The session attempted to bridge the Asia and Pacific, as well as the intergenerational divide. The struggle for women’s equality, political liberation and social transformation in our region remains a formidable task in the face of neoliberal globalisation, militarism and the many other faces of fundamentalisms.

The show: Hosted by Tara Chetty of FWRM, *Tok Talk* took on a live television talk show format, complete with cameras, in-studio audience and featured in-house guests such as Fatima Burnad (India) and Asfinawati (Indonesia) together with Ofa-Ki-Levuka Guttenbeil (Tonga) and Paulini Turagabeci (Fiji).

The show formed around the Pacific and Asian traditions of informal chatting over meals, to create a friendly and creative space. *Tok Talk* included video clips and hard hitting questions to spark an interactive discussion with the in-studio audience. How can younger and older feminists collaborate to address the diverse challenges of our region? How can we get past old conflicts to build a stronger feminist movement? Is there a vibrant Pacific feminist movement? These questions also formed the basis



Left to right: Fatima Burnad, Ofa-Ki-Levuka Guttenbeil, Asfinawati and Paulini Turagabeci

s” AWID 11TH INTERNATIONAL FORUM

of a collaborative FWRM/APWLD DVD project, which is also titled *Tok Talk*.

More than 50 women from across the globe claimed the space provided by Tok Talk and explored questions in continuing and strengthening a vibrant feminist movement where diversity is embraced, participation is ensured and the feminist vision is affirmed with fresh perspectives.

Tok back: Feedback

From Cristina Palabay, Philippines, Women’s Participation in Political Processes Task Force (WPPP TF) member: *“...An interesting point on knowing the points of divergence of views of young and older women activists defines a sharper look into these relations - whether these are fundamental differences on issues and framework on women’s issues or personal differences. What I think is important is that the concept of collective leadership should not be lost along the principle of unity and struggle of divergent views to strengthen our advocacies of women’s movements issues and struggles, especially that of the poor and marginalised women. A particular point raised also was on the concept of forming a Pacific women’s movement, which for me as an Asian woman activist, is a question that should be relevant, answered and should be built, initiated and fortified by the women from the Pacific. The session provided an open*

space for women’s ideas, with the creativity of women, young and old.”

From Virada Somswasdi, Thailand, WPPP TF Convenor: *“The exceptional positive aspect was that it provided a space for the young generation to address concerns in making their presence felt in the movement and organisational matters. However, the negative side is that some misinformation or very personal and exceptional cases might have been conveyed to the participants about high dominance of older generation as generic. Along with it, we heard a very mature and profound voice of some young members on the plus side of opportunity, support and nurturing from the older generation. Let’s hope that audience can mine out the substance from the drama.”*

From the Secretariat: Nalini Singh and Maeanne Llanza: *The excitement of having our session chosen at the AWID Forum from thousands of other applications, was visible across the internet lines as the APWLD secretariat communicated online with our FWRM sisters and APWLD members. Natural disasters did not dampen the enthusiasm we had to ensure that the proposal reached AWID on time.*

At Cape Town, bearing the extreme cold ‘summer’ conditions, Maeanne and Tara continued to map out the plan for the talk show while brainstorming on the FTX video.

The show was a huge success noting that we had a full house, no pregnant silences in between responses, and a good mix of participants in terms of geography, age and stances. The creative arrangement of the room, snacks from India and an entertaining host created a cosy atmosphere and livened the discussions. The session was spiced up with ‘live telecast interviews’ with our members to trigger the discussions.

We would like to thank FWRM, APWLD and our sisters and friends from across the region for inspiring us to continue this discussion.





WHRD exhibit



Making Migrant Domestic workers' presence felt at AWID through the tea towel campaign



The sea of purple: One-in-Nine rally



Lunchtime caucus with Burmese women

And then the participants at the AWID Forum spoke:

Dear friends,

Warm greetings from AWID! I hope this message finds you all well.

This is just a quick note to share with you some good news. After analysing some of the results of AWID's online Forum Evaluation filled out by over 30% of forum participations, we learned that when asked which was their favourite session, "Tok Talk: Nourishing an Asia Pacific Feminist Movement" came out as number 17 of the approximate 115 mentioned.

I think this is great example of how a small session such as yours can have such a powerful impact!

Congratulations and Thank you for all the creativity and vibrancy you brought the to the 2008 Forum in Cape Town.

