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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTION WATCH ASIA PACIFIC ANNUAL REPORT

REPORT OF A CONVENTION IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PROJECT

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

JANUARY – DECEMBER 1997

Implemented by

THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTION WATCH – ASIA PACIFIC

CONTENTS					
	NTRODUCTION	Page 4			
ר וו	Page DDUCTION 4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME 4 EMENTATION 4 EMENTATION 4 CIAL INVESTIGATION VISITS AND NETWORKING Social investigation visits to China and Vietnam Participation as resource persons in workshops, conferences and expert group meeting 6 Attendance at other meetings 12 VELOPING SKILLS IN RIGHTS AWARENESS RAISING AND PCITY FOR THE DOMESTIC APPLICATION OF HUMAN HTS NORMS 13 ORIENTATON AND TRAINING 13 (i) Orientations 13 a. Workshop on Muslim Women's Rights: Situation of Women's Rights and the Convention, Bangladesh 15 c. Women's Rights and Human Rights: Training to Address Violations of Women in situations of Armed Conflicts, India 15 d. Training of NGOs on monitoring the women's convention: Cairo, Egypt 16 e. Workshop on the women's convention for members of the women lawyers network in Tamil Nadu, India 17 Review of Training Materials 18 Technical Assistance to the Government of Bangladesh to write their periodic report to CEDAW utilising input of NGOS 21 Workshop the fulfilment of state obligation to women's equality: South East Asia sub-regional programme 21				
	IMPLEMENTATION	4			
1.	(ii) Participation as resource persons in workshops, conferences and expert group meeting	6			
2.	DEVELOPING SKILLS IN RIGHTS AWARENESS RAISING AND CAPCITY FOR THE DOMESTIC APPLICATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS NORMS				
	 Women within a Minority Community, India b. Women's Rights and the Convention, Bangladesh c. Women's Rights and Human Rights: Training to Address Violations of Women in situations of Armed Conflicts, India d. Training of NGOs on monitoring the women's convention: Cairo, Egypt e. Workshop on the women's convention for members of 	13 14 15 15 16			
	 2.2 Review of Training Materials 2.3 Technical Assistance to the Government of Malaysia on the Writing of the CEDAW Report 2.4 Report on the processes used by the Government of Bangladesh to write their periodic report to CEDAW utilising input of NGOs 2.5 Monitoring the fulfilment of state obligation to women's equality: 	20			
3.	South East Asia sub-regional programme CONTRIBUTE TO THE STRENGTHENING OF THE CONVENTION Supporting advocacy for the adoption of an optional Protocol to the Convention	21 26			

4.	CONTRIBUTE TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF CEDAW'S EFFECTIVENESS			
	<i>(i)</i> Assistance to Indonesia Women's groups in the preparation of the Shadow Report	26		
	(ii) From Global to Local: A convention monitoring and implementation project	26		
5.	PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGION – SPECIFIC GENDER – SENSITIVE HUMAN RIGHTS SCHOLARSHIP STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTING TOOLS Publication on the Domestic Application of Human Rights Norms: Relevant Issues for the Asia Pacific Region	30		
6.	STRENGTHEN IWRAW ASIA PACIFIC'S INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITY FOR GREATER EFFICIENCY IN AND SUSTAINABILITY OF ITS WORK	30		
IV I	IV EVALUATION			

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I INTRODUCTION

The programme of IWRAW Asia Pacific started in 1993 and the period of time between 1993 – 1996 can be considered as the first phase of the programme with 1997 being the start of the second phase.

In the first phase IWRAW Asia Pacific focused on strengthening national groups and alliances that could sustain Convention-related work in their countries; the most significant contribution that IWRAW Asia Pacific made in this regard was to create clarity of concepts pertaining to women's rights and equality and to inspire women's groups in the region to locate their advocacy within a rights framework.

In the next phase, 1997 onwards, IWRAW Asia Pacific will continue to work toward its long-term goal of bringing about the domestic application of international human rights norms for women. However, IWRAW Asia Pacific has undertaken to sharpen its approaches for greater impact and effectiveness.

II THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

The long-term goal of the programme is the enhancement of the domestic application of international human rights norms in relation to women's rights.

Specific Objectives of the Programme

The specific objectives of the programme are:

- 1. To help develop skills in rights awareness raising and to build capacity for the domestic application and use in local activism of the Convention and other human rights instruments.
- 2. To contribute to the strengthening of the Convention
- 3. To contribute to the enhancement of CEDAW's effectiveness
- 4. To promote the development of region-specific gender-sensitive human rights scholarship strategies and implementation tools.
- 5. To strengthen IWRAW Asia Pacific's institutional capability for greater efficiency in and sustainability of its work.

III IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the second phase has some specific features. At the substantive level the programme has tried to be more strategic and sharpen its approaches by recognising the need to monitor systematically, State compliance with its obligation under the Convention.

One of the first steps in this direction has been to create clarity regarding the principle of "State Obligation". So among other things the programme has moved towards capacity building of women's groups enabling them to monitor the fulfilment

of governments' obligations to women's equality and to sharpen women's capacity to claim their rights. This is being done through establishing monitoring networks and developing the frameworks for monitoring. A more strategic focus is also being created by enabling women from reporting countries to directly observe the review of their governments' reports by the Committee. These developments have served to add a new dimension to capacity building at the national level and at the same time linked local activism to regional and international advocacy creating a synergy between the two levels.

In line with its plan for the second phase, IWRAW Asia Pacific has started to address a more defined segmentation of the pertinent target sectors and groups and clearly identified levels at which Convention-related activities should be directed, particularly the institution's awareness-raising and capacity-building efforts. In the past, orientations and training had been limited to women's groups and lawyers generally. In 1997 the programme conducted workshops for two specific groups of women, Minority Muslim Women and Women in Situations of Armed Conflict. This has enhanced IWRAW Asia Pacific's own capability to define the issues of rights more specifically to the context of the needs of these special groups. In 1997 IWRAW Asia Pacific has also started work with the Government.

In terms of geographical coverage the program has been broadened to accommodate the interest and needs of women's from a larger group of countries in the region. The countries involved fall into 2 categories according to the extent of work IWRAW Asia Pacific has done so far. These are (a) those in which IWRAW Asia Pacific has done substantive work in the past namely, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Philippines, (b) countries in which it had identified links with some groups or individuals but in which it had not undertaken any substantive activity to date. This refers to countries like China, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore and Mongolia. Currently, IWRAW Asia Pacific has a programme in 13 countries of Asia.

The fourth feature is institutional strengthening;

IMPLEMENTATION ACCORDING TO PLAN

Specific activities were planned for 1997 to achieve the stated objectives of IWRAW Asia Pacific. It was not possible to raise funds for all the activities. However all activities for which funds were raised were implemented. The only exception to this was a meeting in Cambodia, which could not be held because of the political situation there. This activity has been postponed to 1998 and will be held in September of that year.

Details of implementation.

1. SOCIAL INVESTIGATION VISITS AND NETWORKING

(i) Social investigation visits to China and Vietnam

Two seven-day social investigation visits were undertaken in 1997. one was to china on 22-29 July 1997 and the other was to Vietnam on 28 September – 4 October 1997.

With the expansion of the geographical scope of IWRAW Asia Pacific's programme, groundwork will have to be made in additional countries before work is done there. There is a need to understand the particularities of the human rights contexts of

women's lives as well as the current work of the NGOs in the countries concerned. The outputs of these visits are a written report and a collection of relevant literature. The reports written about the countries concerned surfaces the socio economic and political situations of the country, the priorities for change to advance women's rights, the nature and scope of activism that needs to be undertaken and the barriers to women's human rights activism. The reports also contain recommendations for the work IWRAW Asia Pacific needs to undertake and provides a list of organisations that IWRAW Asia Pacific can network and collaborate with. (Refer to annex 1 for objectives and guidelines for the Social Investigation Visit)

(ii) Participation as resource persons in workshops, conferences and expert group meeting

IWRAW Asia Pacific served as resource person at several meeting and conferences. This provided an opportunity to share the experiences of IWRAW Asia Pacific as well as to disseminate the understanding and definitions and concepts regarding women's rights elaborated through the work of IWRAW Asia Pacific. They also provided an opportunity to make contact with and impress donors and other relevant institutions.

a. The First Conference on Post Beijing Review and action: National Alliance of Women, (NAWO) India

IWRAW Asia Pacific participated in a three-day national conference on Post Beijing Review and action in New Delhi India on 17-19 February 1997. the aim of the conference was to take stock of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for action (PFA) and to develop a plan of action to further the Government of India's commitments vis a vis the Beijing PFA. The plan of action touched on the following issues: Political Participation of Women, Peace Initiative, Alternative Development, Prohibition of Alcohol, Women's Access to Resources, Violence against Women and State Commissions for Women. Four hundred women from all over India participated in the conference/

IWRAW Asia Pacific was invited to make a presentation on the topic "**Women's rights are Human Rights**". It was a good opportunity to introduce a rights concept into the discussion of the national conference and to raise awareness of the significance of the Women's Convention as a tool for the actualisation of women's rights. The conference also presented the opportunity for networking. Links have been made with NAWO which is a coalition of women's groups formed Post Beijing to follow on the Fourth World Conference on Women. Under the aegis of NAWO a one-day orientation was carried out in Bangalore, India and commitments obtained from NAWO to participate in a South Asian sub regional monitoring programme¹ to be started in 1998. The contacts established at this conference led to collaboration on a meeting on the topic "Women's rights are Human Rights" with reference to the rights of women in situations of armed conflict, Assam, India later in the year.

b. First Regional study Session on Human Rights

IWRAW Asia Pacific conducted a one-day session on **Strengthening Knowledge of the Women's Convention and Developing Skills in its Application.** This session was part of a 14-day regional training on Strengthening Knowledge and Skills Essential for Human Rights Work organised for human rights workers by FORUM-

¹ Refer to a similar programme started for South East Asia called <u>Facilitating the Fulfillment of State</u> <u>Obligation to Women's Equality on page????</u>

ASIA. The training was held in Bangkok. Around 25 human rights workers from Asia participated.

The training session conducted by IWRW Asia Pacific aimed to provide argument that would establish that women's rights are human rights and to unravel the tensions that arise when trying to establish women's rights as human rights. The session also elaborated on the significance of the Women's Convention as a critical tool for advancing women's rights and went on to develop some skills in the practical use of the Women's Convention to advance women's rights.

c. Socio-economic and Gender Analysis – An Inter Agency Review Meeting

The meeting which was organised by the Gender in Development Programme of UNDP was held in New York on 5-9 March 1997. The main aim of the meeting was to:

Review new directions in gender analysis and their implications for development that is sustainable and human centred.

The meeting which was attended by the gender programme divisions of the various UN agencies as well as other leading experts in the field addressed new directions for training and gender analysis. The conclusion of the meeting was that consistent understanding of the implications of gender mainstreaming as a strategy and its role in bringing about social transformation in a progressive and democratic direction requires continuing dialogue and analysis. With regard to training instruments, there are marked differences in some of the approaches presented. Further discussion is needed to ascertain how far these differences are a matter of degree, and how far they are contradictory to each other. Existing training instruments must be reviews to ensure that they fully reflect systemic need for capacity building and for transformatory change if gender equality goals are to be met.

At this meeting, IWRAW Asia Pacific was represented by the director on a panel called **Institutional Transformation and Gender Mainstreaming.** Her presentation touched on the frameworks used by IWRAW Asia Pacific for gender sensitive programming. The framework is closely linked with institutional capacity for flexibility and adaptation. The basic elements of this framework include an understanding of gender and how it determines the rights to access and control over resources and the role of various institutions in determining these rights. The framework presents development as a process of social change; and helps to identify resistance to change and conflicts of interest. It was stressed that the institutional mandate to bring about change and willingness to deal with ambiguities was critical. This could not be achieved by training alone but required commitment to change at the highest levels.

d. Caribbean Regional Judicial Colloquium for Senior Judges on the Promotion of Human Rights of Women and the Girl child

The Colloquium which was held on 14-17 April 1997 in George Town Guyana was the last of a series of regional judicial colloquiums conducted by the Commonwealth Secretariat. The broad aim of the colloquium was to raise awareness with the judges about the critical importance of a judicial culture that will help promote women's human rights. The colloquium affirmed the importance of a set of principles concerning the role of the judiciary in advancing human rights by reference to international human rights norms that had been evolved through previous colloquiums organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat. The colloquium drew attention to the schism over the relative importance of civil and political rights versus socioeconomic rights and the fact that civil and political rights have received undue attention within human rights discourse. It was also of concern that the division between public and private responsibility for women's rights, and the fact that state policy often supports an exploitative family structure that legitimises male authority over the female, gas failed to protect women's rights in the private sphere. In many instances this has created the conditions for violence against women.

