



2015

ANNUAL REPORT

IWRAW ASIA PACIFIC

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO WOMEN'S ACTIVISM

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS • IWRAW ASIA PACIFIC

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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The organisation is grateful for the support from its various donors Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, UN Women, Oxfam Novib, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Oak Foundation, Channel Foundation that enabled the work and our contribution to the women's movement in 2015 and we continue to look forward to their support in building the reach of our strategies and initiatives.

ABOUT IWRAW ASIA PACIFIC

International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAW) Asia Pacific is a feminist organisation based in the Global South. We work nationally, regionally and internationally towards the achievement of women's human rights. We work on progressive social change for women based on the universality, interdependence and interrelatedness of human rights, and use the lens of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to contribute to the progressive interpretation and realisation of the human rights of women.

Our programme focuses on building understanding of and using CEDAW as a lens to address gender equality and discrimination against women. Our strategies are designed to fill the gap between human rights monitoring by the CEDAW Committee at the international level and national activism of non-governmental organisations demanding government accountability at the national level, and to strengthen both normative and process content of global and regional law and policy instruments which affect women's rights.

Since 2004 we have been recognized by the CEDAW Committee and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as the key NGO to support communication and submission of alternative information to the CEDAW Committee.

As of December 2015, our list of country level partners working on CEDAW has grown to 206 organisations globally, with further 30 international and regional networks and organisations with whom we collaborate with, on various strategies to promote women's human rights. We have facilitated participation of about 850 women from 165 countries to attend the CEDAW review sessions, monitor state reporting and engage with the CEDAW Committee.

This strengthens the work being done on CEDAW implementation at the national level, including through law reform, policy analysis and litigation initiatives which we do in partnership with women's groups at the local and state level.

The ideology of IWRAW Asia Pacific continues to be framed on its role as a facilitator and enabler of the capacity of women's groups and networks at the national level in strengthening the environment for respect, protection and fulfilment of women's rights.

Our work in 2015 : One year in CEDAW implementation

From 2004, we have been the NGO recognized officially to support the CEDAW process and have been running the From Global to Local project for the 19th successive year since 1997, with the support of various donors including the Oak Foundation, Foundation for Open Society, Channel Foundation and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

In 2015 we were able to provide targeted support for women's NGOs representing groups of women subjected to multiple forms of discrimination to advance their advocacy agendas in global human rights, especially those groups that have not been able to access space for public dialogue, attention, or policy focus. This programme also helped to facilitate participation of mainstream women's rights groups from developing countries to ensure coverage of a broad range of issues under all articles of the Convention and to facilitate better strategic linkage, partnership and normative agreement between mainstream women's rights groups and marginalised, thematic and/or sectoral groups.

In this year we worked to ensure participation of 97 women from at the 60th -62nd sessions, from Azerbaijan, Denmark, Ecuador, Eritrea, Gabon, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Tuvalu, Croatia, Gambia, Namibia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Spain, Viet Nam, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Timor-Leste, United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan to engage with the CEDAW Committee's review of their governments.

At the end of 2015 we have been able to facilitate the participation of about 857 women from 165 countries in "From Global to Local" to attend the CEDAW review, monitor state reporting and engage with the CEDAW Committee to strengthen the work being done on CEDAW implementation at the national level.

From January – December 2015 we held 3 global trainings for NGOs in the CEDAW review process. Besides this IWRAW Asia Pacific engaged in advocacy at various for a such as the ASEAN People's Forum, ASEAN human rights bodies dialogues on women's rights, and the Commission on Status of Women and Asia Pacific, and the UN Summit on the Sustainable Development Goals. We held various strategies to focus on the impact of the new development agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and held an Expert Meeting to enhance the organisation's analysis and position on critical issues related to the SDGs. On a related front we focused on the complimentary use of the UNGP on Business and Human Rights with CEDAW to enhance accountability of business/private actors for gender equality in a regional Roundtable Discussion on Business and Women's Human Rights. We were also able to hold a consultation on the issue of CEDAW General Recommendation on Violence against Women to build understanding about the state practice on combating VAW as part of CEDAW obligations.

In Southeast Asia we worked on various strategic areas linked to young women's activism on CEDAW through a regional agenda setting forum with Young Women Activists, a Regional Forum on Young Women's Participation in, country level agencies and Young Women activists, and various country level dialogues with parliamentarians and campaigns led by young women on specific priority issues such as the returning policy in education, sexual harassment and dating violence. With our Women's Economic Rights Empowerment and Leadership Project we collaborated on various regional trainings as well as capacity building of partners in Cambodia, Myanmar Philippines and Thailand on the three priority issues under the project – women's natural resource governance, the rights of women migrant workers, and the role and accountability of corporations and the need to address gender in the value chain. We focused on supporting partner groups in Africa through a regional lawyers training on CEDAW and OPCEDAW, and shadow report trainings and support for partners in Armenia, Vietnam, Timor Leste and Myanmar.

This year we also focused on development of simple tools including [videos](#) and infographics to clarify key concepts around CEDAW and business and women's human rights.

As part of the global women's rights movement we also participated in various solidarity and networking spaces including the 8th Assembly of the World Movement for Democracy in October 2015, NGO consultations on the

Sustainable Development Goals throughout the year and the ASEAN People's Forum in April 2015 to ensure that women's human rights are placed at the centre of platforms which seek to advance democracy, development and good governance and ensure a linkage to the CEDAW processes in both state and civil society initiatives.

THREE YEAR PLAN OBJECTIVES

A wide gap continues to exist between commitments and legal obligations and realities on the ground for women, thus continued focus on enforcement of rights and working with various stakeholders to effect systemic change is still a key step in the path towards gender equality. IWRAW Asia Pacific's three year plan from 2014-2016 is designed to address the need to effectively monitor laws for CEDAW compliance, to strengthen government agencies mandated to promote gender equality and to support women's organisation's advocacy for positive legal environment for gender equality including removal of discriminatory laws, strengthen women's economic rights, work on strategies to enhance accountability systems for women's rights and CEDAW compliance by non-state actors especially business sector actors.

In the second year of the three year plan, we focused on enhancing the understanding of CEDAW as an instrument that adds concrete significance to the concepts of substantive equality, non-discrimination, the relevance of treaty law to improving national level action plans geared towards social justice, women's equality and empowerment of marginalised groups towards these 4 key outcomes:

- 1. Strengthened application of CEDAW and WHR standards through a broader actor base at national levels**
- 2. Enhanced access to an expanding knowledge base and advocacy strategies on critical and emerging issues in women's human rights amongst global actors**
- 3. Global and regional policy and standard setting processes are supportive of women's human rights or use a gender equality approach**
- 4. Increased private sector sensitivity towards benefits of gender equality approach**

Context Analysis of 2015

Changes and highlights in the context of our work on women's human rights

Post 2015 and Towards 2030 Agenda

Focus now shifts to achieving and delivering on the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development for 'people, planet and prosperity', since the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were finalized in September 2015 as the framework for development for the next phase. From the mobilization, discussions and analysis of the feminist movement in the drafting of the, arose some key demands related to macro economic policy and the need to challenge the sources of inequality in our systems. Economic policy has a critical role to play in the realization of women's human rights: this includes how allocation of maximum available resources are made in government budgets, prioritization and changes to land use policies, decisions to exempt sectors of the economy from labour and other protections of workers, and to the deregulation and privatization of public services and utilities. Without a clear understanding about how economic policies impact on women's rights and gender equality, women's rights movements cannot clearly address to how inequalities and exploitative systems are maintained.

In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals concluded, with women's groups noting there were both opportunities and clear dangers of the development agenda represented by the SDGs. We have noted that the post-2015 development agenda has focused on economic growth and poverty reduction, and not social justice and human rights. [Our own analysis](#) has been that the SDGs and targets, as they are, fail to reaffirm in a concrete way the position of human rights and states' accountability to respect, protect, promote and fulfill human rights within the development agenda. The human rights regime, its established standards and norms and monitoring mechanism, should be firmly placed at the heart of the SDGs, driving a development agenda that is rooted in rights and the people it claims to be committed to. This has not been done in a meaningful way and there is need for the

integration of a human rights perspective and substantive equality approach to development. The standalone gender equality goal is not sufficient to address the comprehensive approach required to ensure women's rights and equality through the development agenda and the resource deficit of the SDG framework. While there is a standalone goal on women, the absence of a gender and women's rights analysis has resulted in the lack of integration of gender-based perspective in all the other goals.

