

# Women's Caucus Bulletin

August 2011

Welcome to the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

Greetings from APWLD and IRAW Asia Pacific!



4<sup>th</sup> Women's Caucus Strategy Meeting

## 4<sup>th</sup> Women's Caucus Strategy Meeting Jakarta, Indonesia - 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2011

Participants at the meeting included 27 women's human rights activists from 10 countries, including Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam.

The meeting enabled the Women's Caucus to:

- Share their initiatives on ASEAN-related activities taken at the national and regional levels;
- Develop immediate plans and strategies to maximize the engagement at the ASEAN People's Forum 7;
- Discuss their advocacy plan for the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration; and
- Review their internal structure and mechanisms.

### This issue

- 4<sup>th</sup> Women's Caucus Strategy Meeting
- ASEAN People's Forum 7
- Women's Caucus lobbies for the nomination of gender expert, Shanti Dairiam, to AICHR's Drafting Group on the AHRD
- ACWC Indonesian Representatives meet with CSOs
- AICHR Thai Representative meets with CSOs
- Second Meeting of the ACWC
- Women's Caucus' National Workshop on Advocacy Skills and Developing Strategies conducted in eight countries
- Women's Caucus Regional Workshop on Influencing the ASEAN Declaration on Human Rights
- Farewell Dalina!
- Introducing our new ASEAN Programme Officer, Nina Somera

The Women's Caucus Coordinating Team, consisting of focal points in the current, previous and next chair countries of ASEAN, was also formed. This year, our members, Le Thi Quy (Vietnam), Rena Herdiyani (Indonesia), Hoy Sochivanny (Cambodia) make up the Women's Caucus Coordinating Team.

## ASEAN People's Forum 7 - Jakarta, Indonesia, 3 – 5 May 2011

The ASEAN People's Forum (APF) is a people-to-people platform for networking and building dialogue across a wide range of issues. It is the biggest gathering event of civil society in ASEAN.

The Women's Caucus has been engaging with the APF since 2007 to:

- Further the agenda of women's human rights in Southeast Asia;
- Promote the Women's Caucus' principles and five priority issues;
- Strengthen alliance between women's groups and other CSO networks; and
- To increase recognition of women as an agency of change.

The 2011 APF (APF7) was held in Jakarta, Indonesia on 3-5 May 2011. 28 Women's Caucus members from 11 countries attended and participated in the event.

### Women's Caucus' Contribution and Participation in the APF7

#### Plenary Sessions



*Kamala Chandrakirana (Indonesia) speaks at the "Alternative Solutions for a People-Centered ASEAN in a Global Community" panel*

On the first day of the APF, Kamala Chandrakirana (Indonesia) spoke on the "Alternative Solutions for a People-Centered ASEAN in a Global Community". Kamala was the only woman speaker on the panel.

Our youngest member of the Women's Caucus, Siti Nadzirah Samsudin (Singapore) made the following intervention, to raise the issue of limited space for women's participation:

*"Earlier, one of the distinguished speakers stated that 'there is a 'delay in danger', I agree with that statement especially when I see that there is only one woman speaker among the four men at the panel. I hope that maybe in the next ACSC/APF, there would be more women speaking. There continues to be limited space for women to participate in the decision making processes, even under this so-called people-centered ASEAN. But from the perspectives of the CSOs, can you please tell us how we can further increase women's spaces for ASEAN?"*



*Joan May Salvador (Philippines), speaks about "Women's leadership"*

#### Preparatory Meetings for the APF7

In the lead up to the APF7, the Women's Caucus participated in three preparatory meetings to ensure that women's human rights concerns were raised and included throughout the processes and in the event itself. At the preparatory meetings, the Women's Caucus' representatives were able to discuss and influence the objectives, methodologies and activities of the APF and also called for gender balance in the selection process of the interface delegates.

The Women's Caucus members are represented in four APF committees including the:

- APF Organising Committee, represented by Rena Herdiyani (Indonesia),
- APF Interface Committee, represented by Atashendartini Habsjah (Indonesia) and Suntaree Sueking (Thailand),
- APF Programme Committee, represented by Cheery Zahau (Burma), and
- APF Drafting Committee, represented by Jelen Paclarin (Philippines).