IWRAW Asia Pacific brought their experiences of activism in the region to the Colloquium and presented a paper on "Educating Lawyers on the promotion of the Human Rights of Women: an NGO perspective." The paper outlined IWRAW Asia Pacific's training experience which aimed to enable lawyers to be conscious of the bias in the I

aw by surfacing concepts and social norms that underpin the substance of the law and implementation structures of the law. Such bias usually does not favour women. The training also stresses on the need for interpreting the law, where possible, using human rights norms and contributing to the development of jurisprudence that sets new standards in the area of women's rights.

The Colloquium was attended by 49 persons, 33 of whom were judges form the Caribbean Region.

e. Church Women's Leadership Conference

The women's leadership conference was organised by the Methodist Women's Leadership Conference and was held in on May 12-18, 1997 in Sibu, Sarawak, Malaysia. IWRAW Asia Pacific was invited to make a presentation on **"Asian Women's Realities".** This session was held on 14 May. The aim of the conference was to enable the Methodist Church women to locate their witness and dialogue in the context of the realities of women's lives.

f. Expert Group Meeting on State Interventions on Violence against Women

The expert group meeting was held on 15-18 June 1997 in Dhaka, Bangladesh by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MWCA) and the Royal Danish Embassy. The aim of the meeting was to develop holistic approaches for state action to end violence against women. Key participants were relevant government officials and NGOs from Bangladesh. Resource persons were drawn from India, Malaysia and the Philippines and were selected for their expertise on a range of strategies to address violence against women illustrating the scope of government and non government action including collaboration between the two.

The meeting focussed on five areas - Complaints Procedures and Investigation, Criminal Justice System, Building Awareness on Violence against Women, Institutional Issues and Health Services Response. A core of recommendations was developed to address the problem comprehensively. The MWCA plans to initiate a multi agency programme based on the recommendations.

The director and an intern from IWRAW Asia Pacific provided assistance in the designing and management of the meeting.

g. Panel Discussion on the IPPF Charter on Sexual and Reproductive Rights.

IWRAW Asia Pacific was invited to speak on the **Significance of a Rights Approach to Providing Health Care Services** at a one-day programme to highlight the importance of sexual and reproductive rights and to publicise the charter on sexual and reproductive rights developed by the International Planned Parenthood Federation. The panel discussion was held on 25 July in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The programme also aimed to identify the application of the charter to the work of the Family Planning Associations in the East and South East Asia and Oceania Region and to brainstorm on ideas for advancing sexual and reproductive rights in the region.

IWRAW Asia Pacific's presentation touched on the obligation of the state under human rights treaty law to respect, protect and promote the rights of people. Under the women's Convention the same obligation exists with reference to women. In the area of health services it should be advocated that States should use these obligations as a framework for providing health services. This would entail concretising the actions that states should take in order to respect, protect and promote health rights of women and what measures should be taken to regulate the actions of non state providers of services as well as that of individual persons who may through their actions or inactions deny health rights to relevant people.

h. Women's Human Rights Strategic Planning Meeting

40 women's human rights activists for all over the world met on 30 September to 6 October in Harare to:

- Identify and discuss key issues for women's human rights advocacy as well as demands and challenges for the future.
- Assess the communication and collaboration processes among groups in different parts of the world with a view towards refining and improving networking within the women's human rights movement
- Explore issues of leadership and develop strategies for expanding the numbers and enhancing the skills of emerging leaders

Several actions were planned to enhance to work of the women's human rights movement.

- Setting up of a UN monitoring group
- Plans for 1998 Global campaign to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the UN Declaration.
- Developing skills for documentation.
- Capacity building for human rights work.
- Setting up electronic communications.

Participants made commitments for follow up. IWRAW Asia Pacific committed itself to start the planning for holding an international human rights conference in the year 2000.

i. Ending Violence against Women and Girls in South Asia

This meeting was held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 21-24 October 1997 by the South Asian regional Office of UNICEF and UNIFEM. The meeting examined various strategies used in the region to end violence against women and developed ideas for strengthening current work in the area, including law, policy and the criminal justice system, support services, health services, awareness raising and education and the use of the media. The meeting also explored long term measures for creating a violence free society.

The meeting produced a declaration called "The Kathmandu Commitment on ending Violence against Women and Girls in South Asia". The declaration emphasised the importance of building a violence free society, for the need for advocacy to draw

accountability from governments and to honour their obligations under the Women's Convention and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. There was recognition of the fact that the family is a site of oppression for women and girls and hence needs to be reformed. The role of several institutions to bring about such a transformation was stressed. Various other recommendations were addressed to the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation, to all UN agencies and to professional bodies.

IWRAW Asia Pacific made a presentation on the **Role of the Media in Combating Violence against Women** and share experiences of Malaysian strategies to end violence against women.

j. Dialogue with Gender and Development (GAD) Committee, Sabah Women's Advisory Council, Malaysia

- (i) The director, IWRAW Asia Pacific was invited to conduct a dialogue session with the Women's Advisory Council, Sabah, Malaysia, on 5 November 1997. the main aim of the dialogue was to:
 - i. To clarify concepts in gender.
 - ii. To set a direction for the GAD Committee's activities and strategies.

The topics discussed were:

- 1. Social Construction of Gender
- 2. Link between Gender and Development Efforts.
- 3. Concepts of Equality
- 4. Practical Issues in Incorporating Gender in Development

The discussion clarified the following:

Gender

- Gender affects the socially ascribed roles, relations and identities of men and women. This social construction disadvantages women.
- Development planning is commonly based on the biological functions of women and is distanced from the social construction of women's lives, hence does not carry with it a transformatory potential.
- In the past, governments have tackled the "woman" issue by creating separate WID (Women in Development) programmes. These have failed.
- Because gender is all pervasive, women's issues and concerns should be tackled across the board in every sector.

Equality

- Substantive equality is concerned with achieving equality of opportunity and results.
- It is not so much about equal treatment as equal access and benefit.
- This may require "remedial measures" (affirmative action) like those adopted for the Malaysian New Economic Policy (NEP) to favour a disadvantaged group.
- Therefore, development agencies cannot treat men and women as the "same" and assume that they can access opportunities and resources as freely and the same as men.

Practical issues in incorporating gender in development

- The Gender Perspective recognises that men and women do not have equal access to development because of ingrained social and structural factors.

- To have a Gender Perspective therefore means an awareness of this fact leading to a process of identifying these constraints so as to compensate for and or to remove disadvantaging structures / practices.
- The integration of gender concerns is important so that development programmes can reach and benefit both men and women equally and effectively.
- Development workers need to do a self-audit of their programmes and ask whether the process of implementation replicate or address the disadvantage of women.

Important issues identified for discussion / dialogue were:

- 1. The Translation of the National Women's Policy (NWP) and Gender Concerns in to Mainstream Development Planning
- 2. Having a Voice for Women at Cabinet Level
- 3. The Participation of Women in Politics and Decision Making.

Conclusion

Several issues and concepts were briefly thrashed out in the Dialogue Session. The Consultant identified three main areas where women / the Council / the Committee have to look at in their attempt to integrate gender concerns in development planning and agenda:

- 1. The Need for a Value-Based Development Framework; i.e. how are women's entitlements conceptualised? Are women seen as individuals in their own rights with claims to autonomy and independence or are they seen as playing a subsidiary role to men?
- 2. The Need for Goals and Planning for Targeted Outcomes. Where do you want women to be by a certain period?
- 3. Identification of who is responsible: a familiar knowledge of the running of the development machinery is needed so as to know at which entry point to come into.
- 4. Identification of resource and structures needed.
- 35 persons participated in the dialogue.
- (ii) On the 6th of May a presentation was made to the Institute of Development Studies, Sabah, Malaysia on the topic "Elements of a Gender Sensitive Framework for Research Relating to Development Issues."

k. Expert Group Meeting Promoting Women's Enjoyment of their Economic and Social Rights.

The director of IWRAW Asia Pacific was chair of the above Expert Group Meeting organised by UN Division for the Advancement of Women and the Institute for Human Rights at Abo Akademi University and held in Abo/Turku, Finland on 1-4 December 1997. She also presented a paper on A Practical Approach to Realising Women's Enjoyments of Economic and Social rights: Experiences from Working with Grass Roots Organisations.

The meeting was convened to address the parts of the Beijing Platform for Action dealing with the human rights of women. Addressing women's social and economic rights not only allowed a consideration of the chapter on human rights but it also

drew attention to two other inter related areas of the Beijing Platform for Action, Women and Poverty and Women and the Economy. The meeting felt it critical to address issues pertaining to women's social and economic rights as women are disproportionately affected by poverty and social marginalisation. The constraints faced by women are particularly acute for women who also face discrimination on one or more grounds including race, caste, creed, disability and age, or because they are indigenous people, migrants or refugees.

The meeting noted that economic and social rights have not received the same level of attention from the international community as civil and political rights. As a consequence, the core elements of many economic and social rights have not been well elaborated and the mechanisms for their enforcement are weak. The failure to develop concrete standards and remedies for the enforcement of economic and social rights make it difficult to hold States accountable for violations of these rights.

Further more, although many academic and non governmental organisations are engaged in important research and mobilisation on issues of economic justice and development needs, the issues are not perceived as violations of women's human rights.

The meeting recognised that States have primary responsibility for guaranteeing economic and social rights and therefore have a responsibility for making available effective channels for the prevention prohibition and protection of such rights for effective means of redress. There also exists an urgent need to consider effective forms of holding non-state actors accountable for violations of economic and social rights. The entrenchment of economic and social rights as justiciable rights in certain national Constitutions presents a valuable opportunity for the interpretation of their content and scope, and the development of effective remedies when they are violated.

The meeting observed that women themselves are critical actors in claiming their rights. However, the general lack of access to effective remedies as well as the absence of legal aid, and legal literacy as well as the formalistic rules of standing in many jurisdictions impede their agency. The meeting reiterated the existence of a gap between the guarantee of rights for women and their effective enjoyment of rights and emphasised that states had a responsibility to eliminate this gap.

Recommendations were addressed to Governments and other National Institutions, Human Rights Treaty Bodies, UN Charter-based Bodies, Regional Organisations, Specialised Agencies of the UB system, Non Governmental Organisations and to International and Financial Trade Institutions.

(iii) Attendance at other Meetings

a. Conference on the Future of Human Rights Treaty System

The director attended the above conference on 21-23 March in Cambridge UK.

b. Dialogue session with Ms Radhika Coomaraswmy, the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women

Shireen Huq represented IWRAW Asia Pacific at the above dialogue, which was held in Sri Lanka.

2. DEVELOPING SKILLS IN RIGHTS AWARENESS RAISING AND CAPACITY FOR THE DOMESTIC APPLICATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS NORMS:

2.1 ORIENTATIONS AND TRAINING

Two 1-2 day orientations on the Convention and four training workshops of about 3-5 days were conducted. The orientations were conducted in Malaysia and India respectively. Three of the training workshops were held in India and one was held in Cairo, Egypt. All these activities were held in collaboration with local women's groups and where two of these were concerned the collaborators were agencies such as OXFAM and UNICEF.

Varied participatory methods of training are used. These include, group discussion, case studies, brainstorming, general discussion and plenaries. Given below are the details:

(i) Orientations

a. Orientation for Malaysian NGOs

A two-day orientation was conducted for Malaysian women's groups with the collaboration of the National Council of Women's Organisations on 26 and 27 July 1997. The objectives of the orientation were to:

- Raise awareness regarding the significance of the Women's Convention in advancing women's rights.
- Develop an understanding of the UN mechanisms and processes through which state compliance is monitored and to identify entry points for women's advocacy and activism.
- Brainstorm on follow up strategies for advocacy and activism focussing on the Women's Convention.

Some inputs were given to help participants grasp the meaning, content and special features of the Convention as well as the UN system and mechanism for monitoring the Convention. This was followed by workshop sessions using case studies to identify the relevance of the Convention to specific issues of concern to Malaysian women. The issues concerned were employment, access to economic resources, political participation and violence against women. This was followed by another set of workshops on ideas for strategies to strengthen implementation of the Convention.

The workshops touched on the strategies for the following areas:

- Elimination of sex stereotyping and gender bias.
- Target groups and methods for the dissemination of information on the Convention
- Preparation of shadow report to the Government's report on the implementation of the Convention.
- Information support service for women's groups to monitor the formulation of laws and policies and their enforcement, to assess their impact on women as well as to obtain information on all development issues pertinent to women.

A second meeting was held on 16 August to plan the follow up to the orientation. Plans were made for more training on the Convention and for the preparation of the shadow report to CEDAW.

Results

The results are that (i) a working group have been formed under the leadership of the Women's Aid Organisation to write the shadow report. (ii) Planning has started under the National Council of Women's Organisations for the implementation of a project called the Women's Watch. This is a monitoring project to identify where discrimination persists and to monitor the formulation of new policies and laws and the enforcement of current laws and development programmes to assess their impact on women. This project may be the direct result of the orientation but it strengthened the idea for it.