The 2030 agenda does provide some additional spaces and mechanisms for monitoring and accountability – the UN Women led strategy [Step it Up](#) seeks new commitments from states in ensuring gender equality, referencing state's obligations to the Beijing Platform for Action as well as the SDGs.

Widening income inequality, development and women's economic rights

Extreme economic inequality between states and within countries is a critical concern for civil society and other actors, noting its negative effects on growth, poverty reduction, and social cohesion and the failure of the trickle down economic distribution system of on which most of the world's economies are based. This has been a focus of the activism around the SDGs, as a possible way to address this concentration of wealth by the "1%". For women, the discussions have focused on gender inequalities around wage gaps, labor force participation, lack of access to capital/business opportunities and disproportionate (over) participation in the informal economy [exacerbate income inequality](#), thus the [International Monetary Funds research](#) reveals that a concurrent reduction in gender inequality would help tackle income inequality.

How do women get out of the cycle of disadvantage? Poverty eradication strategies fail because they remain at the survival level: income generation, adequate food intake, minimum income, access to basic services. But this does not help them get out of the cycle of disadvantage. Women are more vulnerable to risk: illness, natural disasters, economic crises affect women and spiral them back to the original poverty level. The SDGs and national economic policies need to enable people to get out of the cycle of disadvantage.

Women's empowerment and economic development are directly interrelated. Economic development improves women's conditions and reduces inequality between men and women, while the involvement of women in the economy is a key engine for more equitable growth and societal justice. The promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment is key for policymakers. Currently it is receiving wider attention in business agendas as well. However, gender gaps continue to be an obstacle. The reasons and determinants of gender gaps range from culture and history, to attitudes and behaviour, educational choices, family choices including maternity, firms' behaviors, policy interventions, and economic development. Understanding how these link could be a useful guideline in helping to create better policies and decision-making on gender inequality. Feminist groups are concerned about a purely instrumental change to policies to encourage women into labour markets which are inherently exploitative and seek change in law, policies and in the organising behavior of businesses and consumers which recognize the need to treat women and workers more equitably and which is more environmentally friendly.

Equality and Parity at work

In 2015 various events revealed systemic obstacles to achieving substantive equality for women in the workplace. A [hacking incident of Sony](#) internal documents revealed the pay gap for women in showbusiness. Similarly, various initiatives to encourage companies in Western Europe including [Germany](#) and [Sweden](#) to adopt statutory quotas for women in management boards faced resistance citing concerns over tokenism and putting unqualified people in positions. 2015 also saw global concern around maternity leave, with key [Technology companies like facebook](#) providing more flexible arrangements on parental leave in response to growing criticism about obstacles in current corporate culture and systems which reveal '[maternity discrimination](#)'. These events reveal deep-seated gender discrimination which is systemic and requires both political will, regulation of the employment environment and a fair employment and social welfare system that both recognizes and accommodates women in their societal role as child bearers and mothers.

Gender equality and the Democracy Movement

Women's human rights, democracy, and development are [inextricably intertwined](#). Democratic norms provide safeguards and building blocks for human rights claims, greater accountability, good governance, transparency and models of engagement for civil society actors and the function of the political process to serve the needs of the people.

The culture of the country is very important in articulating the duty bearer-rights holder relationship. How do we create a counter movement that puts pressure on the State in looking at gender equality issues as part of a political change agenda? There is usually no linear relationship with the State, for women particularly. The demands for women's rights are so contested: from personal, private, corporate interests, religious and cultural contestations. How much space is there for women to democratically assert ourselves and create a movement: that mobilisation is missing and being restricted in various contexts. What is the status of freedom of assembly, expression and association in the country? In terms of women's freedom of assembly: women face barriers from not just agents of the State, but communities, families, men. What projects do we then need to undertake to create the conditions that we are looking for?

One of the primary challenges for building the networks and strategies to challenge the democracy deficit is in ensuring the equal status and full participation of women. To keep building the global momentum for democratic progress, we must renew our commitment to fostering a network of women and women's organizations engaged in democracy activism at local, national, and international levels.

Women's economic rights

Women's economic rights continue to be a critical area of discrimination. In 2015, the [World Bank released its study](#) on the existing obstacles to women's equality in the world of business and employment. The study showed that in 100 countries, laws still dictated the types of jobs to which women had access. Other indicators of inequality included huge gaps in the right to inheritance, rights to shared matrimonial property, equal pay, vertical and horizontal job segregation, educational systems which were an obstacle to women accessing greater economic opportunities, and banking systems that restricted access to credit. Women's economic rights are a priority due to its transformative potential, not only in ensuring that women's immediate material needs are met, but also in fundamentally reshaping unequal power relationships is also a key area of focus at this time. Monitoring and challenging the pervasive trend in legal recognition of such rights and regulatory policy of the business sector will be critical to our advocacy on rights in this field.

Southeast Asian states implementation of CEDAW obligations

The ASEAN formally announced its community on December 31, 2015, and yet the growing deficit in democracy and good governance [has marked the year of 2015](#), seeing further militarisation, structural gaps in the legal framework for government accountability, economies characterised by greater urban poverty, greater income inequality, divisions between multicultural communities and greater impact of national security laws, laws curtailing freedom of the press and freedom of the internet, used not against terrorists as was intended but against political opposition, bloggers and the press.

Monitoring, adequate data and operationalization of CEDAW Concluding Observations are perennial problems in SEA, due to political will, physical resources and institutional capacity. Indonesia and Singapore was reviewed in 2012, and Cambodia, were reviewed in 2013 and Vietnam in July 2015, Timor Leste in October 2015 . All other SEA countries are due for reporting in the next two years. Myanmar will be scheduled for reporting in 2016,. Malaysia and Thailand's reports are past due on its state report since 2010 and Laos has already completed its state report and will be scheduled by the Committee soon).

In this time before the review, it is critical for civil society groups to monitor the implementation of Concluding Observations of Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against, prioritizing gender equality issues which have been pending for resolution and to put forward issues of particularly marginalised groups or

problematic contexts which can be addressed through the international framework for development and rights such as issues of rights in migration and rights in conflict, as well as issues of young women. For the young women we are working with under this project there is also opportunity for them to input into these international scrutiny processes to ensure that the rights of girls and young women are represented.

Addressing the impact of ASEAN integration on women in Southeast Asia

The significance of ASEAN has to be seen in context of the economic shifts in recent time. The center of global economic gravity has been moving toward Asia. Within Asia, ASEAN is poised between the two giant economies of the People's Republic of China and India, with their comparable market size anticipating accelerated growth and fostering development. In 2015 the ASEAN considered and renewed its framework of integration in creating new Blueprints to implement its commitments under the Political Security, Economic and Socio Cultural Community Pillars. The post 2015 agenda of ASEAN community building is yet unclear

There is an urgent need for ASEAN policy and decision makers to be more responsive to the implication of the ASEAN economic community and in particular the implication on women. This will require the voices of marginalized women to be heard by policy and decision makers. Given their increasing role in the economies of Southeast Asia, women will be exposed to new opportunities and risks in this environment of economic openness. Poor women, in particular, remain vulnerable to economic policy changes that occur in the region.

From the feedback from women's rights organisations in Southeast Asia there are concerns against the mode of growth and development that ASEAN is adopting. It is heading towards a more liberal direction, which does not bring linear and inclusive growth and sustainability because there are no official process of inclusion of Community Based Organisations while the economic blueprint was being developed, thus there is no surprise that this document only addressed the 'professional' and 'formal' workers and fails to mention farmers, peasants and fishers. The key areas under ASEAN community growth are infrastructure development and energy mega projects which pose huge threats to displace people from their livelihoods. De-regulation and privatisation are adopted as fast measures in order to boost trade or foreign investment, without a corresponding governance and regulatory.

