

Women's Caucus Bulletin

December 2010

Welcome to the first edition of the Women's Caucus Bulletin!

This is a quarterly bulletin to keep you informed of all the national and regional activities and events that the Women's Caucus has been involved in.



Study tour to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

Washington, USA - 25 October – 3 November 2010

On the 25 October – 3 November, 2010, our Malaysian Women's Caucus member, Lee Shook Fong joined the delegation for NGOs working on ASEAN advocacy on a visit to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in Washington, USA. The study tour was facilitated by FORUM-ASIA and Freedom House.

In this tour, Lee Shook Fong had the opportunity to participate in the IACHR public hearings. During the session, participants observed the proceedings, met with commissioners, special rapporteurs of the commission as well as NGOs engaging with the commission. Meetings with state department officials, people from the US Senate, Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and US NGOs were also arranged.

The study visit provided an opportunity to develop awareness and understanding on the functionality and procedures of Human Rights Commissions, as well as to build advocacy skills which can be used to influence the ASEAN processes. These experiences will be documented and shared with other Women's Caucus members.

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"I gained extensive knowledge on the historical developments of IACHR, civil society engagement with IACHR and comparative analysis of IACHR and AICHR. It was inspiring to learn that the civil society played an instrumental role in the developmental process of the IACHR into a more effective mechanism in promoting and protecting human rights in the region. I intend to share what I have learned from the trip with Women's Caucus members at the next strategy meeting."

Lee Shook Fong, 2010

Active in the Region

**Meeting on Human Rights Implications
of the ASEAN Community Blueprints**
Bangkok, Thailand
27 October 2010

The Women's Caucus was invited by the Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism to participate in the discussion on Human Rights Implications of the ASEAN Community Blueprints, held in Bangkok on 27 October, 2010. The objective of the meeting was to discuss and analyse the three ASEAN community blueprints to concretely identify their impacts on the human rights of the peoples of ASEAN.

Wanee Bangprapha (WC Thailand) Braema Mathi (WC Singapore), Kate Lappin (APWLD) and Audrey Lee (IWR AW AP) represented the Women's Caucus. The participants were divided into the three ASEAN Community Blueprints depending on the relevance of their NGO or advocacy to the blueprint. This meeting enhanced the Women's Caucus members' analytical skills to examine the ASEAN community blueprints and to better equip members to meet with the ACWC or other ASEAN human rights bodies.

Following this meeting, there will be a dialogue session among ASEAN stakeholders including government and civil society, on how the identified human rights issues and concerns in the first discussion could be addressed vis-à-vis the interests of the ASEAN Member States.

**Women's Caucus Strategy
Meeting**
Hanoi, Vietnam
23rd September, 2010.

Participants at the meeting included 29 women's human rights activists from 11 countries in Southeast Asia, including Brunei Darussalam, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam.

This strategy meeting enabled the Women's Caucus to review their initiatives on ASEAN-related advocacy activities taken at the national and regional levels, to share lessons learned from those activities, and to discuss their priorities and future activities. The Women's Caucus also explored ways to consolidate their movement at the national and regional level as well as their internal functioning and mechanisms. They also discussed their priorities and activities on ASEAN for 2010–2012, including the immediate advocacy strategies to be applied at the APF VI.

At this meeting, the Women's Caucus work plan was developed for September 2011 – 2012.



Women's Caucus Scarves

Our Women's Caucus scarves were produced by a workers' collective, Dignity Returns, in Bangkok. The scarves were worn by our Women's Caucus members at the APF VI. The bright green colour of the scarves increased the visibility and profile of the Women's Caucus in the public arena which were missing in the past. The scarves also built solidarity within the Women's Caucus and with other individuals who support women's human rights. This was the first time that the caucus has displayed a unified visual identity, and was a step towards developing a group logo.



Recent Events

- Workshop on Developing National Human Rights Action Plans in ASEAN in Manila, 11-12 November, 2010. (organized by Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism). Hoy Sochivanny attended the meeting. The purpose of the workshop is to discuss the concept of National Human Rights Action Plans, including experiences on developing and implementing them. Invited participants include representatives of the AICHR, ASEAN Ministries of Foreign Affairs, government line agencies primarily handling human rights issues, NHRI and CSOs.
- Forum on ASEAN and Disabilities in Jakarta, 1- 3 December 2010 (organized by DPIAP and DPI Indonesia). Enita Supit from Kalyanamitra attended.