IWRAW Asia Pacific is now the advisor to the project.

b. Workshop on the Convention to Promote Women's Human Rights, India

A one-day orientation workshop was held as a collaborative effort between IWRAW Asia Pacific, the National Alliance for Women (NAWO) India and Mrs Rani Satesh, Deputy Chairperson of the Karnataka Legislative Council on 22 December 1997 in Bangalore, India. The orientation aimed to raise awareness regarding the potential of the Women's Convention to advance women's rights. The issues elaborated on at the orientation were Evolution of Understanding of Women's Human Rights, The Principles on which the Convention is Based and workshop sessions on the Application of the Principles of the Convention.

Around 60 persons participated in the orientation. In spite of the large number of participants, the orientation was very participatory. The Application of the Convention session which was conducted as group work was successful in enabling participants to name the various forms of discrimination against women as violations of fundamental freedoms and rights for which there are existing remedies.

(ii) Training

a. Workshop on Muslim Women's Rights: Situation of Women Within a Monitory Community, India

IWRAW Asia Pacific through the director and Tulika Srivastava of India, a training consultant of IWRAW Asia Pacific conceptualised and helped implement a three=day workshop on Muslim Women's Rights on 28-31 August, 1997 in Lucknow. The workshop brought together 25 Muslim women of various backgrounds, activists, development workers, lawyers and grass roots workers. The aim of the workshop was to enable Muslim to articulate the issues relating to their rights and to develop strategies to address them. Since Muslim women in India belong to a minority group the sensitivities and insecurities of their community poses an obstacle to an open discussion of their situation. It also denies legitimacy to Muslim women's demands for change in their situation as this is seen as undermining community cohesiveness. Hence any activism by Muslim women to promote their rights runs the risk of being construed as disloyalty to the community.

The workshop provided clarity on the concept of discrimination, its role in disadvantaging women even if the agents of discrimination came from within the community. In other words discrimination is no less detrimental if it was perpetrated by the community on its own members. The politicisation of religion and the isolation of community tensions within India presented a difficult context for mobilising Muslim women through a series of case studies on inter community tensions. The workshop emphasised the critical importance of securing minimum standards of human rights for women applicable to all women regardless of their diversity and set out the

arguments to legitimise this. Strategies for addressing Muslim women's rights and to minimise crisis or social fall out that comes from taking on rights related work within minority community were also discussed.

The workshop was sponsored and organised by OXFAM, India.

b. Women's Rights and the Convention, Bangladesh

A two-day workshop was held n Bangladesh on 13-15 September 1997 to discuss issues pertaining to the use of the Convention to promote women's rights. The topics for this workshop were: *The Evolution of our Understanding of Women's Rights; The Social Construction of Gender; Institutions and Inequality; Towards Substantive Equality; Rights Revisited; The Critical Importance of Minimum Standards for Women's Rights; The Mechanisms to Claim Women's Rights; The role of the Law and the Women's Convention; Application of the Rights Approach and the Principles of the Convention for the Advancement of Women; Issues Pertaining to Activism.*

A total of 23 women from three women's organisations participated in the workshop, 8 from the Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, 4 from Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association and 11 from Naripokkho.

c. Women's Rights and Human Rights: Training to Address Violations of Women in Situations of Armed Conflict, India²

A five-day workshop on 18-22 November 1997 was held in Shillong, India. This workshop was collaboration between IWRAW Asia Pacific and the North East Network. The director of IWRAW Asia Pacific and Sunila Abeyasekera of Sri Lanka facilitated the workshop. The north east of India poses particular difficulties for advocacy on women's rights as there has been an ongoing armed insurgency movement dilemma there demanding political autonomy for the region. Women from the region face the dilemma generated by the conflict between their struggle for equal rights and the need to maintain cohesion within their communities in the face of the larger political struggle for political autonomy. There is a great deal of human rights activism in this region as a consequence of violations of the human rights of civilians in the region by both the armed forces and insurgents. But this activism is not gender aware. The methodology used by the workshop was to have two levels of discussion. The first two days were spend creating clarity among the women's groups in the region and the next three days were spent in a dialogue between the women's groups and mainstream human rights organisation, to raise their awareness about the particularities of the of the violations of women's rights in situations of armed conflict as well as the violations of their right to equality by their families and community.

The reference point used by the workshop was to highlight the conceptual and political gains made for women through the various world conferences in the nineties and to then examine the particular difficulties posed to the practical actualisation of the political gains made for women rights through the conferences in the context of maintaining community cohesion in the face of armed conflict against women.

The workshop identified the need to surface the manifestations of the gendered features of the violations of fundamental freedoms and move the advocacy from taking into account violations that particularly affect women to including the struggle

² This workshop was decided on as result of the networking that took place at the First Conference on Post Beijing Review and Action that took place in India in February 1997

for equality. The following topic were discussed: What Are Rights and Why Rights, the History of Human Rights, The Gendered Dimensions of Human Rights, Equality and the Women's Convention, Universality and the Multiple Identities of Women, Human Rights, Democracy and Peace, the Genesis of the Armed Conflict in the North East of India and Multi dimensional nature of the Conflict-Communities against the State and Inter Community Conflict.

The Evaluation showed that there was unanimous agreement that this was the first time that the women achieved conceptual clarity on several issues they have been hearing about and dealing with in their work. They requested for further input and committed themselves to follow up on the actions identified at the workshop. These actions include Capacity building of Women's Rights Activists with Reference to Utilisation of the Women's Convention as well as to Have Greater Clarity on Gender Concepts, Power Relations, Patriarchy and the Different Dimensions of Women's Rights. Gender Sensitisation of Lawyers, Creating Awareness of Economic Rights and Campaigning against Anti Women Economic Policies and Schemes, Simplifying the Convention and translating it into the Local Languages, Involving More Men in Women's Rights Campaigns, and Conducting Media Campaigns on Women's Rights are Human Rights, and Strengthening Networking among Women of the North East.

The women hoped to have further collaboration with IWRAW Asia Pacific in the area of training. 53 persons participated in the workshop.

IWRAW Asia Pacific Follow up

IWRAW Asia Pacific has included the North East Network into their regional programme "Facilitating the Fulfilment of State Obligation to Women's Equality", A project that aims to systematically identify gaps in State compliance with their obligations under the Convention and engages in advocacy demanding action from the State specific to the context of the situation. IWRAW Asia Pacific has helped with the framework helps surface the multiple effects of armed conflict on women other that violence. These include the exacerbation or poverty as a result of the loss of the destruction of livelihoods, social deprivation brought on by the loss of male support killed or disappeared and the denial of redress for violations of rights in the private sphere because of the responsibility placed on women to maintain family and community cohesiveness in the face of external threat to the integrity of the community.

d. Training of NGOs on Monitoring the Women's Convention: Cairo, Egypt

This was a 5-day workshop conducted on 16-20 November for NGOs in Cairo, Egypt. The workshop was organised and funded by UNICEF, Cairo. The framework, methodology, and substance of the workshop were provided by IWRAW Asia Pacific along with one resource person, Shireen Huq of Bangladesh. The second resource person was the director of IWRAW Minnesota, Marsha Freeman. The workshop was preceded by a one day planning session with IWRAW Asia Pacific to develop the outline for the workshop. Specific Egyptian case studies provided by the organisers complemented those brought in by IWRAW Asia Pacific.

This workshop was an attempt to share the concepts, frameworks and methodology developed by IWRAW Asia Pacific with other regions. The specific objectives of the workshop were:

To raise awareness of the significance of the Convention in promoting women's development.

- > To understand the role of the law in promoting or hindering women's claims to rights.
- To create an understanding of UN mechanisms in relation to the Convention and to identify entry points for women's activism.

The workshop addressed the following topics: Concepts pertaining to the social construction of gender, Institutions, Discrimination and Inequality, Substantive Equality, The international human rights system, the special features of the Women's Convention, and the applicability of the rights guaranteed in the Convention to the reality of women's lives.

The participants decided on follow up actions as given below.

- The formation of an NGO coalition on monitoring the implementation of the Convention in Egypt.
- Preparation of a shadow report
- Consolidating the work already started with regard to the lifting of the reservation to article 9 of the Convention.
- Producing a simplified version of the Convention to make it more accessible to a larger spectrum of women. This will be done to celebrate 20 years since the Convention came into force.
- Establishing a relationship with the Egyptian member of the CEDAW.

22 representatives of Egyptian women's groups and human rights groups, 3 officials from the Ministry of Social Affairs and 9 representatives of NIPILAR the co-ordinating NGO Alliance on the Girl Child in South Africa participated in the training.

e. Workshop on the Women's Convention for Members of the Women Lawyers Network in Tamil Nadu, India

The 4-day training was jointly organised by IWRAW Asia Pacific and Initiatives: Women and Development, Chennai, India on 17-20 December 1997.

The workshop focused on the following objectives:

- To raise awareness regarding the significance of the Convention in promoting women's development within a rights framework and the relevance of the Convention to the local context.
- To develop skills in identifying various sites of discrimination as a means of developing a holistic legal approach to women's development.
- To develop an understanding of the role of the law in promoting or hindering women's rights.
- > To develop skills to strengthen legal activism and court advocacy.
- To create an understanding of the UN mechanisms and processes through which State compliance in relation to their obligation under the Convention is monitored and to identify entry points for women's advocacy and activism.

The workshop provided the space for lawyers to dialogue on the Convention and to evolve methods for utilisation of the Convention in legal work. The group examined legal cases to ascertain the gender bias in the law and its implementation. They critiqued the role of the law in reinforcing or constructing inequality and they identified areas for change.

They identified the following assumptions in the law and in society which reinforces inequality.

- Men have greater sexual needs, which cannot be controlled.

- The young age of the offender is a mitigating factor in sexual offences because a young man has less control over his sexual urges.
- The state is responsible for the family of the offender and not that of the victim.
- If a woman is accustomed to sexual intercourse, every man has a right to rape her.
- Rape results only in physical injury. The state's duty is to punish the offender only if physical injury takes place.
- The ideal woman is chaste.
- The media is responsible for sexual violence against women.
- It is not appropriate for women to act in their own interests independent of their husbands.

They also identified insensitive state structures for the implementation of the law as an area for reform. In-camera trials are not an ideal solution in rape as it isolates the rape trial from public scrutiny. It should be a discretionary option open to women victims. In the case of custodial abuse the procedures need to be weighted in the favour of the victim. The substantive model of equality will facilitate this.

The **final planning session** generated ideas for the development of a jurisprudence of the Convention by citing the Convention in their cases and to enhance the role of the lawyers in educating their women clients regarding international standards for their rights. The participants committed themselves to the following:

- To make available a set of materials on the Convention received at this training to the library of the Women Lawyers Association.
- To organise a workshop on the Convention to other advocates.
- To inform IWID about their cases in which the Convention is cited.

The **Evaluation** showed that the participants had gained considerable knowledge, which would be helpful to them to strengthen their substantive arguments in cases dealing with women's human rights. While all the sessions were assessed as being useful, the topics, Social Construction of Gender, the Application of the Women's Convention in a Legal context (practical case work) and the International Human Rights System were considered to be particularly useful.

19 women lawyers participated and the workshop was facilitated by the director of IWRAW and two consultant trainers of IWRAW Asia Pacific, Madhu Mehra and Tulika Srivastava. Two other resource persons also gave inputs. They were Geetha Ramaseshan and S.K Priya.

2.2 Review of Training Materials.

Background

IWRAW Asia Pacific work started in 1993 with a series of orientations in the region to raise awareness among women's groups about the significance of the Women's Convention as a tool for advocacy. As women became aware of the importance of the Convention a need was expressed for sharpening their skills in the domestic application of international human rights norms and standards that the Convention represents.

The first activity that was conducted to develop training materials was the formulation of a tentative framework for training in August 1994. an expert group meeting was

convened for this purpose bringing together key members of the Global IWRAW network members and Asian network members³

The framework was used to produce an experimental set of materials and a pilot training was carried out in December 1994. since then, the current draft set of materials that IWRAW Asia Pacific uses to conduct training on the Women's Convention has been developed over a period of 4 years through collaborations with women's groups in the region.

Review of the training materials

In 1997, these materials were the subject of a review held on 7-11 September 1997 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This is the prelude to its being published in 1998. An attempt was made to bring the members of the first expert group along with some of the women who had participated and or helped develop the content of the training materials. It was not possible to bring together all members of the original expert group. The names of the members of the team that reviewed the materials are given below.