Terrorism, conflict and women's rights

In 2015, the world has seen an increase of conflict and has been preoccupied with the impact of ISIS and other militants and terrorists, wars in the Middle East and Africa. These illustrated that conflict and its impact on women's rights remained a key concern for the feminist movement. National security is now so much the focus of the state. In the process there has been an erosion of human rights justified in the name of national security. States are not dealing with terrorism as a comprehensive issue instead there has been a lot of emphasis on security advances and legal restrictions to fundamental freedoms and human rights. Unfortunately, the ones who are in danger from these restrictions and national security policies are the most are the people who are not terrorists, as due process and legal protections are gradually eroded.

The impact of conflict on women and girls has been condensed into some simple statistics, besides the cost in human lives. [Data shows](#) that the critical effect on women and girls - girls enrolment in education falls and remains stagnated before and after conflict from 91% to 70%, maternal mortality in conflict/post conflict situations is twice the global average, in conflict land ownership by women drops to 9% from a global average of 19%, and in countries facing conflict the numbers of girls marrying before age 18 is nearly 60-70%.

As part of the 15th Anniversary of the Security Council ground-breaking resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security—the first resolution to link women's experiences of conflict to international peace and security, a global study was conducted focusing on "Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace". The study contributed to the unanimous passing of UNSC resolution 2242 (2015), which reaffirms the international community's commitment to the women, peace and security agenda. Since CEDAW's adoption of General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations and General recommendation No. 32 -- on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women, the women's movement have additional tools to focus global and state action on protection of women's

rights, ensuring that gender equality is the foundation of all rebuilding phase after conflicts and prevention of harms and violations during conflicts.

Connectivity of our work on non state actors and the business and human rights framework

“When there is a crisis, the question is whether the states still have the power to play its development role. The corporations control the politicians. The state remains powerful in the civil and political rights arena but is in servitude to private capital in the economic sphere. In this scenario, the human rights sphere becomes more and more undermined.” - Chee Yoke Ling Third World Network.

This works as a preface to our engagement on the need to address the actors under the business and human rights framework especially in relation to using the CEDAW framework to add value to the integration of women’s human rights within the business industry. The role of business and private sector institutions are comparable to the role played by the state in realising rights for women. There seems to be a recent recognition of the recognition of the role of corporations in the Sustainable Development Goals process, as well as the role of NGOs – but there is a power imbalance between these two entities, whose goals and functionality differ vastly from one another. In light of this, there is an expected increase of challenges for civil society and the women’s movement needs to work on interventions that would be needed to address this situation.

Globalization and development processes have taken place in a rapid pace and a by-product of these developments is the fact that transnational corporations and other business are playing an increasingly important role both internationally, but also at the national and local levels. Unfortunately, the reporting and monitoring of the impact of businesses on human rights have been largely in the sphere of academic debate and/or by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) only when violations of rights occur.

Globalisation premised largely on macro-economic development has neglected and undermined the importance of women’s economic, social and cultural rights. In particular, deregulation and privatisation of health and education have been combined with cut backs or under resourcing of State sponsored education and health. Globalisation continues to be seen traditionally as an economic process involving the State and the corporate sector. This tends to isolate these processes from other initiatives of globalisation such as the development of universal norms, expansion of human rights standards and the role of civil society. The latter type of globalisation must be recognised as central to accountable good governance and people centred development.

Report and analysis of Strategies and Activities in 2015

To effect the four strategic outcomes of our three year plan, we utilised various approaches and the report below shares our implementation results and impact.

Outcome 1: Strengthened application of CEDAW and WHR standards through a broader actor base at national levels

This outcome was achieved by implementing 6 different strategies.

1.1 Strengthening capacity of gender/women's machinery to ensure national level CEDAW compliance through national action plan and law reform

a. Capacity Development Workshop for Effective Implementation, Monitoring and Coordination of CEDAW with Department of Women Affairs and Family Development (DWF), Ministry of Social Development and Human Security Thailand

From 18-20 November 2015, IWRAP Asia Pacific in partnership with the Department of Women Affairs and Family Development (DWF)/ Ministry of Social Development and Human Security Thailand, UN Women CEDAW Southeast Asia Programme organized a Capacity Development Workshop for Effective Implementation, Monitoring and Coordination of CEDAW in Bangkok, Thailand. Even though Thailand ratified CEDAW in 1985, because of recent restructuring of DWF and change in personnel, there was a need for building capacity of DWF staff on concepts and application of CEDAW to ensure effective implementation and monitoring of it.



Officials of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security



Agency staff discuss and work on developing their indicators for CEDAW compliance

The consultation provided an opportunity to build knowledge of staff members of women's machinery concerning the principles of CEDAW. As it focused on examining the roles and responsibilities of national women's machinery in Thailand in order to strengthen the coordination and accountability mechanisms under the CEDAW framework by using indicators to monitor the implementation of the Convention, the workshop **supported the ability of the Department to fulfil its role as the key CEDAW agency** for Thailand. The consultation enabled discussion and **understanding of the specific indicators developed for monitoring CEDAW compliance**¹ and implementation. The workshop took place over the course of three days and was attended by **42 senior and mid-level representatives** from central and provincial offices of Department of Women Affairs and Family Development.

¹ Principle of Male and Female Equality, Equality in Family and Marriage, Accessibility to Health Care and Family Planning, Rights and participation in political and public activities, Violence against Women, Equal rights in employment and Access to rights for women in difficulties (Groups of special concern) .

1.2 Focus on strengthening National Human Rights Institutions mandate and work plans to implement CEDAW and ensure adequate protection for women's rights

Strengthened engagement with state institutions working on CEDAW and gender equality as a means to strengthen the policy frameworks. Several consultations were held as a part of a larger project on engaging with national women's and national human rights institutions in Southeast Asia. In 2015 we collaborated with the National Commission on Human Rights of **Thailand** and the Commission on Violence Against Women KOMNAS Perempuan of **Indonesia**, to strengthen their role in the domestication of CEDAW and women's human rights. The consultations focused on using the commissions core functions include monitoring implementation of international human rights standards, complaints handling, human rights education, and provision of law and policy recommendations to critical priorities of women's rights.

a. Workshop on CEDAW, Business and Women's Human Rights with National Human Rights Commission of Thailand

From 17-19 March 2015, IWRAW Asia Pacific, in partnership with the UN Women CEDAW Southeast Asia Programme and the Foundation for Women, held a workshop with the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand. This national level capacity building workshop for individuals in the Commission, focused on CEDAW, and international frameworks, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to promote women's human rights within the context of business. The National Human Rights Commission of Thailand is engaged with concerns related to human rights and business; the workshop therefore closely examined women's human rights and business to enhance the Commission's analysis and engagement with critical issues in gender equality. It provided the space to link its existing strategies on addressing the responsibility of the business sector to ensure a more gendered approach to designing interventions and monitoring of results.



Thai Commissioners and women's rights activists working together to strengthen the portfolio of the NHRCT on gender equality

This workshop deepened understanding of CEDAW concepts and standards and introduced key international tools that relate to business and human rights to strengthen the Commission's capacity **to develop initiatives and proposals for reform that are grounded in CEDAW standards** to protect women's human rights in the business context. The emphasis of the programme was to examine the role of the Commission in advancing *de facto* equality for women, in line with CEDAW.

Most specifically the group of commissioners **developed plans on possible ways in which the NHRCT could work with the local company to address gender equality issues impacted by the business community** including: fact finding & gender impact assessments, a platform for mediation, work with the local communities to raise awareness on their rights, recommendations to the business sector and to disseminate the UN Guiding Principles to the business sector.

b. Workshop with Indonesia National Human Rights Mechanisms on CEDAW and Women's Human Rights



Commissioners and staff of Indonesian human rights institutions discuss different approaches to strengthening the protection environment for women's rights

From 3-5 August 2015, IWRAW Asia Pacific in partnership with Komnas Perempuan and UN Women, held a workshop with Commissioners and Staff from Komnas Perempuan, representatives from Komnas HAM (National Human Rights Commission), and Komnas Perlindungan Anak (National Commission for Child Protection).