The statement led to loud applause by participants in the auditorium who recognised or came to recognise the importance in providing equal space for women in the ASEAN processes.



*Workshop on Armed Conflict and Militarisation: Looking into the Situation of Women*

## Thematic Workshops at APF 7

The Women's Caucus co-organised the following three women-focused thematic workshops :

1. Armed Conflict and Militarization: Looking into the Situation of Women
2. Women's Rights and Gender Equality: Working Towards a Gender Just ASEAN Community
3. ASEAN Women Adapt to Rapidly Changing Climate Surroundings

The presentations given on behalf of the Women's Caucus included:

- **Burmese women in armed conflict situation (Speaker: Khin San Htwe)**
- **Women's organisations' experience with women victims of 2006 armed conflict in Timor Leste (Speaker: Teresa Verdial De Araujo)**
- **Reflection on the commitment of ASEAN to fulfil women's human rights (Speaker: Kamala Chandrakirana)**
- **Protection of women's human rights defenders (Speaker: Pranom Somwong) Women's health and MDGs in ASEAN (Speaker: Atashendartini Habsjah)**
- **Women's leadership (Speaker: Joan May Salvador)**
- **General women's role and climate change and why women are the most vulnerable victims (Speaker: Nguyen Thi Phuong Nga)**

The Women's Caucus also actively contributed to other workshops as participants to influence the discussion to include concerns on women's human rights. The Women's Caucus' active participation in the throughout the APF7 ensured that women's human rights issues were raised and inputted into the recommendations submitted to the APF Drafting Committee.

## Drafting of the APF Final Statement

The Women's Caucus also actively engaged and made necessary interventions during the drafting process of the APF Final Statement to ASEAN and ASEAN member states. A number series of recommendations devoted to women's issues were included in the APF Final Statement to ASEAN and ASEAN member states.

## Women's Caucus lobbies for the nomination of gender expert, Shanti Dairiam, to AICHR's Drafting Group on the AHRD

**1 June, 2011**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2011, the Women's Caucus made a submission to AICHR to nominate gender expert, Shanti Dairiam to the AICHR's Drafting Group on the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD).

Ms Shanti Dairiam is a founding member and former Executive Director of Malaysia-based International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP) Asia Pacific. She has had extensive experience in managing women's rights programmes and has been involved in building capacity for women's rights advocacy for over 20 years, both with Malaysian organisations and also at the regional and international levels. As CEDAW Committee Member from 2004 – 2008, Ms Dairiam is well versed in the development and application of international human rights norms and principles as well as the content of the instruments. Ms Dairiam has been acting as a consultant to governments, United Nations Agencies and other international institutions, as a CEDAW and gender expert for the last 10 years. As an activist in women's human rights since the 1980's, she has been part of the civil society engagement in the development of women's human rights norms and monitoring of state implementation of treaty standards.

The Women's Caucus also called for women's full representation and participation in the drafting process of the AHRD to ensure that women's human rights principles, particularly the principles of substantive equality and non-discrimination, are integrated into the AHRD.



Photos left to right: Full house for the Women's Rights and Gender Equality workshop / Nguyen Thi Phuong Nga (Vietnam), speaks about Women and Climate Change / Pranom Somwong (Thailand/Malaysia) speaks about women migrant workers in ASEAN countries

### Side Event – People's Speak Out for the Rights of Migrants in ASEAN

The Women's Caucus also contributed to the People's Speak Out for the Rights of Migrants in ASEAN, a parallel event for grassroots organisation to voice concern on the condition of migrant workers, particularly women migrant workers. Pranom Somwong (Malaysia/Thailand) represented the Women's Caucus and spoke on the problems faced by women migrant workers and their exploitation.

Recommendations to ASEAN to protect and promote the rights of women migrant workers were also distributed during the event.

### Media at APF 7

The Women's Caucus Media Team made up of Rena Herdiyani (Indonesia), Usa Lerdsrisuntad (Thailand), Joan May Salvador (Philippines), Aum Borany (Cambodia), Alzira Reis (Timor Leste), Nazreen Nizam (Malaysia) and Siti Nadzirah Samsidin (Singapore) worked hard to develop the talking points for discussion and intervention. The Women's Caucus Media Team also drafted the Women's Caucus' press statement and final statement which was sent to the APF Media Committee and distributed to more than 500 participants at the APF event.