Name	Member of expert group 1994	Developed sections of the training materials	Helped conduct training	Participated in the training
Shanthi Dairiam	Х	Х	Х	-
Shireen Huq	х	Х	х	-
Eleanor Conda	Х	х	Х	-
Alda Facio	Х	-	-	-
Marsha Freeman	x	-	-	-
Madhu Mehra	-	х	х	x
Tulika Srivastava	-	х	х	x
Sapana Pradhan Malla	-	х	х	x
Pramadha Rana	-	х	х	x

³ The expert group comprised Shireen Huq and Rina Sen Gupta, Bangladesh, Eleanor Conda, Philippines, Andrew Byrnes, Hong Kong, Alda Facio, Costa Rica, Marsha Freeman and Margaret Schuler, USA, Thandabantu Nhlapo, S Africa and Unity Dow, Botswana. The director of IWRAW Asia Pacific Shanthi Dairiam was also a member of the group.

Objectives and content of the review

The objectives of the review were:

To review the objectives, concepts and content of the training To examine the materials, facilitators' notes, case studies, discussion guidelines, handouts and background reading materials for their appropriateness. To assess the effectiveness of the training methodology To suggest any other reading materials approaches material etc,

To reviews gave many suggestions for improvement of the materials. These ideas will be incorporated into the training and the materials will be published in 1998 subject to then availability of funds. (Refer to annex 2 for guidelines for the review)

Content of the training

The training comprises 5 main topics with 23 sessions and is meant to be covered over a period of 5-8 days.

The understanding of the dynamics of the Convention and its potential in adapting itself to the reality of the lives of women, the clarity that the training provides on concepts such as discrimination and equality, owes much to the participatory nature of the training and its capability to absorb the thoughts and insights of the participants over the years. (Refer to annex 3 for a concept paper of the training and the annex 4 for the substantive framework of the training)

2.3 Technical Assistance to the Government of Malaysia on the Writing of the CEDAW Report

In 1997, IWRAW Asia Pacific was appointed advisor to the Government of Malaysia in the writing of their initial report to CEDAW. IWRAW Asia pacific has advised the Malaysian Government to set up an inter-ministerial group for the gathering of relevant data. Accordingly representatives from 25 government departments have been invited to the data gathering group. The director gave two orientations on the Convention to this group on 1 and 14 March 1997. The objectives of the orientation were:

- To raise awareness of the principles and content of the Convention and the responsibilities undertaken by the State Parties to the Convention in acceding to the Convention
- To provide information on the guidelines for reporting and to raise awareness of the kind of data required to write the report and where available.
- > To set up a working committee for the gathering of relevant data.
- > To make some preliminary plans for the preparation of the report

3 meetings were then held with this group in 1997 to check on progress. Two consultants have been appointed to work with this group and to write this report.

By the end of 1997not much progress has been made for the following reasons: The inter-ministerial group is not stable. Different people come from the government departments for different meetings. Disaggregated data is not available and historically and as a matter of practice, raw data is not being collected according to the needs of the CEDAW report. Finally delay in funds allocated for the report writing has also been an obstacle.

2.4 Report on the Processes Used by the Government of Bangladesh to write their Periodic Report to CEDAW Utilizing Input of NGOs

Bangladesh presented its 3rd and 4th period report to CEDAW at its 18th session in June 1997. The quality of this report is a dramatic improvement from its 2nd report. Many factors have contributed to this change. Uppermost among them is the collaboration between NGOs and the Ministry for Women and Children (MWCA) in the writing of this report. Under the supervision of the director an intern of IWRAW Asia Pacific, Afra Afsharipour researched and wrote a report on the processes, which brought about this change. The report is called "The Role of Women NGOs in the Enforcement of Women NGOs"... She spent a week in Bangladesh to do her research. The report highlights the fact that 3rd and 4th periodic report is commendable for the understanding it displays of the principle of state obligation to women under the Convention. But the writer goes on to note the disparity between the commitment displayed in the report written by the MWCA and the failure of the Government represented by the MWCA and the Secretary for the Law and Justice Ministry to acknowledge these commitments when they presented the report. The writer attributes this to the fact that the MWCA did not have the political mandate from the other ministries to make the commitments. She points out that neither the MWCA nor the NGOs who worked on the report mobilised internal political support to hold the state accountable for its newly expressed commitments. Nevertheless the report provides useful insights about the processes through which the state opened itself to the NGOs and the benefits of such a relationship.

2.5 Monitoring the Fulfilment of State Obligation to Women's Equality: South East Asia Sub Regional Programme

Introduction and Background

This is a long-term project with 1997 as the year of inception. The purpose of this project is to create a monitoring mechanism in South East Asia to access the fulfilment of state obligations toward women's equality in line with their commitments as States Parties to the Convention and as parties to the Beijing Platform for Action.

This project will help women develop skills in rights awareness-raising and build capacity for the domestic application and use in local activism of the Convention and other human rights instruments as part of the process of monitoring the implementation of the human rights chapter of the Beijing Platform.

What is critically important is to establish a mechanism and process by which progress in the achievement of women's rights can be monitored.

Objective of the long term project

Immediate objectives of the long-term project are to:

Establish a foundation for sustained and effective NGO led system for monitoring state compliance with and fulfilment of obligations under the Convention.

- Contribute in the determination of indicators by which to assess advances in the achievement of equality
- Contribute in increasing greater awareness on the Convention and involvement by women and NGOs in CEDAW processes.

Medium term objectives

Contribute to the implementation of Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action, focusing on law and policy issues and identify where State action is lagging.

Track and demonstrate best practices and positive national level activities that have led to the successful impact on government legislative reform and exchange this information for use by others.

• Strengthen capacity of women and NGOs to actively engage in national advocacy and to intervene in CEDAW processes.

Long term objectives

• Contribute to achievement of equality of women.

Project description

As this is a complex and long term project, it will be implemented in phases, with planning for each phase step by step.

Phase One – Year one 1997⁴

The components in this year are

- (i) The setting up of country focal points to act as monitors.
- (ii) A sub-regional meetings to develop a framework for information gathering and drawing up of indicators and
- (iii) Preparation of country specific preliminary baseline reports with secondary sources of information, using the framework developed at the sub-regional meeting. These baseline reports will help establish bench marks for assessing progress in the attainment of equality for women.

Phase Two – Year Two 1999

Phase Three – Year Three – 2000

(i) Information exchange and utilization for assessment of progress by countries in complying with their commitments to gender equality and for advocacy

Phase Four – Year Four and onwards

Ongoing monitoring and related advocacy at the national, regional and international

The information will be updated on a regular basis, disseminated and utilized for advocacy at the national level and through the regular work of IWRAW Asia pacific, i.e. training workshops and orientations. IWRAW Asia Pacific will keep national-level groups informed about the data collected and their implications for future directions in claiming women's human rights through the above activities.

⁴ Activities of phase 2-4 are given below

⁽i) Second sub-regional meeting to assess the completeness of the baseline reports, develop the monitoring methodology and plan for the next phase.

⁽ii) Carry out primary research to complete the baseline report is necessary and

⁽iii) Where possible carry out research as part of the monitoring to assess progress in the attainment of equality for women.

Project implementation in 1997

Activity 1

The identification of focal points that will serve as monitors

Focal points were identified in 9 countries of South East Asia and Mongolia. These countries are Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and Mongolia through investigatory visits and networking with IWRAW Asia Pacific's current working partners.

Activity 2

Regional Meeting to Draft a Framework for Data Collection held in Malaysia

A four-day conceptualisation meeting was held on 10-13 July 1997, bringing together experts and activists to enlist their help in devising a framework for the collection of information.

The objectives of the meeting were:

Workshop objectives

- Develop a tentative framework for effective NGO monitoring of state fulfilment of obligations and commitments under the Women's Convention and assessment of impact.
- 2. Validate a baseline data collection format
- 3. Firm up or secure tentative commitments of partnership between IWRAW Asia Pacific and prospective focal points.
- 4. Finalise arrangements for project implementation and develop plans for project sustainability

The meeting addressed the following issues:

- Identification of priority issues for monitoring
- Consensus on a framework for monitoring
- The outline for a baseline report that includes the following-

An inventory of the most important gender disparities (in relation to identified priority issues) using the framework and standards set by the Convention.

In relation to the above, Current areas of discrimination as it exists in law and court decisions, policy and practice (development, legal and social) contributing to the unequal status of women, using both the standards of the Convention, in relation to equality and non-discrimination, and the substance of the human rights chapter of the Beijing Platform.

Current state actions that are being taken in fulfilment of their obligations such as Constitutional provisions on equality and with reference to treaty obligations, model legislation and development policy and programmes that promote women's rights and equality (current) past judicial interpretations or review within a human rights framework that have had a normative effect. Existing mechanisms for ensuring accountability with regard to women's rights such as women's commissions or human rights commission, ombudsperson, cases brought before these bodies etc.

Actions already taken by the state to implement the Convention such as any legislative, political or administrative action taken to receive the principles of the Convention into domestic legislation; (gender related targets of the government) models of affirmative action in compliance with treaty obligation, monitoring systems set by the state to assess the progress of the implementation of the Convention, the occurrence of discrimination in practice or to assess obstacles to de facto equality; setting up of mechanism for data collection and preparation of reports to CEDAW; law, policy and administrative reform undertaken by the state include identification of issues to be addressed and priorities, allocation of resources, institutional arrangements; training given to key state functionaries in relation to state obligation under the Convention etc.

Past advocacy strategies of women's groups, (including legislative ad court advocacy or political action) citing human rights principles or treaty obligations that have been successful or otherwise in addressing discrimination against women.

- Tentative methods and indicators for collecting information to assess developments on all the above, as well as sources of information.
- The meeting also identified methods for in country coordination and interchange of the information collected, relevant time frames, budgets, skill requirements, long term financial sustainability of the project etc.

19 women from 8 countries participated in the meeting.

Activity 3: Follow up to the sub regional meeting

Preparation of baseline report and technical assistance provided to the countries by IWRAW Asia Pacific

The process of producing baseline reports has been slow. By the end of 1997 only Laos, Mongolia, Thailand and Vietnam has communicated with IWRAW Asia Pacific on the status of their work regarding the production of the report.

With **Laos** there has been an ongoing discussion on what the follow up should be. They are being persuaded to write a baseline report on one critical issue regarding the status of women, rather than do training for government officials, which is what they wanted to do.

Mongolia in the person of Zanaa has been in close touch with us and she has been informing us of the wide range of CEDAW Watch and advocacy activities that they are carrying out. They will be submitting their work plan for the baseline report soon.

Thailand was the first country to communicate with us and presented a plan to do the baseline report. They have decided to do the report on two issues: Trafficking on women and Political Participation of Women.

Our communication with **Vietnam** resulted in a visit by the director to Hanoi on 10-11 December and a workshop was conducted on planning for the baseline report. They now have their work plan. They will do their report on Women's livelihood in the Context of the Open Market Economy. However they have proposed that the deadline for the report by mid March 1998 was not feasible. They have suggested an extension of the deadline to June 1998.

Lessons learned

Results and issues

- 1. The concrete outputs of the workshops were a monitoring framework and an outline for a baseline report.
- 2. This was done through a collective process ensuring the commitment of everyone and a sense of ownership of the outputs of the project.
- 3. The women were enthused about the long-term objective of the project and felt that the approach for monitoring state obligation that the project advocated was essential. No one had attempted to carry this out in the systematic and holistic manner that the framework called for and they found this exciting.
- 4. However, this also meant having to deal with a certain amount of complexity that required a level of resources that was not available to them.
- 5. As a result it was agreed that the arrangements for project implementation (last objective of workshop) could only be done stage by stage, assessing capacity and available resources for each stage.
- For example, it has been agreed that a preliminary baseline report using secondary sources of information will be done for each country by March 1998. The baseline report will only look at one or two priority issues for the country⁵

This will be followed by a regional workshop to assess gaps of information and a decision made as to the primary research that needs to be carried out to complete the report. The time frame for doing a comprehensive report and to establish the scope of the monitoring will be decided at the meeting.

Constraints faced

Specific

Cambodia was not able to participate because of the political problems that erupted at the time of the workshop. IWRAW Asia Pacific had conducted a social investigation visit to Cambodia with funds from UNDP, prior to the SEAGEP project and has an interest in ensuring the involvement of Cambodia. When the situation is conducive, a visit will be made to Cambodia (using UNDP funds), to give them an orientation and facilitate.

<u>General</u>

There has to be continuity of funds for this project both for IWRAW Asia Pacific and for the national groups. The women also felt that the sum of Canadian 4000 for the baseline report was insufficient. At both levels there has to be institutional strengthening. The women have been encouraged to raise funds locally.

⁵ The issues identified for the baseline reports by the countries are the following: Laos: Rural women Indonesia: Employment
Singapore: Equality under the law Thailand: Trafficking in women

Malaysia: Rights of women in marriage Philippines: Violence against women

Process undertaken to achieve results

Steps in project implementation have been identified and deadlines have been set for accomplishing various steps. For example, the women have been asked to develop a plan for producing the preliminary baseline report and send in their plan to IWRAW Asia Pacific by the end of September. The deadline for the baseline report was first fixed for March 1998 but this has changed to June 1998⁶. IWRAW Asia Pacific will be monitoring the situation and trouble shoot as necessary.