This workshop deepened understanding of CEDAW concepts and standards to strengthen the capacity of national human rights institutions in Indonesia to develop initiatives and proposals for reform that are grounded in CEDAW standards to protect women's human rights. It also focused on core international human rights treaties, using CEDAW as a cross-cutting convention to analyse other treaties. The workshop also examined the role of national human rights mechanisms in the CEDAW process and discussed strategies to monitor the progress of CEDAW implementation in Indonesia. The emphasis of the programme was to examine the role of the National Human Rights Commissions in advancing *de facto* equality for women, in line with CEDAW. As a result Komnas Perempuan and representatives from Komnas Ham and Komisi Anak committed to a number of possible follow-up actions to engage in to strengthen the implementation of women's human rights standards.

1.3 Strengthening justice sector capacity to address women's access to justice through capacity building and energising judicial activism on gender equality

Association ESE in Macedonia collaborated with IWRAW Asia Pacific in organizing a training for judges under their project "Strengthening the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)" which is a part of its followup strategy on implementing the Concluding Observations to the state from the CEDAW Review in 2013. IWRAW AP has been providing concerted support to Macedonian NGOs since then. The training provided a space to engage with **20 judges** from 10 courts in Macedonia that are involved in the process of monitoring of **ongoing court cases related to violence against women**, as well as representatives of civil society organizations involved in the implementation of this Project.



VAW activists from ESE and IWRAW Asia Pacific resource persons

The objective of the training was to **raise the level of judicial protection for women victims of violence** and discrimination, and it was delivered by representatives of an organization from Malaysia which has extensive experience and credibility to work in this field, IWRAW Asia Pacific, Ayesha Sen Choudhury and Jane Connors. Participants were introduced to the content of CEDAW, including other relevant documents such as General Recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Concluding Observations regarding the implementation of CEDAW in Macedonia. The focus was put on international standards

and state obligations in relation to violence against women. An integral part of the training was the **analysis of the national legal framework and its implementation in accordance with international standards** for protection of women victims of discrimination and violence. In this regard, specific recommendations for improving the civil and criminal litigation, as well as access to justice for women victims of violence were prepared.



Macedonian Judges in discussion and sharing on legal standards on violence against women

One key result is that in the following period ESE **will be able to followup with judges on how they utilize CEDAW standards to expand the scope of legal protections for victims of violence**, and for discussing the opportunities for improvement of the judicial system of protection and drafting amendments to relevant national legal framework.

1.4 Build a new cohort of activists working on CEDAW

a. Strengthened clarity and mobilization of young women's issues in Southeast Asia

Our strategy on “Strengthening the voice of Young Women (as CEDAW Activists)”, had many successes, and in 2015 we wrapped up a successful three year project which worked in collaboration with partners in Vietnam (CGFED), Laos (GDA), Timor Leste (Alola Foundation) and Malaysia(a network of young women activists).

- Connected to a strong group of 96 young activists and build their capacity to use CEDAW as a framework for advocacy.
- Strong participation and input from young women activists from Timor Leste and Vietnam on their issues in the CEDAW shadow reporting process, which ensured that their priority issues of dating violence and the returning policy (to combat girls early pregnancy & school dropout rate) was included in the CEDAW Committee's official recommendations to the state in July and October 2015 respectively.² The groups were able to organize and develop 5 concrete recommendations to the CEDAW Committee on their issues, two of which were then taken up by the Committee.
- Supported NGO partners in Vietnam in a project focused on NGO Networks working on “Gender Equality and Women's Rights to Strengthen Coordination and Use of CEDAW for Advocacy in Viet Nam”. This training is one of three trainings with aim of supporting knowledge and skills for CSOs staffs in Vietnam specially young staffs to promote gender equality and disseminating CEDAW in Vietnam. Held on 23-25 June 2015, we worked with three women's networks in Vietnam (GENCOMNET, DOVIPNET, NEW), and UN Women. The participants were a mix of young and experienced group of women and men working on the issues of gender equality, HIV positive, rural & ethnic women, CEDAW, health, sex workers, education, employment.
- Stronger ability to advocate was demonstrated by the young activists who held dialogues with legislators in their countries, a regional agenda setting forum and a regional Forum on Young Women's Participation in

² Vietnam was reviewed during the 61st session in July 2015 and Timor Leste during the 62nd session in November 2015. Young women from this project were part of the national NGO delegation representing their respective countries. These young women interacted with the CEDAW Committee members directly during lunch briefings and presented their work in this project. Both the Vietnamese and Timorese young women succeed in getting the CEDAW Committee to issue recommendation/concluding observations to the respective governments on the issues that they worked on i.e Vietnam on Dating Violence and Timor Leste on the Re-entry Policy.

ASEAN where they directly discussed their priority issues³ and 'demands' with country and ASEAN level actors

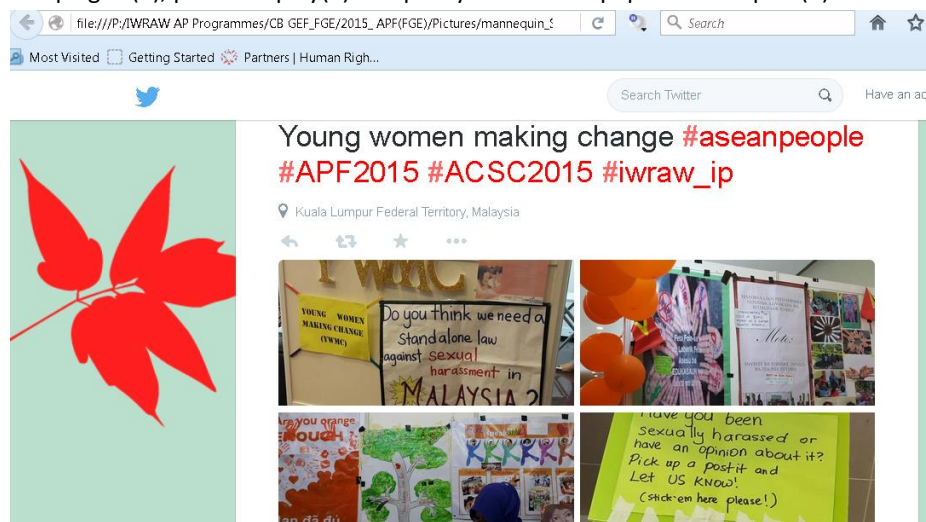
- Continued recognition and increased understanding of young women activists in regional policy processes – participation in the ASEAN People's Forum 2015. As part of IRAW Asia Pacific's project : "Strengthening the voices of young women as gender equality advocates in Southeast Asia", IRAW Asia Pacific facilitated the participation of four young women from Laos, Malaysia, Timor-Leste and Vietnam respectively, to attend and experience the ASEAN Youth Forum and the ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN People's Forum held in Kuala Lumpur in April 2015.



Our Young activist from Timor Leste Abrantes providing the closing speech of the ASEAN People's Forum 2015

The ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ ASEAN People's Forum (ACSC/APF) is a conference that draws civil society actors from across the ASEAN region and beyond and aims to discuss the contexts and challenges regarding human rights, development and social justice issues. The ACSC/APF aims to build solidarity and networks across ASEAN, influence ASEAN mechanisms and processes and reflect the diversity of civil society voices across the region

- Ability of the young activists to develop advocacy ideas, campaigns and tools to further awareness raising and public sensitization of their issues was demonstrated in the number of dialogues (4) social media campaigns (2), public display(4) and policy documents papers developed (4)



Art installations by young activists at the ASEAN People's Forum

³ a. Right of young women in Timor to all levels of education even after maternity (returning policy). This topic in a majority Catholic country is very difficult to work on as there are many cultural reasons for the young mothers to be married, care for children or find work rather than prioritise completing their formal education but the young activists recognize education is a stepping stone for women to access and benefits from other opportunities in society.

b. Vietnamese young women chose to focus on the issue of intimate partner violence. In this conservative culture, discussing date rape and other such issues happening in intimate relationships is a growing concern. This issue allows the activists to also bring in issues of consent and self determination.

c. Laotian activists chose to work on a combination of young women's right to health services, and right to sexual and reproductive education since many are becoming sexually active younger and need to know their right to sexual and reproductive health and the kind of services required to support these rights.

d. Malaysian group of young women chose to focus on sexual harassment at the workplace. The numbers of women entering the workforce in Malaysia is high in ages between 18-30 but taper off at 48% after age 35 or so because culturally women give up employment to care for children. Because there is no legal protection on sexual harassment at the workplace yet, coupled with weak labour protection or application of concepts related to bullying and harassment, then employers are only enjoined to develop their own internal policies for sexual harassment. As such the plan is to raise more awareness on the need for legal protection but also to campaign for community recognition of the seriousness of sexual harassment.



