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Our Voices Count! Global South communities hold the IMF-WB to account

BANGKOK, October 20, 2026 – Women’s movement leaders and frontline environmental and land defenders, from across the Global South gathered in Bangkok, Thailand for a tribunal to present community testimonies exposing harms caused by projects and policies carried out in the name of ‘development’, particularly those supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). They also presented community-led solutions for just transition.

The ***Our Voices Count! A Counterdocket***, a convening that centred collective struggle and solutions challenging extractive systems and demanding greater accountability from the IMF-World Bank, successfully concluded on October 15.

Co-organised by a network of more than 50 organisations and led by JASS (Just Associates), the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), the International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net), and the International Accountability Project (IAP), the Counterdocket brought together nearly 400 women from over 30 countries from across Asia and the Pacific, Africa and Latin America. Communities shared powerful and painful accounts of losing their lands and homes, facing livelihood insecurity and witnessing Indigenous practices being erased – the very opposite of what these projects claim to protect and provide.

“The Counterdocket’s jurisdiction is not grounded in formal legal authority, but on the right of affected communities to document, testify, question, and demand accountability for decisions that shape their lives,” said Zeph Repollo, Southeast Asia Regional Director at JASS , a feminist movement-building organisation.

The Counterdocket was organised around five interconnected themes examining how economic policies, development projects, and global power structures shape the lives of communities across the Global South.

The testimonies presented at the tribunal covered a range of projects and issues spanned across South Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Counterdocket has launched a [microsite](#) of the full testimonies, and welcomed the community to share their stories.

Together, these cases illustrated recurring struggles across different regions and contexts, highlighting the impacts of large-scale infrastructure, energy, and industrial development projects on communities, their livelihoods and their environments.

“The Counterdocket is not about saying no to development, but about saying what we want. We want fairness and transparency. We want gender equality and we want a seat at the table. We are not against technology or the digital economy, but we want them to work for the people. We are not just people riding motorbikes; we are also mothers, daughters and members of our communities,” said Tannaree Jaruprasit of the Southern Riders Association (SRA) in Thailand.

Women’s lived experiences provided evidence of harm, revealed what communities need and want and put forward community-centred solutions as a model for genuine development. The testimony-holders called the IMF-WB to recognise women’s knowledge and leadership and ensure their meaningful participation in decision-making – not merely consultation after decisions have already been made.

Joan Carling, Executive Director of Indigenous Peoples Rights International shared that women are at the center of the environmental and indigenous movements because of their experiences of discrimination, abuse and being unheard.

“They have nothing to lose by asserting and making their voices heard. They were already in the worst state you can ever imagine. The only way is to resist and fight. Also, for Indigenous People, that’s the only way,” Carling reflected.

The Counterdocket concluded with a panel examining recurring patterns of harm experienced by communities across countries and regions, as well as the need for collective solutions.

“Drawing on testimonies and evidence presented, the Tribunal finds that the World Bank and IMF have perpetuated colonial structures and contributed to widespread harms against communities, human rights, and nature, violating its own safeguards and disregarding demands for justice and reparations. It recommends that the World Bank Group suspend support for the projects presented, provide community-defined remedy and reparations to all affected communities, respect Indigenous Peoples’ right to free, prior, and informed consent and self-determination, and immediately withdraw from the Board of Peace.” - Felipe Mesel, ESCR-Net Strategic Litigation Coordinator, Panel of the Tribunal.

The final verdict issued by women and communities demand an end to financing exploitative projects and false climate solutions, reparations, transparency, and accountability, with grassroots women at the centre of decision-making. They called for Palestinian-led reconstruction grounded in the right of return and women's power and demanded the closure of the IMF and World Bank if they refused to meet these demands.

Ibrahim Pam, Chairperson of the World Bank Group's Inspection Panel and Acting Director-General of the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman of the International Finance Corporation, attended the Counterdocket, heard the community verdict and responded that voices of the affected communities *"should be brought into the boardrooms"*. He also acknowledged that the *"mandates of the accountability mechanisms are limited to fact-finding and facilitating access to remedy"*.

Meanwhile, APWLD Regional Coordinator Joms Salvador emphasised that the movements' struggle continues and that collective action and resistance are essential to reclaiming power and achieving people-centred change and development.

"They have their courts, their ratings agencies and their boardrooms. We have our collective memory, our stubborn resistance and our shared vision of Development Justice—one that redistributes wealth, power, and resources into the hands of the people." Joms underscored.

The message from women across the Global South was clear:

"Our lands and communities are not collateral for debt. Our territories are not assets to be liquidated. Our labor is not disposable. Our lives are not externalities."

The Counterdocket closed with a community verdict and a resolute call for justice and systemic change:

"The IMF and World Bank are GUILTY of development without justice. We demand reparation, restitution and systematic change. Women and peoples of the world must reclaim power to shape our own futures. Where the imperialist road ends, the paths to liberation, self-determination and justice must begin!"

For further information about the Counterdocket, please contact

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For testimonies, please visit <https://www.ourvoicescount.org/interactive-map>

About the organisers:

- JASS (Just Associates), founded in 2002, is a global feminist movement-strengthening organisation dedicated to building women's voice, visibility, leadership, organising capacity, and collective power for a just, liberated, and sustainable world for all.
- The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) is a feminist network of over 300 organisations and activists across 32 countries and territories in Asia and the Pacific. It works to challenge and transform laws and systems, strengthen feminist movements, and advance women's human rights, Development Justice.
- International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net): The network strengthens the realisation of all human rights — with a particular focus on economic, social, and cultural rights—by advancing advocacy, solidarity, and accountability.
- International Accountability Project (IAP): They strengthen local advocacy by supporting communities to access, exchange, and use information to shape development that affects their lives.