Lessons learned

Results oriented work is complex and resource intensive.

3. CONTRIBUTE TO THE STRENGTHENINIG OF THE CONVENTION

(i) Supporting advocacy for the adoption of an optional protocol to the Convention

Eleanor Conda was financially supported by IWRAW Asia Pacific to attend the 3 week open ended working group on the optional protocol in March 1997 held concurrently with the meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women. Eleanor Conda was on the government delegation of the Philippines and was able to contribute to the progress of the drafting of the protocol both in terms of language and concept.

4. CONTRIBUTE TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF CEDAW'S EFFECTIVESS

(i) Assistance to Indonesia Women's Groups in the Preparation of the Shadow Report

The Indonesian government report was schedules for review at the 18th session of CEDAW in January 1998. IWRAW Asia Pacific provided financial and technical assistance to the groups in Indonesia or the production of a shadow report that could be used by the CEDAW to assess the government report. The technical assistance was by way of guidelines for the production of the report.

(ii) From Global to Local: a Convention Monitoring and Implementation Project

7-20 January, 1997

INTRODUCTION

On the occasion of the 16th session of the CEDAW Committee Meeting on 13 January to 2 February 1997, IWRAW Asia Pacific and UNIFEM collaborated to bring together eight women from six reporting countries or countries that were going to report at the seventeenth session in July 1997. The purpose of the project is given below:

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES:

The project aimed to enhance the dynamism of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (hereafter called the

⁶ At the time of writing this report, the deadline for finishing the baseline report has been further postponed to end of November 1995.

Convention). The strategy used for this was to help women shape their advocacy at the local level to fall within the mandate of the Convention of eliminating discrimination against women and by linking it with the international official processes for monitoring the implementation of the Convention at the UN level.

Specific objectives of the project

The specific objectives of the Convention were to

- To facilitate the presence of women from reporting countries at the sixteenth session of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in order to monitor the state party performance during CEDAW meetings;
- (ii) To create an understanding among the women, of the significance of the Convention as a tool for advocacy;
- (iii) To familiarise them this the mechanisms set up by the UN for the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention, in particular;
 - the dynamics of the reporting process and the mechanics of the CEDAW meetings, and
 - the role NGOs can play within those proceedings;
- (iv) To raise pertinent issues with CEDAW, relevant to the position of women in the countries whose reports will be heard at the 1997 session of the CEDAW
- (v) To make plans for monitoring state party compliance with CEDAW recommendations and fulfilment of state obligation to implement the Convention in their countries on their return.

PARTICIPANTS:

Eight women's rights advocates from eight countries who were reporting in January 1997 participated. The countries selected were Bangladesh, Canada, Morocco, Philippines, Turkey and Zaire.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project brought together the above eight participants to New York 8-20 January 1997 when CEDAW held its meeting to review state party reports. They were given an intensive orientation for two days prior to the CEDAW Sessions (11-12 January). This orientation gave them an understanding of the Convention and the CEDAW's working methods as well as its application for their advocacy. The women had brought alternative information and during the orientation they had an opportunity to study their government report and were guided on critiquing this report and to prepare a brief commentary that could be used by CEDAW members for constructive dialogue with the government representatives. Awareness was also raised on the ways in which the women could support the work of the CEDAW. They then observed the reporting process at the UN for a week 13-17 January. During this time they interacted with CEDAW members to give them alternate information or explanations to the information given by their state party members.

Daily meetings were held every evening with participants to monitor their level of participant and to share their experiences of the observation of the reporting process

and lessons learnt. A one-day debriefing exercise was held on 19 January 1997 to plan the follow up. Participants made plans to hold meetings with women's organisations to share their experiences and observation of State CEDAW interaction and to give wide publicity to the concluding comments.

On the 20th of January, a meeting was held with NGOs from New York and this facilitated an exchange of experience, ideas and strategies for strengthening NGO Advocacy around the Convention.

The Bangladesh participants whose government was going to report in July 1997 prepared an alternate information / commentary on the government report subsequent to their participation in the project in January. Three organisation, Mahila Parishad, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association and Naripokkho prepared this commentary on their government report. The two Bangladesh participants were part of this process. They also returned to New York in July 1998 to observer their government's report. When they returned to Bangladesh after this they held a press conference to publicise the government's commitment to fulfil state obligation as evidenced by their response to the questions of the CEDAW committee.

A core resource team of six persons planned and managed he project. They were assisted by resource persons as necessary⁷.

Schedule of activities

8-9 January 1997: Resource team planning

10 January 1997: Preparation of materials

11-12 January 1997: Orientation and training of participants as preparation for observing the reporting process. (Refer to Annexe 3 for outline of orientation)

13-17 January 1997: Observation of the reporting process, informal interaction with CEDAW members and states party officials as needed and daily meeting to share lessons learnt.

19 January 1997: Debriefing and planning for follow up

20 January 1997: Discussion with NGOs from USA⁸

List of additional resource persons

- Jane Connors, DAW, United Nations 1.
- Donna Sullivan, Centre for Women's Global Leadership, USA 2.
- Marsha Freeman, IWRAW Minnesota, USA 3

⁸ The programme was officially over on the 20th of January. However, as the Philippines report was only heard on the 29th of January, the two participants from the Philippines stayed on to observe their government's report and to interact with the CEDAW.

⁷ List of core resource persons

^{1.} Shanthi Dairiam, IWRAW Asia Pacific, Malaysia

^{2.} Eleanor Conda, Philippines

Alda Facio, Ilanud, Costa Rica
 Ali Miller, International Human Rights Law Group, USA
 Roxanna Carrilho, UNIFEM

^{6.} Ilana Landsberg Lewis, UNIFEM

29 January 1997: Participants from the Philippines observed their government's report.

EVALUATION

Substantive issues

A written evaluation was carried out and participants found the content, materials distributed and method of the programme very good. They found the programme useful in women's work at the national and regional level. This was because; the programme created familiarity with the Convention, the work of CEDAW, and a strategy for using CEDAW's concluding comments. All of this is helpful in making the work of women's groups more strategic and effective. As one participant stated, the programme can bridge the gap between local advocacy and Convention related work at the international level. It was strongly recommended that it should be carried out on an annual basis.

In particular, sessions on the use and influence of the Convention as a treaty, the procedures pertaining to CEDAW, the methodology for critiquing of state part reports and the group exercise on equality were found to be very useful.

They felt they required more discussion on the UN treaty system and the gaps that remain in the UN system with regard to women's rights. The session on creating a lobby presence needed to more focussed, precise and practical.

A very good suggestion came from one participant who felt that some time should have been spent on reflecting on which constituencies the participants represented. This would have been helpful to identify whose interests they represented and to puck up on issues that were of priority to the groups they were committed to. It would have also helped to identify more sharply whom the participants would link up with when they returned in order to pass on the new knowledge to.

It was also suggested that more time should have been spent getting to know one another and the kind of expertise everyone possessed as well as to share experiences on Convention related advocacy. Specific examples of how the Convention could be used on the ground would have been useful.

It was felt by everyone the orientation was very helpful but too intensive and the pace was too fast. As a result it was overwhelming at times. It was acknowledged that it would not be productive to reduce the content and hence the suggestion was that three days should be spent on the orientation.

Administrative issues

Programme schedule

It was suggested that the schedule for the entire programme and relevant materials should be sent to participants prior to their coming so that they could become familiar within the content of the programme and organise their own free time in advance.

Resource team

The comment of one participant with regard to the above is reproduced.

"The resource group was a great team with different expertise and perspectives which offered a wonderful training experience. What stood out in particular was the co-operation among everyone and the respect that they had for the other resource persons. I have seen some of the competitiveness and territorial nature of human rights groups and activists, which I find totally unnecessary and destructive. So that was for me, what really stood out (aside from the substantive expertise).

Administrative support

There should have been better administrative support so that the resource persons did not have to spend time photocopying, dealing with reimbursements and per diems etc. In future, an intern should be engaged for this purpose.

5. PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGION – SPECIFIC GENDER – SENSITIVE HUMAN RIGHTS SCHOLARSHIP STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTING TOOLS

IWRAW Asia Pacific plans to produce a publication on *The Domestic Application of Human Rights Norms: Relevant Issues for Asia Pacific.* To plan for this publication, a meeting was held in Sri Lanka on 6-7 February 1997. The meeting was attended by Savitri Goonesekere, Vasudha Dhanamvar, Eleanor Conda and two members of the staff. The publication will be about 250 pages and will adopt the following format. Three theme papers will set the tone for the publication and this will be followed by case studies relevant to the theme. The scheme for the book project is given in annex 5.

Writers have been identified for some of the papers and guidelines for papers writers have been drawn up. Savitri Goonesekere will edit the publication.

6. STRENGTHEN IWRAW ASIA PACIFIC'S INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITY FOR GREATER EFFICIENCY IN AND SUSTAINABILITY OF ITS WORK

Institutional development takes on more significance and becomes more urgent as IWRAW Asia Pacific intensifies and broadens its program in the region. Institutional capabilities have been strengthened in the following ways.

- (i) An administrative officer was employed and an intern from Columbia Law School, New York worked with us for 2 months.
- (ii) The programme moved into new premises, which provided more space. The original office was 300 square feet compared to 600 square feet of the present office
- (iii) The programme acquired more equipment i.e. 1 new PC, the old PC was upgraded to have more memory, 2 computer notebooks and a fax machine.
- (iv) The resource materials acquired over the past years are being classified and computer entries made for easy retrieval.
- (v) IWRAW Asia pacific has been exploring possible long-term partnership with donor agencies and other institutions, which identify with its vision and goals, to ensure the sustainability of its work in the region. In 1997 grants were obtained from four new donors. This is an advance over previous years although some of the grants are not large. The new donors in 1997 are:
 - NOVIB, The Netherlands
 - SEAGEP, CIDA, Singapore
 - UNIFEM
 - The Internal Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, Canada

IV MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The implementation of the programme is closely tracked by the staff and the directors for its compliance with its objectives and for financial accountability. Individual

projects have their own evaluation component and feedback is obtained on each occasion from the participants of the project.

Annex 1 SOME GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDUCT OF 'SOCIAL INVESTIGATION' TRIPS

I. Introduction

A 'social investigation' trip, for the purpose of IWRAW Asia Pacific, refers simply to the preliminary trip or entry by IWRAW Asia Pacific into a country in which it had not had any previous presence, regardless of whether or not it has existing contracts in that country. During the last three years of IWRAW Asia Pacific, preliminary trips have been made in certain countries in its priority list, often with an initial orientation on the Women's Convention tucked on. But those trips were primarily for networking.

During the June 1996 Bangladesh Evaluation and Planning Meeting of IWRAW Asia Pacific Coordinating Team, the cursory and ad hoc manner by which IWRAW Asia Pacific's entry into a country had been made was pinpointed as a weakness and a reason for many of the difficulties encountered in the course of IWRAW Asia Pacific's implementing of its in-country activities. It was seen that the utility of those preliminary steps to IWRAW Asia Pacific's planning could have been optimised. The Coordinating Team saw the import of these preliminary trips to a successful implementation of IWRAW Asia Pacific's in-country activities, and decided on a more systematic, thorough conduct thereof following clear guidelines.

II. The Stance upon Entry

As articulated and nuanced in various institutional documents, IWRAW Asia Pacific is a support regional program that catalyses national action and capitalises on the interest – no matter how tentative – in Convention-related work among national groups and individuals. Although it is ready to be aggressive and pro-active where and when required, IWRAW Asia Pacific aims for building capacity nationally and for leadership, autonomy and integrity of national-level groups and individuals. It recognises the peculiarities and uniqueness of a 'women's movement' and is cognizant of the particular dynamism (or lack of it) at the national level. Finally, in practice, although IWRAW Asia Pacific talks of model training and orientation designs or packages applicable in countries throughout the region, it refrains from using fixed formulas or approaches, as it considers adaptation and contextualisation of its work as crucial to the sustainability and impact of its work in a country.

The Bangladesh meeting in not so many words affirmed such a working philosophy, although sans the nuanced extractions. It is a philosophy that places premium on respect for and recognition of the integrity, autonomy and capabilities or potential in its relationship with national groups.

Stating the foregoing might be seen as belabouring the point, but there is a reason for its articulation, or appropriately, its re-articulation. It is maintained that the mindset and stance of the IWRAW Asia Pacific person undertaking the Social Investigation trip will be affected by her clarity on such philosophy and her internalisation thereof. A contrary belief and position or one that is unclear and vague may manifest in the person's words and actions that would not be lost to the women and groups being related to and could reflect against the to-be introduced IWRAW Asia Pacific.