Laotian partners GDA and young activists in their network working on their issues of youth activism in women's rights



Young activists working with Alola Foundation and Grupo Mulheres Parlamento Timor-Leste (GMPTL) speaking with legislators at their dialogue “ADVOCATE AND CAMPAIGN ON ‘EARLY PREGNANCY-DROP OUT SCHOOL’ FOR YOUNG WOMEN.”

1.5 Developing legal strategies focused on use of law as a tool for advocacy on women's equality

In 2015 we focused on legal strategies in several ways. One way was to support legal activists to use CEDAW in Southern Africa and Cambodia.

a. Supported litigation strategies by training lawyers on using CEDAW and Optional Protocol to CEDAW

From 7 – 10 December 2015 we worked with FIDA Kenya on a **Africa Regional Workshop For Lawyers On Litigating Women's Human Rights Using CEDAW** as part of a strategy to enhance legal environment for strengthening women's access to justice, including but not limited to strengthening initiatives for legal and judicial reforms, monitoring application of law and engendering adjudicative processes. This intensive workshop was **able to enhance the capabilities of a group of 12 lawyers from Botswana, Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe** as peer trainers and agents for advocating conceptual understanding and use of CEDAW amongst lawyers, judges, paralegals and others as stakeholders in law enforcement; helped to 11 **identify potential cases** and strategies identified for pursuance of strategic litigation and law reform at the national, regional or international level with support from/ in collaboration with IWRAP Asia Pacific and supported the development of a system of information exchange relating to best strategies in litigation and positive jurisprudence on women's human rights from within the region and with lawyers from across the world.

Working with the Cambodian Center for Human Rights(CCHR) we worked on a use of law and litigation strategy in the **National Workshop for Lawyers on Litigating Women's Human Rights to Land** Using the CEDAW, 4-6 August 2015 Hotel Sunway, Phnom Penh. The national workshop for lawyers in Cambodia was conducted in the context of Cambodia's status as a State Party to both CEDAW since 1992 and the Optional Protocol to CEDAW since the year

2010. In the succeeding years, while Cambodia has taken extensive steps to enhance protection of women's human rights through adoption of new laws and amendments to old laws. Unfortunately, access to justice for women remains a challenge, such as the lack of a comprehensive legal aid system, which negatively affects women's access to justice as well as the cost of legal options. This workshop provided support to lawyers in framing arguments in land cases on women's human rights using CEDAW's approach to equality and non discrimination. **One result was that the mapping identified current challenges in the domestic jurisdiction** raised which would impact the advocacy on women's rights through the courts and the development of specific jurisprudence on land rights:

- Domestic procedure, role of ministries and some legislations are not clear
- Around 400 laws and sub-degree in relation to the land issue, however it is conflicting with each others
- Access to justice on land related cases are very weak, in term of complains mechanism.



Cambodian lawyers working on framing legal arguments using CEDAW

Another result was that an agreement was reached with the lawyers to consider a strategy which includes initiating OP CEDAW case, continued training for lawyers and judges, court-watch activity and strategic litigation. From the reviewed 7 cases one case was selected as a focus to bring the issue to bring the CEDAW committee. The case covered indigenous women rights and their rights to land. More importantly it will initiate strategic litigation approaches in view of potential use of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW as a means of ensuring state accountability and access to justice for women. The court monitoring initiative by CCHR identified to be a useful tool to identify gaps in access to justice for women victims, as well as identify stakeholders engaged in the process of law enforcement and causes that contributed to the lack of successful convictions or grant of relief to victims.

1.6 Building knowledge of women's rights NGOs to strengthen advocacy, at CEDAW review sessions through the From Global to Local programme, through submission of shadow reports, and through Concluding Observations strategies

a. Built capacity of women's groups on application of CEDAW as a legal framework and tool for advocacy

From Global to Local Training – the impact from this programme can be seen in the impact section

- Throughout January – December 2015 we continued to implement the From Global to Local Training programme to provide women activists at the national level familiarity and skills to directly engage with the international framework for driving policy change such as through UN mechanisms like CEDAW and to build understanding of women's groups on how to use the CEDAW review to mobilise support and raise concerns about the continued existence of gender based discrimination and inequality.



Azeri State delegation members in the 60th CEDAW session

- In 2015, we were able to provide targeted support to country level women's NGOs from 22 different countries, **Azerbaijan, Denmark, Ecuador, Eritrea, Gabon, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Tuvalu, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Croatia, Gambia, Namibia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Spain, Viet Nam, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Timor-Leste, United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan**, 16 of which were from developing countries and representing groups of women subjected to multiple forms of discrimination to advance their advocacy agendas at the global level. This support to country level activists makes a difference to the advocacy of the NGOs to ensure coverage of a broad range of issues under all articles of the Convention and to facilitate better strategic linkage, partnership and normative agreement between mainstream women's rights groups and marginalised, thematic and/or sectoral groups.
- The **60th CEDAW session** was held from 16th February 2015 until 6 March 2015. The CEDAW Committee reviewed 8 countries: Azerbaijan, Denmark, Ecuador, Eritrea, Gabon, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Tuvalu. "From Global to Local" was held over two weeks, from 12 Feb until 28 February 2015. IRAW Asia Pacific trained and facilitated the participation of 20 women from these countries. All the NGO representatives involved submitted shadow reports and continued to engage in advocacy initiatives with the CEDAW Committee to influence the outcome of the reporting process for their countries.



Activists from Azerbaijan, Denmark, Ecuador, Eritrea, Gabon, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Tuvalu

- The **61st CEDAW session** was held from 6 – 24 July 2015. The CEDAW Committee reviewed 8 countries: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Croatia, Gambia, Namibia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Spain, Viet Nam. "From Global to Local" was held over two weeks, from 2nd July – 18th July 2015. IRAW Asia Pacific trained and facilitated the participation of over 25 women from these countries. All the NGO representatives involved submitted shadow reports and continued to engage in advocacy initiatives with the CEDAW Committee to influence the outcome of the reporting process for their countries.



Equality activists from Vietnam, Gambia, Senegal and Spain

- The **62nd CEDAW session** was held from 26 October till 20 November 2015. The CEDAW Committee reviewed 11 countries in this session: Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Timor-Leste, United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan. Our training and mentoring programme "From Global to Local" was held over three weeks, from 16 October until 13 November 2015. IRAW Asia Pacific trained and facilitated

the participation of over 53 women from these countries. All the NGO representatives involved submitted shadow reports and continued to engage in advocacy initiatives with the CEDAW Committee to influence the outcome of the reporting process for their countries.



Activists from Timor , Malawi, Portugal.



Women's human rights defenders from Malawi, Russia, Slovakia and Slovenia

- The 62nd CEDAW session was held from 26 October till 20 November 2015. The CEDAW Committee reviewed 11 countries in this session: Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Timor-Leste, United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan. Our training and mentoring programme “From Global to Local” was held over three weeks, from 16 October until 13 November 2015. IWRAW Asia Pacific trained and facilitated the participation of over 53 women from these countries. All the NGO representatives involved submitted shadow reports and continued to engage in advocacy initiatives with the CEDAW Committee to influence the outcome of the reporting process for their countries.
- In this year we worked to ensure participation of 97 women's right activists (92 women, 5 men) from at the 60th – 62nd sessions, from to engage with the CEDAW Committee's review of their governments. We provided **targeted support to 28 women's NGOs representing groups of women subjected to multiple forms of discrimination** to advance their advocacy agendas in global human rights, especially those groups that have not been able to access space for public dialogue, attention, or policy focus. Including the 62nd CEDAW session, we have now facilitated participation of about 857 women from 165 countries in “From Global to Local” to attend the CEDAW review, monitor state reporting and engage with the CEDAW Committee to strengthen the work being done on CEDAW implementation at the national level.
- We supported **NGOs in submitting 52 shadow reports and more than 70 oral statements** to the Committee thus contributing to the relevance of concluding observations so that they can then be used as a tool for advocacy at the national level. Specific priorities were given to encourage women from marginalized groups to be part of the CEDAW reporting process. We also supported the **NGOs in 21 lunch briefings with the CEDAW Committee**. For impact of the programme on the CEDAW review please go to next section of this report on impact.