Pranom Somwong, Women's Caucus resource person from Thailand/Malaysia moderating the workshop on Labour and Migrant Workers'

Women's Caucus representatives from Thailand and the Philippines are discussing the recommendations in the Final Statement

ASEAN People's Forum (APF VI) Hanoi, Vietnam 24-26 September, 2010

The ASEAN People's Forum (APF) provides a venue for Women's Caucus' members to voice and incorporate women's human rights issues into the APF VI final statement of recommendations; to directly engage with ASEAN and strengthen the Women's Caucus' influence on the agenda of ASEAN human rights bodies; to develop advocacy skills of the Women's Caucus members and to network and exchange information with other civil society groups in the region. The APF VI in Hanoi was participated by 29 Women's Caucus members from 11 countries.

The Women's Caucus members are represented in the three APF committees including APF Steering Committee (represented by IWRAW); APF Drafting Committee (represented by Wanee Bangraphra (WC Thailand) and Jelen Paclarin (WC Philippines)); and APF Program Committee (represented by APWLD and Boutsady Khounnouvong, (WC Lao PDR)). As committee members, the Women's Caucus' representative members were able to discuss and influence the objectives, methodologies and activities of the Forum.

The Women's Caucus co-organised and co-hosted four APF VI thematic workshops:

- 1 ASEAN Free Trade Agreements and Regional Economic Integration and Cooperation: People's Perspectives and Alternatives**
- 2 Human Rights and Democracy: Achieving Human Rights and Democracy in ASEAN**
- 3 Labour and Migrant Workers' Rights: Decent Work for All Including Migrant Workers (Moderator: Pranom Somwong)**
- 4 Changing Roles of ASEAN Women: Challenges and Opportunities (Moderator: Ivy Josiah)**

Presentations given on behalf of the Women's Caucus included:

- Gender Perspectives on FTAs and Integration (Speaker: Teresita Vistro)
- Achieving Human Rights and Democracy in ASEAN (Speaker: Kamala Chandrakirana)
- Women's Leading Role in Southeast Asia: Issues and Challenges (Speaker: Eleanor Conda)
- Political Participation (Speaker: Pham Thi Hoai Giang)
- Violence Against Women (Speaker: Khloth Tong Hka)
- Economic Rights (Speaker: Rena Herdiyani)

Petition Letter to the Philippine President Benigno C. Aquino Jr.

Following the Women's Caucus Strategy Meeting and APF VI, members of the Women's Caucus in the Philippines drafted a petition letter to the Philippine President Benigno C. Aquino Jr. urging him to resume and expedite the process of the selection of Philippine representatives to the ACWC. The petition was signed by 41 organisations and 60 individuals (7 ASEAN countries included).

The Philippine Women's Caucus member, Joan May Salvador, met with the representatives from the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) to present the petition and also to discuss the Women's Caucus' observations regarding the implementation of CEDAW and the Philippine Magna Carta of Women. The presentation was made at the NGO-Government dialogue meeting to assess the human rights situation in the Philippines during the first 100 days of President Aquino. The participants of the event included the representatives of Philippine Commission on Human Rights and PCW, together with representatives from other government agencies.



Tay Tay, Women's Caucus representative from Burma is making an intervention at APF VI



Hoy Sochivanny, Women's Caucus representative from Cambodia is making an intervention at the APF



Usa Lerdsrisuntad, Women's Caucus representative from Thailand is presenting the recommendations



Wanee Thitiprasert, Women's Caucus representative from Thailand is presenting statement at the SAPA press conference.

Statement on the Occasion of the APF VI Towards Building a People-Centred ASEAN

Based on the inputs in the women's rights workshop, the Women's Caucus drafted an official statement calling for the realisation of women's human rights in the ASEAN processes. The recommendations were made to the ASEAN member states and government, ASEAN Secretariat and the ASEAN peoples. The statement was presented in front of more than 800 people by Usa Lerdsrisuntad, the Women's Caucus member from Thailand.

This statement brought out the visibility of the Women's Caucus and distinguishes its stance and intention to engage constructively with ASEAN. This statement can also be used as an advocacy tool at the national level. At least 300 copies of the statement were distributed at the forum.

Press Statement: ASEAN Women Unite to Push for Elimination of Poverty, Inequality, Poor Participation and all Forms of Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination

Following the APF VI, Women's Caucus produced a press statement calling ASEAN women to push for elimination of poverty, inequality, poor participation and all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination. The press statement was released to the international press covering ASEAN and the major Philippine newspapers (Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippine Star, Manila Standard Today, Manila Bulletin) and online editions of major television networks. The press release was also sent to Filipino reporters who work with international news agencies including the Associated Press, Reuters and AFP.