III. Objectives of a Social Investigation Trip

These can be as follows:

- 1. To provide data that will enable IWRAW Asia Pacific to have better understanding of the women's situation in the country, and the urgent and priority issues facing the women therein;
- 2. Ti be able to provide the social-cultural, economic, religious, legal and political context in which women's rights and related issues may be viewed;
- 3. To be able to provide a general picture of the advocacy on women's rights, the issues addressed by the women's groups in the said country, and the politics or dynamics among women's groups and/or individuals concerned, including mainstream human rights groups in said country and identify key players.
- 4. To generate sound observations and impressions on which IWRAW Asia Pacific can base its identification of prospective partners for in country cooperation.
- 5. Which organisations / organisation is involved / interested in the systematic monitoring of changes in law and policy that would promote women's rights, in keeping track of discriminatory practices or actions that violate women's rights and related women's activism. Would any of these organisations be interested in being part of IWRAW Asia Pacific's information network and send feedback systematically on all the above developments as well as on landmark cases and judicial interpretations (good or bad)

These data will be especially valuable for the institution in drawing up a country plan or program, in strategising future moves, in building key partnerships, and in deciding on content of IWRAW Asia Pacific's training package. Moreover, familiarity with those data is a positive projection of the institution as to its preparedness and thoroughness (perhaps, even its sincerity) in undertaking its national program to support local activism. Also the confidence that such knowledge can add to IWRAW Asia Pacific may go far in ensuring successful implementation of its in-country plans.

IV. The How To's

Data gathering can be primary and secondary since it is expected that there will be existing materials and studies that ca be used. There are some aspects or areas however that by their nature requires personal interviews and meetings.

It is strongly suggested that the social investigators prepare prior to her trip a checklist of data to secure, plus a questionnaire to guide her in the interviews. The following are some suggestions that may be considered in drawing up their checklist and questionnaire.

 Socio-economic aspect – official data or country situationers may be obtained from pertinent government agencies while "the-other-point-of-view" materials and studies might be available from concerned population, employment, macro policies, economic strategies and programs, social services, etc. should be very useful. The intent here is only to enable IWRAW Asia Pacific to have some 'feel' and not for it to have at the tips of its finders all such socio-economic indicators.

- 2. Religious and cultural aspects information should include <u>inter alia</u> dominant religions and religious and cultural practices that violate rights of women etc.
- 3. Legal and political aspects-Information to be obtained can include:
 - 3.1 Form of government and structure; the legal system.
 - 3.2 Lawmaking and other governmental processes.
 - 3.3 Constitutional provisions on equality and non-discrimination or on human rights and international law in general.
 - 3.4 Law relating to or affecting women and whether or not these laws discriminate against women and are being enforced, among others, in the areas of family relations, property and inheritance or succession rights, labour, criminal, law etc.
 - 3.5 State ratification of and reservations to human rights and other international instruments (note: there also may be obtained outside the SI trips)
 - 3.6 Public mechanisms or structures concerned with women and human rights

By way of short cut, existing studies in these areas especially those done by NGOs or academics can be secured. Copies of the constitution, pertinent laws and codes and other related documents should be secured.

- 4. Women's situation and advocacy Questions to ask may be as follows:
 - 4.1 What are major concerns of the women in the country? In this regard, issue or sector-based studies and researches might be available.
 - 4.2 What are the key issues advocated by women and women's groups? (Note that these may not correspond to 4.1) what are their strategies and approaches in addressing these issues? Are those strategies or approaches women's rights / human rights-oriented or are they more adoptive of needs or service framework? Are court advocacy and legislative advocacy being waged? If yes, is there any test case pending in court or about to be filed? Are new bills on women being proposed? What are these?
 - 4.3 Is there awareness among women and women's groups on the Women's Convention and other human rights instruments? Is there an advocacy around the Convention? If yes, which groups are involved?
 - 4.4 Which are key groups / networking working on women's issues? How are they positioned, identified or perceived (i.e. are they seen as conservative, radical or militant, left wing, right-wing etc) who are seen as the credible or respected ones? What are the personal observations or impressions by the social investigator of these groups?

- 4.5 Are these mainstream human rights groups in the country? What do they think of women's rights? Do they address also women's rights issues? How do they relate if at all to women's groups?
- 4.6 Have the NGOs prepared or in the process of preparing an alternate report which could be used as baseline information from which to assess the incremental progress in relation to women's rights.

The foregoing questions and points are definitely not exhaustive. The 'social investigator' has all the leeway to secure other data that she deems will be useful. A possible guide to other information that can be gathered is the <u>Guide to Reporting under the Women's Convention</u> distributed by IWRAW Minnesota. The specific questions under the different articles presented in the Guide can help the 'social investigator' frame more specific and comprehensive checklist and questionnaire.

V. Output from an Social Investigation Trip

After a 'Social Investigation' trip, the following are expected:

- 1. An Accomplishment Report that includes observations and recommendations, especially on strategies and prospective partners.
- 2. A country profile and brief women's situationer
- 3. Copies of the constitution and other legal documents and codes and pertinent studies and researches, if any;
- 4. Directory of women's groups and advocates.
Annex 2 MEETING TO REVIEW TRAINING MATERIALS ON PROMOTING EQUALITY AND RIGHTS FOR WOMEN IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN.

OBJECTIVES

To review the objectives, concepts and content of the training To examine the materials for their appropriateness To assess the effectiveness of the methodology To suggest any other background reading materials

Notes

The materials comprise the following:

The are 5 topics with 18 sessions

Each session comprises:

- Facilitator's note
- Accompanying materials

 Case study and discussion guidelines (if applicable)
 Examples of discussion under the heading 'trainers note'
 Hand out (if applicable)
 Diagram (if applicable)
 Ready materials (if applicable)

Please review the materials under each session for

(i) Substance

- clarity of message
- adequacy of content depth, details etc

(ii) Specific

- choice of case study, whether it is illustrative of main message of the session
- appropriateness of discussion guidelines
- clarity of the facilitator's note

(iii) General

- consistency of depth etc. among the sessions
- suggestions for reading materials
- order of the materials in each session
- any others

CONCEPTS PAPER FOR TRAINING OF WOMEN ACTIVISTS PROMOTING EQUALITY AND RIGHTS FOR WOMEN

THE NEED TO DEVELOP SKILLS IN WOMEN TO CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS

The aim of the training as developed by IWRAW Asia Pacific is to strengthen the domestic application of human rights norms in relation to women's rights. This agenda is situated within a theoretical framework that provides the basis for its implementation. This framework takes on as an essential premise the fact the domestic application of human rights norms requires both the enforcement mechanisms and the creation of a culture that encourages compliance within human rights principles and norms.

The former refers to the courts and the legal system, which sets standards, appraises compliance and makes authoritative decisions forcing compliance. The latter deals with the business of defining rights, invoking rights and promoting rights so that a culture that recognises people's rights and demands for justice is formed. These two dimensions are mutually reinforcing. When rights are not enforced, it provokes a call for justice with more intensified articulation of the definition as well the invoking of rights. As the demands for rights mounts up, it influences the enforcement of rights.

A working premise that enables the creation of synergy between the enforcement of rights and the culture of compliance with the human rights norms is that a rights framework does not automatically confer rights on people; it only legitimises the claims for rights. We have to be able to claim our rights.

When assisting women to claim their rights, we come across many barriers such as a culture and tradition that is hostile to women's claims to their rights, gender bias in the administration of justice generally and in the courts in particular and the absence of litigation by and on behalf of women. The last would indicate that women do not come forward to claim their rights for a variety of reasons. This has serious implications. As Justice Cartwright of New Zealand once stated, it is essential to have good cases in court that will help expand the parameters of the meaning and content of women's rights so that good precedents are set. Hence education and training of women and providing them with support to enable them to claim their rights is essential.

MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE TRAINING

The training of activists will comprise several elements:

The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

The central focus of the training is the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

(The Convention) is a unique instrument as it is formulated on the principle of equal rights between women and men in the private and public spheres. Furthermore, it recognises the fact that women's unequal position is socially constructed because it draws attention to discrimination against women. It further governments to mandate development for women through a framework of legal rights; hence it provides a mechanism for accountability.

The principle of equality in the Convention entails the achievement of de facto equality and not only the creation of equal opportunity. This can only take place in an appropriate socio-economic environment that provides the enabling conditions for women to access their rights. The Convention therefore mandates gender responsive development policies and programmes that are premised on a rights perspective, taking into consideration women's unequal social position.

However, if women are to have access to the rights that the Women's Convention intended them to have, then a great deal of work has to be done to enable women to claim these rights. The mechanisms set up by the UN on their own will not bring this about.

First of all, the articles of the Convention have to be creatively interpreted at the local level, issues that need to be addressed have to be identified, as well as the nature of the discriminations that pose obstacles to the development of women and the kind of affirmative actions that need to be taken. In other words, the relevance of the provisions of the Convention to the local context has to be established.

The basic principles of the Convention, equality between women and men, non-discrimination, State obligation to eliminate discrimination, the conformity of domestic law and development policy with the standards prescribed by the Convention, have to be promoted at all levels of government, the legislature and among development practitioners.

The training aims to bring about a realisation of the significance of the Convention in various contexts.

Creating conceptual clarity

If the Convention is to be used creatively, creating conceptual clarity on the principles which the Convention sets out to be fundamental to the promotion of women's human rights and which should form the basis of legal arguments that justify women's claims to rights is critical. These are the principles of equality, non discrimination and the principle of state obligation to include the obligation of mean (through law and policy) and the obligation of results; the obligation of the state to exercise due diligence to protect women from violation of their rights by private actors; and the obligation to amend domestic laws and systems to absorb the principles of international human rights norms where a state has undertaken such an obligation.

The principles of equality and non discrimination need elaboration at this point. The model of equality that is emphasised as relevant to protecting women's rights and as guaranteed in the Women's Convention is that of substantive equality. This encompasses equality of opportunity and equality of results. It takes into consideration, the biological and socially constructed differences between women and men and presents the view that because of these differences women and men cannot be treated equally if they are to benefit equally from all rights and opportunities that laws and policies guarantee in theory. In other words gender neutral laws and policies will only benefit women who can behave like men. This model of equality provides for corrective measures or affirmative actions that will create the enabling conditions for women to overcome the effect of past discriminations or the effect of biological differences that may disadvantage women. The training

will also help to see the limitations of other models such as the protectionist approach or the approach based on the model of equivalence.. the substantive model of equality attempts to bring about social change. Such change does not come without risk and it is essential that within any project that aims to enable women claim their rights, there should be a component that anticipates the risk and helps women cope with the risk.

While social change may come at a price, it is often far more transformatory and sustainable in the long term if it represent a move from dependency to autonomy.

The challenge is to know when to take note of difference without compromising the claim for equal rights as a legal standard. For example, there can be no compromise on the claim for legal equality in matters pertaining to personal status such as equal rights within the family, in wages, inheritance, access to, ownership and control over resources, citizenship and participation and representation in political decision making.

The training on the **principle of non discrimination** also looks to the Women's Convention for the definition of discrimination as being any restriction or exclusion that has the purpose of effect of preventing women from a full enjoyment of their human rights in all fields. It aims to unpack the systemic nature of discrimination and reveal the complex process by which social norms practised at the private and community level underpin the manner in which institutions such as the family, the community, the market and the state reproduce discrimination by allocating responsibilities, resources, privileges and rights to women and men on the basis of social rules and norms and institutionalising them through law and policy.

Familiarising oneself with the law

The other elements of the training deal with the understanding the law, its potential to empower women as well as its limitations. The framework for a discussion on the law includes the substance (the statutes); the structures of implementation such as cumbersome or ineffective court procedures, biased interpretations of the law and gender based bias in the court generally, access to legal counsel or legal aid, lack of women's awareness of their rights; and the culture of the law. The last refers to social rules and norms the dictate what is appropriate for women and what is appropriate for men in the context of the allocation of responsibilities, resources and rights sand in turn defines appropriate identity and behaviour. The training will enable us to identify where the law (substance and structure of implementation) is supportive of women's rights and where it discriminates and the culture that underpins it.

Understanding the significance of the Women's Convention and other human rights treaties in advancing women's rights.

Women have been sceptical about the relevance of international treaties such as the Convention to the various contexts of their lives. This is understandable, as there has been a disjuncture between the traditional concept of human rights and women's rights. The training will help create an understanding of the reasons behind this disjuncture and will create an awareness of then need to engage in international advocacy to create new understanding of human rights that will take into consideration the application of human rights principles to women. The Women's Convention will be discussed in depth with exercises to develop skills in the use of the Convention to advance women's rights. The training advances the argument that a development for women has to be promoted within a right framework, and that Women's Convention is one instrument that cab be used effectively as a framework for law and development policy.

Eventually skills have to be developed for various target groups such as the bureaucracy, judge's human rights groups and other to utilise the Convention for women's advancement.