- Strengthening access of women's rights activists to the review through webcasting and disseminating the results of the review. We were able to provide **webcasting** of all the 27 reviews to broaden the reach of the review process and ensure women's groups would also be able to monitor the report by the state remotely from their location without being in Geneva and be able to disseminate the output of the review which is the Concluding Observation by disseminating the Concluding Observation as key recommendations by the Committee when it is made available on the OHCHR website through emails, facebook and our dedicated listservs cedaw4change and global2local. (www.treatybodywebcast.org)
- Plans/processes for monitoring and advocacy on Concluding Observations developed by country level women's rights groups. Immediately after the review we were able to support NGOs in developing immediate strategies to disseminate the Concluding Observations and use the Concluding Observations to strengthen monitoring and advocacy with their governments on CEDAW priorities. All 97 activists supported contributed to developing country level action plans. The action plans are summarized in the annexed report. Thus all NGOs from the **22 countries supported by the From Global to Local programme developed their own action plans**⁴ which would be the basis of advocacy and monitoring using the CEDAW Concluding Observations.

b. Supported development of NGO shadow reports to CEDAW

Shadow report trainings are a critical aspect in the preparation by national NGOs/CSOs for the CEDAW review process. In the last couple of years, IWRAW Asia Pacific has been emphasizing the need for these national level organizations to critically analyse and develop the list of issues and questions for the pre-session as well. We worked directly with women's groups in 3 countries namely, **Vietnam, Armenia and Myanmar in 2015** in writing their shadow reports. Besides this we also provided technical reviews for NGO shadow reports remotely for more than 50 reports in 2015, as reported above.

Developed Shadow report and process with NGOs in Armenia

On 17-20 November 2015 in Yerevan, Armenia we organized a shadow report training in collaboration with Democracy Today. Armenia is scheduled for review by the CEDAW Committee in October 2016 next during the 65th

⁴ The plans developed by NGOs are centered on:

- Circulating and creating understanding about the concluding observations
- There is a need to invite, educate and share when you have been involved in the international processes
- Need to create understanding about the different bodies in the UN
- Building relationships with the media to create better understanding
- Disseminate Concluding Observation of CEDAW Committee through social network (emails, facebook)
- Workshop with NGO partners to discuss and create plans to monitor, research, lobby and create awareness within 6 months
- Strategies to monitor and advocate on concluding observations and your priority issues
- Creating an NGO working group to analyse CEDAW recommendations and monitor state implementation
- Integrating linking CEDAW monitoring and advocacy with organizational mandates and priorities
- Integrating CEDAW monitoring with the current focus on the Sustainable Development Goals especially on Goal 5 on gender equality. States will be focused on monitoring the SDGs and this can be used to link to CEDAW implementation as a way to strengthen standards on women's rights.
- Focus on 2 priority follow-up issues as opportunities to FastTrack actions
- Focus on strategic litigation if there are sets of cases which can be used to test the way the judicial system looks at the issue
- Focus on judiciary to change gender stereotypes and cultural norms - high level panel for judges of Supreme and Constitutional courts regarding the importance of applying the international HR standards on their national rulings
- Create and sustain a network of partner organizations – also with a view to creating the next shadow report
- Important to recall what the government said or did not say, information provided or not provided, etc
- Any promises the government have made – should be disseminated in the media
- Engage directly with government and law-makers wherever possible
- Explore opportunities to directly dialogue and engage with your State on priority concerns
- Explore whether you can do any training and capacity building with them – including how should government agencies implement/work CEDAW into their existing plans or agenda for gender equality
- Socialization programmes with government, Socialization with social movements and organizations
- Working with other international NGOs
- If you get the funding, you can even invite CEDAW Committee members to attend in their personal capacity
- Advocate for State-level Research
- Engage with NHRIs – how can NHRIs or ombuds system strengthen state capacity to implement CEDAW and monitor actions and follow-ups.

CEDAW Session. This training was organized with the support of Democracy Today. This workshop was to assist the groups working in Armenia to prepare for the CEDAW review of Armenia which will take place in October 2016. This particular training saw the representation of activists from diverse backgrounds/area of work – including and not limited to, health, violence against women, education, disability, minority rights, sexual orientation & gender identity, political participation of women and others.



Workshop with Armenian NGOs in Yerevan to develop their information for the CEDAW review

A plan for the shadow report is a key output from the workshop. An immediate output was the preparation of a report to be submitted to the pre-session. This coalition of NGOs developed a list of Issues and Questions for the pre-session which took place on the 7th of March 2016. Democracy Today coordinated this and has submitted this list to the CEDAW Secretariat to assist the CEDAW Committee in their preparation of the official List of Issues and Questions⁵ that will be sent to the State of Armenia, to direct the constructive dialogue between the Committee and the state in October 2016.

**ARMENIA'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF
ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
SUGGESTED LIST OF ISSUES**

**Submitted for the 65th Session (Pre-sessional Working Group) to be held on March 6-11, 2016
by group of NGOs including:**

Democracy Today NGO
Disability Info NGO
Sinjar Yezidi National Union
Center for Gender and Leadership Studies
Coalition on Violence against Women in collaboration with The Advocates for Human Rights. The members of the Coalition are the following NGOs:
Women's Support Center NGO
Women's Rights Center NGO
Women's Resource Center NGO
Sexual Assault Crisis Center NGO
Real World, Real People NGO
Public Information and Need of Knowledge NGO
Society Without Violence NGO

Armenian NGOs submission
to CEDAW for the
Presession

Developed Shadow report and process with NGOs in Vietnam

From the Training Workshop on Gender and Women's Human Rights Movements (in the context of Viet Nam), Hanoi, 23-25 June 2015 we were also able to work with the three women's networks in Vietnam (GENCOMNET, DOVIPNET, NEW), to finalise their shadow report submission. Though a more generalised gender training, one key output was the finalisation of the shadow report to CEDAW from the coalition that was focused on the priority issues of rural women, health, education, rights in marriage and employment.

⁵ The issues covered by Armenian women's groups include:



**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON
ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
IN VIET NAM 2007 – 2015**

This submission was prepared by members of three NGO networks in VietNam:
GENCOMNET (Gender and Community Development Network),
DOVIPNET (Domestic Violence Prevention Network) and
NEW (Network for Empowerment of Women)
and their partners
to the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
for the reporting circle VII and VIII of Viet Nam, 2015

Developed Shadow report and process with NGOs in Myanmar

On 27-30th September 2015 in Chiangmai, Thailand IWRAW Asia Pacific organized this activity with Women's League of Burma (WLB). The shadow report training was organized for organizations working within and outside the border of Myanmar/Burma. Myanmar is scheduled for review by the CEDAW Committee in July next during the 64th CEDAW Session. This training was organized with the support of Women's League of Burma (WLB). Shadow report trainings are a critical aspect in the preparation by national NGOs/CSOs for the CEDAW review process. A shadow report is being prepared focused on the rights of rural women, violence against women and women's political participation.



Women from NGOs in Myanmar

Outcome 2: Enhanced access to an expanding knowledge base and advocacy strategies on critical and emerging issues in women's human rights amongst global actors

a. Strategies to support rights of marginalised groups including sex workers, women who use drugs and women living with HIV/AIDS

Women sex workers, women who use drugs, and positive women often live at the fringes of society based on societal understandings of acceptable behavior and moralities. Such understandings often get formalized as norms which in turn serve to maintain status quo in denying women sex workers and women who use drugs the enjoyment of and access to fundamental rights and freedoms. While the governments of Ukraine, Lithuania, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have recognized the right to equality under various clauses of their respective constitutions, at the international level, they have also expressed commitments to gender equality by ratifying the CEDAW. Despite such initiatives women continue to experience multiple forms of discrimination at the national level. Since 2014 we have been engaging with women's groups who wished to begin a direct engagement with the CEDAW Committee on strengthening the use of CEDAW to address the rights of Women Sex Workers.