Warm regards,
Sarah Rosenhek
Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator
Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)

United for Foreign Domestic Workers Rights (UFDWRs) working for the promotion, protection and recognition of domestic workers took the opportunity presented by the AWID forum to create greater awareness on the issue by setting up the exhibit 'Tea Towel messages' from domestic workers in the Asia Pacific region. (Please refer to the article: Our Messages in Tea Towels: UFDWRs regional campaign for more information.)

Joining the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence campaign, members of the **International Coalition on Women Human Rights Defenders** (WHRDs) honored 16 WHRDs who have endured all risks and dangers in pursuit of their activism. APWLD assisted the International Coalition in setting up the WHRD exhibit to create more awareness on the campaign for WHRDs around the world. The WHRD Coalition also launched the French version of the Claiming Rights, Claiming Justice Guidebook.

APWLD members at the AWID Forum joined thousands of other supporters at the 'One in Nine' rally. The **One in Nine Campaign: Solidarity with Women Who Speak Out** was established in February 2006 at the start of the rape trial of Jacob Zuma, to express solidarity with the woman in that trial as well as with other women who speak out about rape and sexual violence. The Medical Research Council study on sexual violence (2005) indicated that only one out of every nine rape survivors report the attack to the police. This statistic prompted the name: "One In Nine".



Our Pacific sisters at AWID



APWLD at AWID. Left to right: Fatima Burnad, Cristina Palabay, Nalini Singh, Asfinawati and Mae-anne Llanza

Furthermore, statistics indicate that of the cases that do reach the courts, less than 5% of the rapists are convicted. The One In Nine Campaign works towards social justice for a society where the sexual rights of women are respected, upheld and advanced.

'With the rousing call of Amanza! I joined a sea of purple clad women, men and children - both Forum delegates and locals - who converged and marched on the streets of Cape Town in solidarity with the One in Nine Campaign. The message delivered to the South African authorities was simple: there was an urgent need to reform the institutional framework for responding to women who speak out against sexual violence. I gained strength and a rejuvenated insight that by raising a collective voice against injustice, we hope to empower those who are still in the sidelines and to reach those in power to make positive change.' - Nalini Singh, APWLD Programme Officer

The AWID Forum was a wonderful gathering of women from all over the world representing different women's movements such as indigenous, tribal, dalit and others. The plenary sessions were a learning process and were very relaxing. The panellists were well represented from all regions. I learnt many new issues and was reminded of using the feminist language.

The most interesting workshop that I attended was the one on intergeneration, "What's Age Got To Do With It: Generational Shifts in Movement Building" where I felt really very old. The workshop made me realise the mistakes I committed as a senior person in the work I do.

Tok Talk, our workshop, was the best. I felt workshops need not be in a serious atmosphere. Though not very formal, our workshop brought out many serious and interesting agenda for future work.

I have attended many gatherings of women at the International level, but the AWID Forum really gave me more strength. I felt that this is how sisterhood is so powerful. I met many of my old friends and made new friends. I enjoyed living and working with the wonderful APWLD team at Cape Town. - **Fatima Burnad**

The AWID Forum is a testament to the strength of women's togetherness from all over the world. That each of the 2,000 women found time and reason in going to a worldwide event indicated that women are continuously asserting our space in the realm of global politics and movements.

I was particularly interested in the movement of migrant women in the US and how they confront the various challenges against them in terms of their economic, political and socio-cultural rights. The session sponsored by the National Domestic Workers' Alliance in the US was sufficient and inspiring as it recounted the travails, successes, difficulties and tactics in migrant women organising. It is relevant for me and Gabriela Women's Party because there are thousands of Filipino migrant women workers as well in the US, who will bear the brunt of the global financial crisis and the schemes under the Global Forum on Migration and Development. The lessons imparted by the Domestic Workers' Alliance were valuable in terms of organising, campaigns of Filipino migrant women workers in the US and the engagement of the US government on the rights of migrant workers through legislation.