OBJEBTIVES OF THE TRAINING

The broad objectives of the training is to

Create awareness in women

- About their rights on the basis of equality between women and men and on the basis of the principle of non discrimination as guaranteed by the Convention.
- About the need to mobilise women to present themselves a political constituency whose demands for equal citizenship for rights cannot be ignored by any government, which claims to be liberal and democratic.

Develop an understanding of the law in promoting or hindering women's rights.

Develop skills in identifying the sites of discrimination and in addressing discriminatory aspects of laws and legal systems towards developing a holistic approach to women's development.

Raise awareness of the significance of the Convention in promoting women's development within a rights framework and to develop skills in using the Convention to advance women's rights in the local context though law and policy reform.

Provide a conceptual understanding of the barriers to establishing women's rights as human rights.

Raise an awareness of the significance of engaging in international advocacy to advance women's rights and to create an understanding of UN mechanisms and processes and entry points for women's activism.

Plan for the effective use of the Convention as a tolls for advocacy to promote women's rights.

TOPICS AND SESSIONS

Topic 1: Women's realities-understanding some concepts

- Session 1: Inequalities and discrimination in women's lives.
- Session 2: Social construction of gender Part 1 – Sex and gender

Part 2 – Institutions and inequality

Session 3: Towards substantive equality Part 1 – Formal vs. substantive equality Part 2 – Marshalling arguments in favour of equality

Topic 2: Law and the legal system (for non lawyer women activists)

- Session 1: The role of the law and women's activism
- Session 2: Law and gender
- Session 3: The limits and possibilities of the law for women' activism.
- Topic 3: Rights as tools for change
- Session 1: What are rights and why rights
- Session 2: The link between development and rights
- Session 4: International human rights law
- Session 5: Historical background to the evolution of women's human rights

Topic 4: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

- Session 1: The herstory and key features of the Women's Convention
- Session 2: State obligation and role in protecting women's human rights
- Session 3: Mechanisms and procedures under the Convention

Session 4: Constitutional provisions relating to the Convention and other international treaties

- Session 5: Using the Convention to promote women's rights (for non-lawyer activist)
- Session 6: Application of the Convention's framework and principles: Part 1 – in court advocacy Part 2 – in law reform
- Topic 5: The next step
- Session 1: Planning for advocacy using the Women's Convention as a tool.

FRAMEWORK FOR TRAINING ON PROMOTING EQUALITY AND RIGHTS FOR WOMEN IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

TOPIC ONE: WOMEN'S REALITIES – UNDERSTANDING SOME CONCEPTS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	CONTENT	PROCESS	RESOURCES
SESSION ONE Inequalities and discrimination in women's lives Participants are able to articulate the nature, extent and interconnectedness of inequality and women's subordination and the assumptions and common rationalities on which inequality is based.	Participant's knowledge and experience of inequality as it has occurred to themselves or to other women in the family and within marriage, in relation to property, inheritance, freedom of movement, political participation and representation, employment, health etc.	unequal treatment which will be used as a springboard for	
SESSION TWO Social Construction of Gender Part 1: Sex and Gender Participants will be able to appreciate the difference between 'sex' and 'gender' and have a strengthened awareness of socially constructed inequalities as opposed to biological differences.	The concepts of sex and gender. What differences between women and men are biologically determined and what is socially determined on the basis of the ideology of gender. The implications of analysing the impact of gender ideology (gender analysis) in order to assess the extent of	Presentation and discussion	Relevant background reading materials. Handout

	inequality between women and men and related manifestations, in the context of promoting rights and development for women.		Facilitator's note: Shireen Huq
Part 2: Institutions and inequalities Participants are able to: recognise the sites of discrimination as well as the structures of inequality; understand the role and dynamics of different social institutions in reinforcing and perpetuating inequalities and discrimination against women; as well as the inter connectedness of various forms of discrimination	Gender based differences in the way in which institutions such as the family, the community, the market and the state allocate responsibilities, resources, privileges and rights between women and men on the basis of social rules and norms. Those are based on assumed differences between women and men. The contradictions between the claim that these institutions operate in isolation from each other and the interconnectedness of the dynamics of the practises of these institutions in drawing upon and reinforcing social rules and norms and gender based disparity and discrimination. The ideology of gender permeates all these institutions. Various mechanisms (for example, violence against women) are used to make women 'tow' the line. There is a need to address discrimination across all institutions as they impact on the composite identities of women.	input and small group discussion on identifying social rules and norms and that entrench inequality across various institutions and analysing gender based discriminations that they justify, followed by plenary session.	Background reading on institutions and inequality taken from Baila Kabeer, Reversed realities Hand out Facilitator's notes: Shanthi Dairiam
<i>SESSION THREE:</i> Towards Substantive Equality			
Part 1: Formal versus substantive equality Participants will be able to:	The formal model of equality and its variations based on an	Presentation and discussion	Ratna Kapoor;s paper on equality

Differentiate between	assumption of sameness;	on formal and	and other
formal and	non-recognition of difference,	substantive	background
substantive equality;	assumption of sameness and	equality	reading on
become familiar with	its effects leading to		equality.
the different	discrimination of intent and	Small group	
approaches to	effect;	discussion	Case study on
equality and the	Recognition of difference and	using case	equality
relative merits and	the protectionist approach.	study on	- 17
implications of each	The substantive model of	equality and	Hand out on
approach from the	equality, de jure/ de facto	plenary	equality.
point of view of	equality.	discussion.	oquanty.
promoting autonomy	Equality of opportunity/		Facilitator's
for women; discuss	equality of outcome		notes: Shanthi
hwy equality is	Corrective		Dairiam
valuable for women.	measures/affirmative action		Damam
valuable for wornern.	Equivalence/equity		
	Why equality for women is		
	important		
Part 2: Marshalling			
arguments in favour			
of equality			
Participants will be	Arguments commonly made	Role play	Faciliator's
able to identify	against women's equality.	followed by	notes: Shanthi
arguments against	Misconceptions about	small group	Dairiam
women's equality and	women's equality and	discussion on	
counter them	arguments in favour of	identifying	
	equality.	misconceptions	
	· ·	about equality	
		and developing	
		arguments to	
		counter them	
		followed by	
		plenary	
		session.	
		36331011.	

TOPIC 2: LAW AND THE LEGAL SYSTEM (For women activists)

SESSION 1 The Role of the Law and Women's Activism			
Participants are able	The substance, structure and	Presentation	back ground
to:	culture of the law (the legal	and discussion	reading on the
Critique the role of	system) reflect social rules		Law and Gender
the law and its	and norms that discriminate		
implementation in the	against women and	Small group	
construction and	perpetuate socially	discussion on	Summarised
reinforcement of	constructed assumptions	understanding	case laws
inequality; identify or	about them.	the law-using	
describe examples of	Laws promote various models	summarised	Handout on
law where women's	and approaches to equality	case laws and	Substance
interests have been	that may not always be	plenary	structure and
excluded and in	beneficial for women.	discussion.	culture of the law

which they embody or assume stereotyped and subordinated roles; give examples of laws that redress inequality; critique women's activism. And to identify areas where changes are needed and where there are gaps in women's activism.	Role of law in society and functions of the law in ordering and regulating society and mediating conflict, in defining rights and duties of members of society, in providing for protection against violations and enforcement of obligations and in determining behaviour and conduct of members of the society. There is therefore a potential within the law for providing a framework and mechanism for claiming equality and eradicating discrimination against women. Examples of how law functions in different areas both to the benefit and detriment of women; Examples of how law can change customs A critique of the areas of legal reform that women activists engage in and the limitations. The need for conceptual clarity, when engaging in	Facilitator's notes: Shanthi Dairiam
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TOPIC 2: THE WOMEN'S CONVENTION, THE ROLE OF THE LAW AND WOMEN'S ACTIVISM: (*For Lawyers*)

SESSION 1			
various laws relating to women as well as identify the basic	women in different areas such as the marriage and family, civil laws, criminal laws etc, Discriminatory and	Presentation and discussion	Facilitator's notes: Eleanor Conda

SESSION 2 Law and Gender Participants are able to: Critique are able to: Critique the way in which laws construct and reinforce inequality; identify or describe examples of laws where women's interests have been excluded and in which they embody or assume stereotyped and subordinated roles; give examples of laws that redress inequality	Selected laws or constitutional provisions in the areas of labour, crime, access to economic resources such as land and property, family and marriage and an analysis of the social norms and rules they reflect. The assumptions underlying those laws about women and men in term of responsibilities need for resources, entitlement to rights and privileges on the basis of social rules and norms. How socially constructed differences between women and men is institutionalised in the law	Small group discussion on selected laws	The national constitution Selected statutes Background reading on a critiques of the laws of the country concerned from a gender perspective (if available) Facilitator's notes: Eleanor Conda
SESSION 3 The Limits and Possibilities of the Law for Women's Activism Participants are able to recognise the limitations and potentials of the law and the legal system, as well as that of women's activism; and to identify areas where changes are needed and where there are gaps in women's activism	The different branches of government and their roles vis a vis the law. Role of law in society and functions of the law in ordering and regulating society and mediating conflict, in defining rights and duties of members of society, in providing for protection against violations and enforcement of obligations and in determining behaviour and conduct of member so f the society. The power of the law to present itself as the truth, as the word of authority drawing the submission of the governed, and as seen to be vested with an illusion of	Presentations of a case study (as an example) that will show gaps between desired legal remedy and actual result and an analysis of the obstacles preventing justice for the women. Presentation on the main points in the content column. Linking to case	Background reading on: gender and the law- Women and the law in Asia and the Near East: Lyn Freedman Indira Jaising's paper, Savitri Goonersekere's paper on the Legal status of women in the Asia and the Pacific. Any other? Hand out Case study

tru Bu cl th im st la ex di w fu cc sc Eu in bu	nplementation, (substance, ructure and culture of the w) it can delegitimise operiences and reality of the sadvantaged and those of omen in particular and can nction as an instrument of ontrol to perpetuate existing ocial rules and norms. ngaging with the law in the terests of activism cannot e done without confronting e following: The reality of law as an instrument of control, and the need to ask whose interests, whose voices and experiences are heard. The traditional legal method which has an inclusionary, exclusionary bent (for example, the issue of relevance and the principle of previous precedence-women's experience may not be accepted) The flaws in implementation or	study where possible. Plenary discussion on area of activism needed.	Facilitator's notes: Eleanor Conda
•	heard. The traditional legal		
	inclusionary, exclusionary bent (for example, the issue of relevance and the principle of previous precedence-women's experience may not be		
•	The flaws in implementation or		
	enforcement, the de jure de facto divide which occurs as a result of the perspectives of the		
	implementers, the negative culture which denies women the		
	legitimacy to claim rights and the non recognition of the state of the multiple correlative programmatic		
	and administrative obligations of the state in relation to each of the rights guaranteed in a		
•	piece of legislation. The law monopoly as it alienates and intimidates lay people because of its		

 technical nature and the use of jargon. Legal knowledge is monopolised by a select group who begin to have a vested interest in their supremacy. The law also has potentials for women's activism. Because of its power to present itself as the truth and the critical functions it performs, it is important that women use and influence the law as an instrument for transformation. The challenge for women and areas of activism those are critical.