Pranom Somwong (Malaysia/Thailand) and Rena Herdiyani (Indonesia) also acted as spokespersons on behalf of the Women's Caucus, giving interviews to Republika and Antara, the Indonesian news agencies on the issues of women in Southeast Asia and the work of the Women's Caucus.

Teresa Verdial De Araujo (Timor Leste) and Hoy Sochivanny (Cambodia) also gave interviews with Voice TV (Thai media) to highlight the issues faced by women and calling on ASEAN to take action.

### Interface Meeting with ASEAN Leaders

The Women's Caucus also developed a statement of recommendations on the health issues of women in the region which was hand delivered to the interface delegates to influence their dialogue with ASEAN leaders. The statement was also delivered to the APF Drafting Committee which resulted in the Women's Caucus' recommendations being included in the "Statement of Representatives of 2011 ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC) / ASEAN People's Forum (APF) to the Informal Meeting Between ASEAN Leaders and Civil Society".



Teresa Verdial De Araujo (Timor Leste) and Hoy Sochivanny (Cambodia) also gave interviews with Voice TV



Group photo of the Southeast Women's Caucus on ASEAN at the ASEAN People's Forum 7

## Second Meeting of the ACWC 15 – 16 June, 2011 - Jakarta, Indonesia

The ACWC held their second meeting on the 15 – 16 June 2011 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Prior to the meeting, the Women's Caucus submitted the *Women's Caucus Statement on the Occasion of the Second Meeting of the ACWC* and the *Women's Caucus Briefing Paper on the 5 Priority Issues*.

The purpose of the Statement was to reiterate the issues raised during the Women's Caucus' meeting with the ACWC on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2011. The Statement called on the ACWC to:

- To ensure meaningful and substantive representation of women in all processes of ACWC and other ASEAN human rights mechanisms.
  - To ensure CSOs' participation, especially the women's groups, to be an institutionalised process, including it being an agenda item of all ACWC formal meetings. The participation of CSOs should be a part of all formal processes of ACWC and not left to the discretion of the ACWC. This includes a specific affirmation in the Rules of Procedures of ACWC.
  - To make sure the engagement of ACWC is with all relevant CSOs and not limited to just those accredited and listed under Annex 2 of the ASEAN Charter.
  - To consider the five Women's Caucus priority issues as thematic issues of ACWC's Work Plan
- (set out in Women's Caucus(women and migration, violence against women, economic rights, women's political participations, discriminatory laws, policies, and practices).
- Conduct regular consultation and co-operation between ACWC and other human rights mechanisms, ASEAN sectoral bodies, coordinating councils as well as other ASEAN entities. The role of ACWC shall be as an expert on the human rights of women and children.
  - To seek possibilities in engaging with the drafting process of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD), whether by providing direct contribution and inputs to the AHRD Drafting Group or through consistent follow-up with AICHR on the development of the draft.

## ACWC Indonesian Representatives meet with CSOs

6 June, 2011 - Jakarta, Indonesia

On the 6 June 2011, the Indonesian Representatives to the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Women and Children (ACWC), Ms Rita Kolibonso and Mr Taufan Damanik, met with CSOs at the Office of Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia. Rena Herdiyani (Indonesia) attended the meeting on behalf of the Women's Caucus. During the meeting, the participants discussed the:

- Alignment of the ACWC and AICHR
- Rules of Procedure of the ACWC
- Five year work plan of the ACWC
- Seed funding from ASEAN for the ACWC
- Annual report of the ACWC to the AMMSWD
- The US Department's invitation for a study tour for the ACWC
- The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Institute for International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights (4-16 July 2011 in Singapore and Cambodia)
- Consultation on Violence Against Women with the UN SR on Violence Against Women and Special Representative to the UN SG on Violence Against Children.

## Women's Caucus Briefing Paper on the 5 Priority Issues

The Briefing Paper is a comprehensive review of the Women's Caucus five priority issues, namely:

1. Women and Migration;
2. Violence Against Women;
3. Economic Rights
4. Women's Political Participation; and
5. Discriminatory Laws, Policies and Practices

The Women's Caucus urged the ACWC and those involved to tackle these issues and develop further action to realise a concrete improvement in the lives of women across the Southeast Asia region.