On February 26th 2015, we held a **Thematic Meeting with the CEDAW Committee with various community groups such as Sex Worker Advocacy Networks (SWAN) and Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP)**. Through the meeting we achieved our main goal and were able to brief the CEDAW Committee on the context of rights violations faced by women in sex work towards more comprehensive strategies to enable them to realise their rights. The meeting was able to create a space for discussion between the expert body and activists on issues and challenges in protecting rights of women sex workers, presenting specific case studies from specific countries and reviewed the established international standards and legal approaches towards protection of rights of women sex workers. This meeting was critical as there are limited spaces to analyse and consider complex and marginalised issues like the rights of sex workers and how the international system responds to these issues. A framework⁶ for addressing these rights is part of the outputs that was used in the discussion with the CEDAW Committee and will be used to ground the future strategies of this group.

⁶ The key elements of the framework include:

Principles	
1.1	Articulation of principles and standards in addressing discrimination and rights violations faced by women sex workers.
1.2	Based on CEE/CIS regional consultation
Terminologies and clarity on approaches	
2.1	Sex worker and other identifiers (sex service provider; prostitutes; women in commercial sex, etc)
2.2	Sex work – work v. business
2.3	Decriminalisation and de-penalisation (Specific elements)
2.4	Regulation and legalisation
2.5	Understanding sex work and trafficking
Mapping the context and violations against women sex workers in CEE/CIS	
3.1	Social, political and economic context
3.2	Legal context
3.3	Sex workers as non-homogenous group [race; ethnicity; class; status; categories (street walkers, etc)]
Part 4: Understanding discrimination and violations against women sex workers and related state obligations	
4.1	Denial of access to justice
4.2	Institutional violence
4.3	Economic and social security
4.4	Human trafficking
4.5	Limited participation and representation in decision making and policy processes
4.6	Lack of access to adequate and timely healthcare
4.7	Stigmatisation
4.8	Rights in marriage and family life
4.9	Lack of privacy

In February 2015, we also **facilitated the participation of 4 representatives from groups working on women who use drugs and women sex workers to engage at the 62nd CEDAW Session** held in Geneva from 26th October to 20th November 2015. This provided them with a platform for articulating rights of women who use drugs (WUDs) and women sex workers in relation to CEDAW and advocate for reform in national legal framework and standards as well as mobilise support for their issues amongst other mainstream women's rights groups from individual countries through a 8 day interaction and training period. Accessing to policy spaces and strengthening the linkage between women from marginal groups with women's groups working on 'mainstream' issues is a critical aspect of building strategies to ensure accountability for the rights of people who are invisibilised by social norms and lack of political will.

b. Strategies addressing critical and emerging issues

i) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and Women's Human Rights

If the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda are to lead humankind to the future we want, it needs to not merely make the broad claims of being people centered, but show a clear and determined commitment by articulating and infusing a human rights framework and the principle of substantive equality within its goals and targets. This is a critical aspect and cannot be left for national level implementation or interpretation. The international human rights standards and norms have to be seen to be at the core of the SDGs, providing the framework within which the goals and targets are understood and fulfilled.

Throughout 2015 IWRAW AP's focus on the SDGs has been on strengthening the linkage between CEDAW as an instrument that adds concrete significance to the development process and SDGs in particular. The infusion of feminist perspectives, human rights principles of universality, non-retrogression and indivisibility are necessary to address the governance, financial, environmental and human rights challenges that present themselves in the current global context. Initiatives and processes need to reinforce the principle that achieving gender equality and human rights are autonomous ends in themselves and not simply instruments to achieve economic growth.

In January 2015 we held an **Expert Group Meeting on Women's Human Rights, Equality and the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda** in Kuala Lumpur from 29 – 31 January 2015. Through this sharing we were able to concretise [our position paper](#) on the SDG framework and develop a critique of it to submit to the UN.

In preparation for the final draft of the Sustainable Development Goals and indicators, **we also provided our [response to the 'zero draft'](#)** in June 2015, which provided the perspectives of our partners and resources persons on the critical limitations of the SDGs and our common demands on outcome, indicators and processes surrounding the SDGs.



RESPONSE TO THE ZERO DRAFT OF THE POST-2015 UN SUMMIT OUTCOME DOCUMENT BY IWRAW ASIA PACIFIC

IWRAW Asia Pacific welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the Outcome Document to be adopted in relation to the Post-2015 Development Agenda at the UN Summit in September 2015.

We congratulate Member States for their commitment towards developing a comprehensive and far-reaching set of universal goals and targets with the aim of transformation for a better world. The zero draft attempts to consider and address a range of existing challenges to sustainable development and growth in the current world order. We appreciate the reaffirmation of commitment towards adherence of rights and obligations under international law and the promotion of dignity for all human beings. In specific we appreciate the vision of ensuring a world in which every woman and girl enjoys gender equality and all barriers to their empowerment in our society have been removed.

Recalling the observations of High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post 2015 Development Agenda¹, while it is imperative for the Post 2015 Agenda to build on the gains of the Millennium Development Goals, it is equally pertinent to note that the MDGs had failed to

The **UN Summit on the Sustainable Development Goals** in 25-27 September 2015 in New York launched the framework for development and we joined the women's groups in lobbying to mobilise constituencies and thoughts on promoting women's human rights in the post 2015 process using the CEDAW framework and accountability mechanism. Besides providing our inputs into the formal process we held a side meeting called **Results and Rights: Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals and Post 2015 Development Agenda through CEDAW** on the 26th September at the Armenian Centre. This meeting examined how CEDAW as an international mechanism can be used to ensure accountability and implementation of the sustainable development goals. The meeting drew *more than 40 activists and enabled us to rally activists to* examine and consider how CEDAW can be effectively used as a norm and indicator within the development agenda, particularly within the realisation of women's human rights and shared understanding of the use of women's human rights, as embodied in CEDAW, to further advocate for effective implementation of the sustainable development goals.

ii) Strategy on Women's Rights in Conflict and Post Conflict

At this time there is still a need to strengthen the reporting by NGOs on issues affecting women in conflict/post conflict contexts, and to ensure that use of GR 30 through the robust nature of the CEDAW review process enhances the concepts and norms related to state accountability, highlights current and emerging issues related to the prevention, conflict and reconstruction phases towards more effective recommendations from the treaty body system and in turn , toward more constructive actions by the state. There also is a need to explore the strategies to highlight the application of GR 30 as a complementary accountability mechanism to UNSCR 1325 and the other UN SCRs related to women, peace and security.

In 2015, we continued to strengthen our strategies addressing the rights of women in conflict and post conflict context through two main initiatives: our **membership and advocacy in the Asia Pacific Women Peace & Security Network (APWAPS)** and in **providing technical support to partners in using the new General Recommendation 30 of CEDAW** to strengthen monitoring and NGO reporting on rights of women in conflict and post conflict context.

IWRAW Asia Pacific used the opportunity and platform of various APWAPS partner meetings and trainings including Joint Workshop between Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the Asia-Pacific Women's Alliance for Peace and Security (APWAPS) and APWAPS meeting on 24-26 November 2015, Seoul, Republic of Korea **to promote the use of the CEDAW framework** and we have been continuing this strategy to expand the stakeholder groups on CEDAW working on conflict since 2004.



IWRAW Asia Pacific linking with activists working on women peace and conflict at APWAPS

We also coordinated a **Regional Writeshop on CEDAW General Recommendation 30 on Women in Conflict Prevention, Conflict and Post Conflict Situations** on 20-23 September 2015 in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia. From this working meeting with activists we **developed a guideline for reporting to CEDAW using GR 30** which will be printed and disseminated in mid 2016.

Key elements identified in the guideline includes the scope of the Convention in addressing conflict, and the complementarity of the Convention, international humanitarian, refugee and criminal law and the Security Council Agenda on Women, Peace and Security, and the strengthened accountability structure for women in peace and conflict. The guide also **identified common key issues to highlight** through their monitoring and strategies in relation to women's human rights in conflict and post conflict through the CEDAW and 1325 processes.