TOPIC 3: RIGHTS AS A TOOL FOR CHANGE

	violation of human rights. Step to claim rights- dynamism of human rights in the concepts, definitions and contexts for application are evolving, the need for women to participate in this process and the need to create space for women's participation, examples of the contributions of people's movements to the development of international human rights norms.		
SESSION 2 The Link Between Development and Rights-(For women activists) Participants are able to: Establish why a rights	The interrelatedness of socio economic and civil and political rights.	Brief input Small group	Experience / Case studies of development
approach to development is essential.	A critique of specific development initiatives directed at women (taken from the participants' experience) such as access to factors of production such as credit or land, income generation etc., to draw the link between achievement of the socio economic objectives of that initiative and a range of other rights such as freedom of movement, freedom of expression, legal autonomy to transact business, right to self determination and	discussion on selected development initiatives for women and analysing them to identify the missing component of rights and the effect this has on the socio economic	initiatives for women. Background reading on link between socio economic and civil and political rights, rights approach to development. Facilitator's notes: Shireen Huq Backed by
SESSION 3	decision making right to equality and non discrimination etc	session	Shanthi Dairiam
International Human Rights Law Participants will be able to list the international human rights treaties and the various mechanisms in place to protect the rights of all human beings and will: - Recognise the key	The UN human rights system and various mechanisms. The Human Rights Commission and other human rights bodies and their relevance for the promotion of women's human rights.	Presentation and discussion small group discussion using case studies	Background reading material: Rebecca Cook, Andrew Byres Hilary Charlesworth, Charlotte Bunch

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treaties and	Where the specific		Diagram of the
mechanisms that can	mechanisms for the	session	UN system
be used for the	protection of women's human		
protection of women's	rights is placed within this		Handout
human rights; be able	scheme.		
to identify the	The disjuncture and tensions		Facilitator's
absence of gender	between traditional human		Notes:
perspective in	rights concepts and those		Madhu Mehra
traditional human	pertaining to women's human		
rights concepts and	rights such as the		
practice and the	public/private divide,		
reasons for this.	dejure/defector devide and		
	the adverse effects of a		
	gender neutral approach, the		
	divide between civil and		
	political and socio economic		
	rights.		
	Reasons for this: historical		
	reasons – the contexts in		
	which human rights norms		
	developed historically – the		
	problem with the concepts of		
	legal equality and non		
	discrimination and the		
	principle of difference in		
	treatment that is justifiable,		
	the non recognition of the		
	systemic nature of		
	discrimination, the exclusion		
	of the experiences of women		
	as gendered individuals and		
	the related contexts in which		
	their rights were violated in		
	particular the non recognition		
	of state obligation to protect		
	women from violated in		
	particular the non recognition		
	of state obligation to protect		
	women from violations of		
	their rights by private actors,		
	the lack of capability of		
	mainstream human rights		
	practitioners to reconstitute		
	their thinking to absorb		
SESSION 4	women's experience.		
Historical			
background to the			
evolution of			
women's human			
rights			
		Presentation	Background
Participants will be able to:		and discussion	Background
	History of the activism of the	anu uiscussium	reading materials:
Trace the evolution of	History of the activism of the		Tribute Centre
the understanding of	women's movement in its		articles, Rebecca

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women's human	struggle for the protection of	Cook, Charlotte
rights and the	women' human rights.	Bunch??
activism that inspired	Advances made in the	
it and identify the	application of human rights	Hand out
major obstacles to	principles to women: - History	
the promotion of	of CSW, The Women's	Facilitator's
human rights	Convention, The Declaration	notes: Shireen
	on Violence and other human	Hug
	rights treaties to protect	•
	specific rights of women, the	
	World Conferences on	
	Women and the World	
	Conference on Women and	
	the World Conference on	
	Human Rights; and their	
	significance.	
	The global campaign for	
	women's human rights.	
	The evolution of the concepts	
	in the application of human	
	rights principles to women:-	
	Recognition of violations and	
	rights such as equal pay for	
	equal work, maternity rights	
	etc, the guarantee of equality	
	and non discrimination	
	established through the Bill of	
	Rights and national	
	constitutions and finally the	
	recognition of the systemic	
	nature of discrimination and	
	the need for holistic	
	approaches and the substantive equality	
	approach as promoted by the Women's Convention.	

TOPIC 4: THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

SESSION 1 The Herstory and Key Feature of the Women's Convention			
Participants will be able to: - Trace the development of the Women's Convention as a product of	Overview of the background to the Convention and women's activism Why it was necessary to have a separate Convention on women. Overview of the substance of	and discussion	The Women's Convention Summary of the Women's Convention

Identified and general General of the Women's Ine convention and general General Convention that make it a comprehensive bill of rights for women and addresses women's concerns; Concept of equality and discrimination under the Convention. Chart of ratification / access ion to the Women's document recognises and addresses women's concerns; Convention. Chart of ratification / access ion to the Women's document defactor rights and obligate the practical realisation of legal rights through temporary special measures; obligates receptivity of the principle so f the Women's Convention into domestic legislation. Facilitator's notes: Shireen Hug SESSION 2 State obligation and role in protecting women's human rights The obligation of state level recognition of means, through law and policy as well a obligation of means, through law and policy as well a obligation of in calling for hybit women's rights need to policical and socio economic rights of its citizens. Brief input Hand out SESSION 2 State obligation and role in protecting women's human rights and negative. The obligation of states to rights of its citizens. Brief input Hand out Conventico role of the state in political and socio economic deliver and defacto rorected by the state: political and socio economic deliver and defacto women against violations by private actors. Brief input Small group discussion on right to health. Facilitator's notes: Shireen public/private actors. Need for consocious	identify the factures	the Convention and general		General
Convention that make it a comprehensives as a it a comprehensives as a complete bill of rights. bill of rights for Concept of equality and discrimination under the Convention. the special features: concerns; conconcerns; concerns; concerns; concerns;	identify the features	5		
 it a comprehensive bill of rights. complete bill of rights. complete				recommendations
 bill of rights for discrimination under the convention. document that teconins: concerns; document that addresses women's combines civil and political and socio economic rights; dismisses the distinction between the public and private and dejure and defacto rights and obligate the practical realisation of legal rights through temporary special measures; obligates receptivity of the principle so f the Women's Convention into domestic legislation. The significance of obtaining state level recognition of discrimination against women and collegation of results and obligation for the state in policy as well a obligation for the state in role of the state in role of the state in protecting women's rights nearly in the significance of obtaining sits different contexts in unman rights and its implications both which women's rights nearly in the significance of obtains by private parties. SEESSION 2 		•		Chart of
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SESSION 3	are violations of the human rights of others involved such as the use of anti terrorist ordinance against perpetrators of violence against, demanding death penalty for crimes against women, or demands that which are based on social norms that perpetuate the inferior position of women. The above can become counter productive. How to deal with contexts where the state can use the power it acquires through demands to protect women's rights for its own political purpose.	alternative ways of protecting women's rights where the state may use its powers to suppress dissent.	
Mechanisms and procedures under the Convention Participants will be able to identify: -The international mechanisms and procedures for monitoring the implementation of the Women's Convention; the entry points for women's activism; -Obstacles for the full implementation of the Convention.	International mechanisms and strategies relating to the Women's Convention: CEDAW, the reporting obligation and the procedures for reporting to CEDAW The function of the reporting process and entry points for activism through the provision of alternate reports by NGOs. The CEDAW: its composition, how nominated and elected, their methods of work, their powers and achievement. Need monitoring and implementation at the national and international levels and for advocacy for the full implementation of the Convention as well as for influencing the appointments of CEDAW members. Obstacles to the full implementation of the convention; problems pertaining to reporting, state apathy in not reflecting the	Presentation and discussions. Case study presentation of activism and lessons learnt at the UN during reporting by NGO and linkage with national level advocacy	Background reading on domestic application of the Human Rights norms on general and on the Convention in particular. Reporting guidelines Selected state party and alternate NGO reports Case studies of NGO activism at the UN during the reporting Facilitator's notes: Eleanor Conda

	principles of the Convention into national laws and development policies, lack of a complaints procedure and the significance of an optional protocol, problem of reservations Conflict between international human rights law and culture, tradition and national sovereignty Need for linkage between international and national level advocacy.		
SESSION 4 Constitutional provisions relating			
to the Convention and other international treaties		Descent ii	Delaurat
treaties Participants will be able to: List the provisions in the Constitution relating to ratification of, accession to and implementation of international treaties as well as related directive principles; discuss the jurisprudential position in the country in relation to treaty obligation; discuss how the Convention and other Human Rights Treaties are enforceable and; the benefits of ratification/accession	Constitutional provisions relating to ratification / accession to international treaties Related directive principles jurisprudential position in the country with regard to the implementation of treaty obligations How treaties can be enforced even if the country has not taken the necessary legal steps from implementation of the treaties. Examples are – invoking the moral force of treaty obligation in all demands for rights, both civil and political and socio economic; taking human rights into account when interpreting statutes; invoking	Presentation and discussion	Relevant constitutional provisions Relevant judicial interpretations Examples of how the Convention or other treaties have been enforced inspite of the neglect of the state in taking legal steps for its implementation Facilitator's notes: Madhu Mehra
to human rights treaties even if a country has not taken legal steps to implement treaty obligation.	human rights in defining public policy; enlarging the range; the meaning and contexts of fundamental rights when defining treaty obligations. The benefits of ratification / accession to the Convention in relation to advocacy for women's rights: legitimises higher expectations;		

	introduces now language to		
	introduces new language to advocate earlier demands; demands are now not addressed to an uninformed state as by ratification / accession the state has acknowledged discrimination against women and undertaken an obligation of results.		
SESSION 5			
Using the Convention to promote women's rights (for women activists) Participants will be able to: analyse a specific development problem or violation of women's human rights to assess the discrepancies between the Convention and policy and practice at national level; formulate practical ways in which the standards of the Convention can be transferred to practice; include ways of ensuring that government fulfils it obligations; link participants experiences of rendering governments accountable.	advocacy those were	Small group discussion using case studies dealing with labour, land rights, violence. Political participation, reproductive rights etc. Plenary session and discussion for strategising towards advocacy and sharing of experiences regarding successful strategies.	Case studies Examples of successful use of the Convention for advocacy purposes. Facilitator's notes: Shanthi Dairiam
SESSION 5			
PART 1 Application of the Convention's framework and principles in court advocacy			
(<i>For lawyers)</i> Participants will be	Critique of the arguments	Small group	Case laws

able to apply the framework and principles of the Convention in their court room work.	and decisions of specific cases using the framework and principles of the Convention and assessing the points at which discrimination occurs whether in the substance, structures of implementation and the culture which underpins the discrimination i.e. social rules and norms. Reformulation of arguments using the principles of the Convention i.e. Equality, non discrimination and state obligation to receive international human rights standards into domestic laws.	discussion using case laws followed by plenary session	Background reading materials on domestic application of international human rights standards, Scope for judicial interpretations within a human rights framework; Judicial decisions upholding state obligation to comply with international treaty norms Facilitator's notes: Eleanor Conda
PART 2 Application of the Women's			
Convention' framework and principles in law reform			
(For lawyers) Participants are able to apply the framework and principles of the Convention in formulating laws or amending existing laws.	Rights involved in the issue addressed by a particular law. Critical examination of the law in question and its application looking at the underlying assumptions about women and men. How such assumptions discriminate against women. Elements to consider in amending the law or formulating new ones; differences between women and men in the areas of roles; responsibilities, capabilities, access to resource, vulnerabilities etc,; handicaps to women arising from the above; measures or actions needed to balance the differences between women and men.	discussion	Examples of laws that need to be amended Facilitator's notes: Eleanor Conda

TOPIC 5: THE NEXT STEP

SESSION 1 Participants will develop some plans regarding steps to be taken to utilise the Convention for advocacy on women's rights into their ongoing work.	Identification of priority action to be taken such as lobbying for the writing of the government report, preparation of alternate report, law and policy analysis using the framework of the Convention, research into identifying where discrimination occurs and how, making demands for a particular rights through reform of relevant stature or development policy reform on the basis of treaty obligation, filing test cases, conducting rights awareness training for other women at the national level and at grass roots level, training of lawyers on advocacy in the courts citing treaty obligations and the preparation of model briefs, educating parliamentarians and government functionaries on their obligations under the Convention, creating wide spread publicity about the	Small group discussion and plenary session	Facilitator's notes: Eleanor Conda

SCHEME FOR THE PUBLICATION ON DOMESTIC APPLICATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS NORMS: ISSUES FOR ASIA PACIFIC.

Theme papers:

- a) state sovereignty
- b) The politics of gender and the State
- c) Integrating the standards of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women into national systems.

CASE STUDIES

Case study writers to be instructed to contextualise their case studies within the three themes in Section 1. Where a case study falls under more than one theme, the significance of the relevance to the theme paper is referred to (a, b, and c indicate the theme papers in the order that they are listed in the first section). Case study writers will have to be sent the objectives and guidelines of the theme papers for reference.

Objectives of Case Studies: To forge international standard setting with regard to realising socioeconomic rights for women either through interstate relations or national experience which can be of comparative use.

Outline for Case Studies

- 1. Facts of the case
- 2. Identification of the issues with regard to the implementation of the provisions of the Convention
- 3. Analysis and critical comments: refer to the theme paper guidelines; also refer to other international standards and how they reinforce the Convention.

Case studies	Related themes
Issues of nationality, citizenship and domicile	a,b,c
Nationality cases: Nepal (spouse) and Pakistan (Hina Jilani, resource) Passport case: Bangladesh (still pending) Domicile/citizenship: Sri Lanka Compare the proceedings of the following cases: Amiruddin Ziffra – HR Committee; Unity Dow, Botswana <i>Comparative Materials available in Sri Lanka</i>	
Achieving universal rights for women in the context of plurality of legal systems and the Convention	b,a,c
Case challenging India's reservation to Article 16 of the Convention (Rani's case)	
Poligamy cases in India	
Case challenging Nepal's law of inheritance	

Seeking redress for violation of women's rights by a state through the international human rights mechanisms	a,b,c
The case of the comfort women	
Integrating the standards of the Convention into national systems to gain socioeconomic rights for women Working terms and conditions for migrant workers	c,b
Access to land and water	
Critique of the activism / strategies adopted for women's rights to reproductive health and assessing the use of the standards of the Convention or other human rights norms	b,c

The length of each theme paper will be about 6250 words or 25 pages, double spaced.

The length of a case study will be about 2,500 to 4,000 words or up to 15 pages