The ACWC has yet to finalise its Five-Year Work Plan, but has identified the following thematic areas to prioritise its focus and attention on to address the urgent regional issues concerning the lives of women and children in the region.

The thematic areas concerning women's rights include:

- Elimination of violence against women,
- Multiple forms of discrimination against vulnerable women,
- Gender-equality and quality education,
- Trafficking in women,
- Early-age marriage
- Reproductive health,
- Women's participation in politics and decision making,
- Governance and democracy,
- Women living with and affected by HIV and AIDS,
- Social impact of climate change on women,
- Women in natural disasters,
- Strengthening economic rights of women with regard to feminization of poverty,
- Women's rights to land and property,
- Women and discrimination based on nationality and citizenship, and
- Administrative and policy measures on family matters.

The thematic areas concerning children's rights are:

- Elimination of violence against children,
- Multiple forms of discrimination against vulnerable children, including children in need of special protection
- The right to quality education, including Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD),
- Trafficking in children,
- Adolescent physical and mental health,
- Children living with and affected by HIV and AIDS,
- Children affected by war or armed conflict and in situation of disasters,
- The social impact of climate change on children, and
- The right of children to participate in all affairs that affect them.



*Cambodia national consultation on "Women and Children Rights in ASEAN," 28-29 April, 2011, Phnom Penh*

### Women's Caucus' National Workshop on Advocacy Skills and Developing Strategies conducted in eight countries

The Women's Caucus National Workshops on Advocacy Skills and Developing Strategies aimed to build the capacity of the Women's Caucus to engage with ASEAN to prioritise women's human rights issues and concerns. To date, eight workshops have successfully been conducted in:

- Burma: 18 – 20 April, 2011
- Cambodia: 28 – 29 April, 2011
- Indonesia: 31 May – 1 June, 2011
- Lao PDR: 14 – 18 March, 2011
- Malaysia: 9 April, 2011
- Thailand: 27 – 28 April, 2011
- Timor-Leste: 14 – 15 April, 2011
- Vietnam: 14 – 15 April, 2011

The workshop provided a space for women's groups to come together to strengthen their knowledge and advocacy skills to enhance meaningful and constructive engagement with ASEAN. The workshops for Brunei Darussalam, the Philippines and Singapore will be conducted later this year.

### AICHR Thai Representative meets with CSOs

20 June, 2011 - Bangkok, Thailand

On the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2011, Dr. Sriprapha Petchramesree, the Thai representative to AICHR, in collaboration with the ASEAN Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, held a consultative meeting with CSOs. Usa Lerdsrisuntad (Thailand) and Naw Htoo Paw (Burma) attended on behalf of the Women's Caucus.



## Farewell Dalina!



### Message from Dalina:

*"During my time working with the Women's Caucus, I have learned a great deal about the women's movement and the struggle of the people, women in particular, in our region. These knowledge and experiences are so invaluable for me because it is beyond what I could learn from any classrooms and textbooks.*

*I thank you for letting me be part of this amazing movement that we are, all together, carefully building. It was because of your kind support and encouragement, I was able to perform my duties in facilitating the activities of the Women's Caucus. If I may, I hope to continue my engagement with the movement from my new destination."*

Sadly, we had to farewell the lovely and ever-patient Dalina in June when she moved back to her home in Bangkok. During her time in Chiang Mai, she Dalina cycled into the office every morning and always appeared fresh, calm and happy despite managing the sometimes chaotic tuk tuks, pot holes and unpredictable weather. In the same way she somehow always stayed fresh, calm and happy when

managing the sometimes chaotic and unpredictable ASEAN and the potholes that have faced our movement to promote women's rights through ASEAN.

We would like to thank Dalina for all her hard work and commitment during her time with the Women's Caucus and wish her all the best with her next endeavour. We hope she will stay connected to the movement where she can continue to contribute and make us smile.

For more information on events and other activities planned by the Women's Caucus or to contribute to this bulletin with stories and photos, please contact Nina ([nina@apwld.org](mailto:nina@apwld.org)) and Huong ([huong@apwld.org](mailto:huong@apwld.org)).

### 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.

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