Press Statement on the First Anniversary of AICHR

On the 27 October 2010, Wanee Thitiprasert, Thai Women's Caucus member, participated in a SAPA Working Group on ASEAN press conference, issuing a statement titled "*AICHR and Other ASEAN Human Rights Mechanisms: Their Meaning for Women*" on behalf of the Women's Caucus. The statement called for ASEAN to adhere to the principles of Women's Caucus and its five priority concerns, to establish coherent monitoring systems, to eliminate violations against women and end impunity, to produce reports on laws and policies in relations to CEDAW and CRC, and to provide resources for AICHR and ACWC. The press statement was reported in various national and regional media organisations including Bangkok Post, Yahoo Southeast Asia News, The Nation, ASEAN Affairs, and Asian Tribune.

Advocacy efforts at the national level

- A meeting with ACWC representatives in Indonesia where the five core issues of the Women's Caucus were submitted. The Women's Caucus priority issues were accepted by the Indonesian representative as pressing issues for women in Southeast Asia.
- Women's Caucus Thailand members have worked with AICHR representatives, including joining the AICHR road show and collaborating for consultations on the ASEAN Human Rights Declarations, further highlighting the national and regional efforts of the Women's Caucus.
- A meeting with ASEAN representatives, officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and ACWC representatives in Lao PDR. ACWC ToR and plan were presented by ACWC at this meeting

Upcoming Activities

→ The Expert Group Meeting on Effective Alignment among Human Rights Mechanisms in Jakarta, 6-7 December 2010 (organized by Komnas Perempuan). Kamala Chandrakirana (Nana), Eleanor Conda and Dalina Prasertsri (APWLD) will attend.

→ National Workshop: Developing an NGO Advocacy Strategy to Promote and Protect the human's right by using ASEAN human right mechanism, 8 – 10 December, 2010 (organized by Kalyanamitra, Indonesia's NGO Coalition for International Human Rights Advocacy (HRWG), and Pattiyo). Rena Herdiyani (WC Indonesia) and Dalina Prasertsri (APWLD) will present on the advocacy on women's issues and ASEAN advocacy activities of the Women's Caucus.

→ The Expert Meeting on ASEAN Human Rights Declaration in Bali, 11-13 December 2010 (organised by Forum Asia). Eleanor Conda will represent the Women's Caucus.

→ Country reporting on the existing national mechanisms (January 2011)

→ Mapping of expertise among Women's Caucus members (January 2011)

→ National consultations on advocacy and capacity building strategies (January to March 2011)

→ Workshop on the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (February or March 2011)

For more information on these and other activities planned by the Secretariat and country members, contact Dalina, dalina@apwld.org

We encourage you to contribute to this bulletin with stories and photos about national level activities. Contribute and give feedback by contacting Huong, huong@apwld.org

On behalf of the team at APWLD and IWRAW AP, we would like to thank our members for all their hard work and contributions and congratulate them on their achievements this year.

Happy holidays from the Secretariat!

About the SEA Women's Caucus on ASEAN

The Women's Caucus represents an extensive network of women's human rights groups from 11 different countries in Southeast Asia.

Since 2008 we have been bringing together women from the Southeast Asia region and providing a platform for them to share information, build expertise, support collective advocacy and provide a strong, coherent voice to women.

The Women's Caucus strategically and positively engages with ASEAN to influence its processes, decisions, instruments, policies and structures in order to achieve the full realisation of women's human rights in Southeast Asia. The Women's Caucus also collaborates with the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and civil society networks.

The Women's Caucus has identified 5 key priority issues for women in Southeast Asia including, migration, violence against women, economic rights, political participation and discrimination in laws, policies and practices.



Info-video on ASEAN

The Malaysian members of the Women's Caucus produced an English-language animation info-video on ASEAN. The 5 minute clip gives an overview of the ASEAN human rights bodies (ACWC, AICHR and ACMW). The clip can be viewed on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKe8xuOT9jw>

The clip has been used as a tool to raise awareness and strengthen NGO understanding of the ASEAN human rights bodies and the role of Women's Caucus. It was shown at the September Strategy Meeting and at various NGO consultations on ASEAN. The video has received positive responses from other Women's Caucus members and NGO partners, a number of whom have requested copies and suggested that the video be translated into their national languages. APWLD and Malaysian Women's Caucus members are examining options for translating the video into Southeast Asian national languages.

SEA Women's Caucus on ASEAN

Co convened by APWLD and IWRAW

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