I think there were two main and very important point missed by the Forum. One was the articulation of situation and analysis of poor women, who comprises the majority of women worldwide. Especially at this time of the global financial crisis brought about by policies of neoliberal globalisation among others, the impact and the struggles of poor women should have been in fact at the forefront of the issues, as they are also the backbone of our movements. The other point was on the engagement of women in the realm of politics and governance at a time when women's movements are actually engaged in challenging the patriarchal and elitist political structures to advance women's rights, welfare, interests and voices. - **Cristina Palabay**



Mae-anne Llanza

Regional organisations are communications technology dependent. Work is being done mostly via the internet. But the questions, which were also raised at the Feminist Technology Exchange (FTX) were: how well do we know the technology we use? Is it feminist or at the very least, is it women-friendly? At the FTX there were more questions: Do we maximise Information Communications Technology (ICT) in our advocacy work? Where do communication rights fit into the women's movement? How can we reclaim technology for women's empowerment?

The FTX was developed in response to calls from feminists and women's rights movements for greater understanding of emerging technologies, their potential and impact on the rights and lives of women. Held at Monkey Valley, Cape Town, South Africa on 10-13 November 2008 with more than 80 participants, this groundbreaking capacity building event aimed to strengthen the skills and knowledge of women's rights organisations, advocates and feminists in the areas of communication rights and ICTs through five tracks:

Track 1: Digital Storytelling for Transformation: using multimedia technology (words, pictures, sound and video).

Track 2: Social networking technologies for activism: Blogs, social bookmarking sites, online communities, tagging among others.

Track 3: Wireless and mobile technologies for advocacy: Community wireless and mobile networks.

Track 4: Audio for action: Community radio and podcasting.

Track 5: Video for justice

Tara Chetty of Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) and I participated in the Video track. As APWLD and FWRM have partnered in creating the Tok Talk video building upon the intergenerational dialogues within the Asia-Pacific region, the video track was our default.

Participants in our track had varying levels of experiences, from "first time to hold a camera" to "it is their work" in their respective NGOs. Even our expectations were varied: from learning how to create videos, distribution, to the feminist technological implications, issues and challenges confronting ICTs.

Our facilitators Mien, Gabe Ivanov and Tessa Lewin were on hand all the time to help out. We stood in awe of the professional cameras, fiddled with the software programmes, and enviously worked on the hi-



tech laptops made available for the track. We worked with focus and determination.

The time, space, equipment and isolation provided by the FTX made us more focused on delivering the goods: a two to three-minute video. We were able to concentrate and build not just the Tok Talk video segment, but also tie it in to the whole concept of the intergenerational dialogue that FWRM and APWLD were to hold at the AWID Forum! At the end of the three days, all teams in our track were not only able to produce two-minute videos per team, but great two-minute videos!

Connection is the defining word for technology. The exchange brought back to me the power of networking – personally as well as virtually. The personal interaction and discussions with other women who share the same passion in ICTs made me feel connected.

The bigger morning plenaries linked us with what the other tracks were doing, and enabled a more macro discussion on information communications and the feminist movement.

Because we handle sensitive issues such as state oppression, globalisation, militarisation, fundamentalisms, women human rights defenders and because our

members are activists in countries that took it upon themselves to redefine activism to mean terrorism, we worry about security issues in the virtual world where communications technology is the pulse of information.

Frontline Defenders provides help regarding internet security issues, as shared by an activist from Lebanon. She also shared the experience of some groups who would have servers in three different countries just so when one is forced to shut down, the others could pick up and they will not be completely cut off. The bottomline is, it is difficult, especially in countries run by governments that want to control people's access to information, and have the money to buy the system to block it.

Despite progress made in the advancement of women's use of ICTs, there are still key issues confronting women. Given women's current socio-economic status and the patriarchal society we live in, issues such as access to technology within the public and the private spheres are still very much relevant especially to poor and marginalised women. Yet there are more issues to be threshed out aside from access (which will be another article in the next Forum News issue).

Particularly striking to me were the invaluable inputs of Srilatha

Batiwala of AWID, who stressed the "importance of communications technology in movement building, and the need for feminists to be involved not only in

strategically utilising the tools but also in shaping their development."

An important gap in the feminist movement was identified: for a group of feminists to be within not just the dialogues and discussions happening in the information society, but also within policy and decision-making that shapes it, to represent and push for women's issues and concerns affecting women's access, use, control and development of ICTs.

Having a feminist group to address issues in ICTs, to be at the forefront in the shaping of policies, safeguard our communication rights as women, and information is not monopolised by states or rich countries, would address the many questions within the information society in relation to the women's movement. This group can provide the feminist perspective within the information society and address issues such as the global digital divide (rich countries having access against poor countries not having ICT access), the political economy of ICTs and its impact on women, among others.

As the campaign of Association for Progressive Communications Women's Networking Support Programme (APC WNSP) goes, we need to Take Back the Tech. We need to claim our space within information society and ICTs.

Indeed, three days (half of which was dedicated to technical training) were not enough to tackle the issues.

A first of it's kind, we applaud the organisers of the FTX: APC WNSP and AWID, together with local partner, Women'sNet.



APW LD CALENDAR OF PROGRAMME /ACTIVITIES 2009

Date	Month	Place	Activity
	Jan	Brazil	World Social Forum
18-20	Jan	Bangkok, Thailand	3rd regional HRDs Forum and WHRD Forum with UNSR HRD
19-21	Jan	Singapore	Asia Pacific Judicial Reform Forum
19-23	Jan	Geneva	Durban Review intergovernmental working group meeting
29	Jan	Bangkok, Thailand	Interactive exchange on UNDRIP
	Feb		Asia Summit on Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change
2-13	Feb	Geneva	UN Human Rights Council: UPR - Malaysia
18-19	Feb	Bangkok, Thailand	Regional Women's Human Rights Consultation on the ASEAN Human Rights Body
20-22	Feb	Bangkok, Thailand	ASEAN People's Forum
	Feb	Malaysia	Musawah: Global Movement for Equality and Justice in the Muslim family
27 Feb to 1 Mar.	Thailand		14th ASEAN Summit
5-8	Mar	Chiang Mai	Women's Get Together
8	Mar		International Women's Day
2-13	Mar	New York	53rd session of CSW
9-11	Mar	Philippines	Aid Effectiveness
12-13	Mar	Philippines	Aid Effectiveness UNDP workshop
15-18	Mar	Hyderabad	Asia Skills Share Workshop on Women and Mining
16	Mar	Penang	Steering committee meeting of the Asian Rural Women's Coalition
18-19	Mar	Kuala Lumpur	CSO Write-shop on the TOR of ASEAN HRB
20	Mar	Kuala Lumpur	CSO Interface Meeting with the ASEAN HLP
23-24	Mar	Bangkok	Asia Pacific Climate Change Conference
28-30	Mar	Bangkok	SEA Consultation of Rural Women on the ASEAN HRB and ACWC
	April	Alaska	Global Summit on Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change
6-9 /	April	Geneva	Durban Review inter-governmental working group and prepcom meetings
15-17	April	Geneva	Durban Review Conference
20-24	April	Philippines	Exchange visit to the mining communities
	Apr	India	L&M- India research on internal migrant workers in Chennai, India
3	May	Bali, Indonesia	Asia Pacific People's Tribunal on ADB
18-29	May	New York	UNPFII 8th Session
17,20	May	Chiang Mai	P&M Meeting
18-19	May	Chiang Mai	Regional Council Plus
21-23	May	Malaysia	WPPP- Gender and Politics Training Level 2 meeting
2-18	Jun	Geneva	Human Rights Council - 11th session
5	Jun		World Environment Day
	Jun		International network on Women and Mining Conference
1-3	July	Nadi Fiji	2nd Annual Gender and Development Partners Meeting
4	July	Fiji	WPPP TF- WIP Caucus and Campaign Launch
7-9	July	Fiji	WPPP- Gender and Politics Pacific Subregion Training Level 1
10	July	Fiji	WPPP- Evaluation/ assessment of training
	July	Pacific	Pacific Donors Meeting
	Aug	Nepal	Third Indigenous Women's Conference
9	Aug		International Indigenous Peoples' Day
	Aug		L&M - Training on ILO mechanisms in SEZs
28	Aug		L&M- International Solidarity Day for Foreign Domestic Workers
7-11	Sept	Fiji/Pacific	Regional FLTP training
5-6	Oct	Geneva	Stakeholders' consultation with the UNSR on business
	Oct	Bangladesh	FFM on aqua culture
15	Oct		International Rural Women's Day
16	Oct		World Foodless Day
17	Oct		International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
	Nov	Thailand	Thai Association Annual Meeting
25 Nov to 10 Dec			16 Days of Activism to end Gender Violence
29	Nov		International Day for Women Human Rights Defenders
1	Dec		World AIDS Day
7-18	Dec	Copenhagen	UN Climate Change Conference COP 15
10	Dec		Human Rights Day
18	Dec		International Migrants Day

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6. Sita Poudel	RIW	Napal
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