Priority issues

- a) Gender based violence-
- b) Early /forced marriages
- c) Restriction on mobility
- d) Policy and approach to Internal Displaced Peoples and Refugees
- e) Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution
- f) Marginalization of women from ethnic and religious minorities and women with disabilities
- g) Comprehensive national plan- gaps and challenges in the State and Shadow Reports
- h) Women become targets of extremists - The impact of extremism on the participation of women in political and public life
- i) Security sector reform
- j) Access to justice

(iii) Strategies on Women's Economic rights

In 2015 we implemented the ***Women's Economic Leadership and Empowerment in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (WEL-ASEAN)*** project is to strengthen Women's Rights Organisations (WROs) to influence laws and policies in the ASEAN economic community for women's economic leadership and empowerment in the formal and informal sectors. The key strategy is to increase the engagement of WROs in the ASEAN region through the framework of review of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as an avenue to raise awareness of priority issues for women's economic leadership in ASEAN countries.

Under this project we have been able to

- Develop and increase the capacity of women and WROs in ASEAN to develop their analysis of the impact of ASEAN on women in the formal and informal economy;
- Challenge discriminatory laws and practices against women in ASEAN and to advocate for progressive laws and socio-economic policies and programs which promote women's human rights, women's economic leadership and empowerment in the informal and formal sectors of the ASEAN economy and;
- Strengthen WROs network and mobilisation for advocacy with their state and with ASEAN.

In 2015 we **developed a framework using CEDAW and other international human rights standards to strengthen advocacy on women's economic rights in ASEAN** and a common position to articulate an agenda for advocacy to strengthen women's rights in three priority issues with partners through an expert group meeting. From 28-30 March 2015, IWRAW Asia Pacific organised an Expert Group Meeting on Women's Economic Rights and Leadership in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This meeting is a part of the regional project on Women's Economic Leadership (WEL) that IWRAW Asia Pacific is implementing together with national partners in ASEAN countries in partnership with Oxfam and supported by the Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This meeting deepened understanding about the key components and issues for women's economic rights and analyzed the implications of development and ASEAN integration. Key areas of concern for women in this context include i) the rights of women migrant workers ii) women's rights in natural resource governance and iii) the impact of multinational corporations on women's rights and how the concept of gender and the value chain could be used to address current inequalities faced by women in the economy.



Expert Group Meeting on WEL Framework



Capacity building of partners was supported by the development of the Framework for Women's Economic Rights in ASEAN. We also built in a capacity building initiative to increase the resource pool in the region on this issue through a **Regional training on women's economic rights with women rights organisations** (WROs) from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, the Philippines and Thailand. From 5-8 September 2015, IWRAW Asia Pacific, in partnership with the Foundation for Women held a regional training on women's economic rights in Hua Hin, Thailand for **20 trainers**, partners and practitioners on women's human rights from Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand and the Philippines.

This was followed by **4 country level trainings held in Vietnam Cambodia Myanmar and Thailand which scaled up the capacity building of WROs and allowed the project to reach out to other organisations to link strategies.**

- Cambodia - Training on "Women's Economic Rights and ASEAN " on 14th -17th December 2015, at **Orchidee Restaurant, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.** The total training participants are 27 (5 men) and they are from 4 different kinds of networks/institutions/backgrounds. One group is from the grassroots communities (women land activists), another group is members of NGO-CEDAW, one more group is from GADNet, and some are GADC's staff members. Due to the fact that one participant is from a local TV channel, the training activities and some of its objectives were featured by a TV channel-Cambodia News Channel (CNC) and uploaded on [GADC Facebook page](#) and others.



Partners on field visit to communities to talk about their priorities and articulate their issues.



Trainers at the Cambodia workshop and the results of their work.

(iv) Strategy on Business and Human Rights

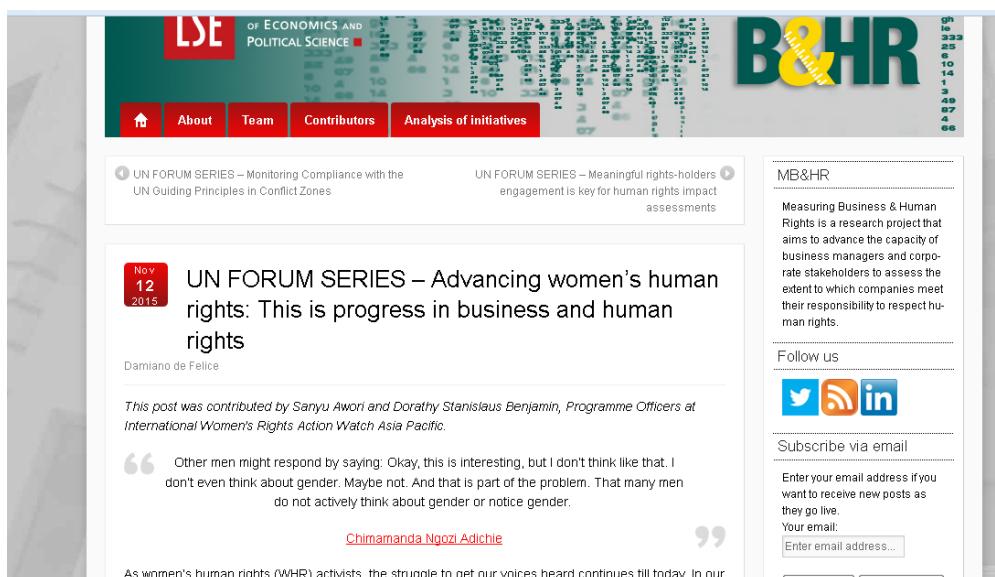


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From 16-18 November 2015, IWRAP Asia Pacific attended the fourth annual UN Forum on Business and Human Rights that was held in Geneva, Switzerland. The UN Forum is the world's largest annual gathering on business and human rights and had over 2,500 participants from government, business, community groups and civil society, law firms, investor organisations, UN bodies, NHRIs, trade unions, academia and the media.

The annual **UN Forum on Business and Human Rights in November 2015** was identified as a key forum that IWRAP Asia Pacific should attend as we continue to explore and further our work in this area. Participating in the UN Forum provided an opportunity to identify the possibilities and limitations of women's human rights in the business and human rights discourse, network with individuals/organisations working on business and human rights and ensure IWRAP Asia Pacific as a stakeholder invested in the business and human rights discourse. Participating increases our visibility; and provides an opportunity to build and nurture relationships; and is useful to gauge where the discourse is at with regards to women's human rights and where we as an organisation should lay emphasis. Women's human rights is yet to be concretely integrated into the business and human rights discourse.

Resources on Business and Human Rights were also part of the strategy. IWRAP AP Programme staff [contributed a perspective article at the London School of Economics Blog](#) on Business and Human Rights looking at the role of the UN General principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPR) and women's human rights. Also see below for other resources created on Business and Human Rights linking to CEDAW.



In holding the **IWRAP Asia Pacific Roundtable Discussion on Business and Women's Human Rights in Manila, Philippines, 6-8 July 2015** we were able to chart potential strategies and opportunities for IWRAP Asia Pacific & our partners, to develop its strategy on business and women's human rights to ensure that CEDAW implementation fully recognizes the role being played by business in terms of realizing women's human rights. The roundtable enhanced clarity on several key concepts related to the UNGP framework on business and human rights namely universality (norms), indivisibility, accountability and the need to build evidence base and business case in engaging with business actors. The roundtable also usefully mapped instruments and mechanisms related to business and human

rights that had a business or conversely more human rights orientation –this allowed us to build clarity on the large volume of structures, policies and instruments in existence.



Contributors to the Roundtable Discussion on Business and Women's Human Rights

Key strategies for IRAW Asia Pacific were also developed as a key output from the roundtable.

1. Facilitating a CEDAW Good Recommendation on business and women's human rights
2. Providing a CEDAW lens for the national action plans.
3. ASEAN engagement: facilitating a women's business forum (as intermediary; bringing together female business leaders for a dialogue).
4. Mapping out good practices by IFIs and businesses (include the perspectives of IRAW Asia Pacific's partners and constituents; WHRDs (Women Human Rights Defenders)).
5. Three-country studies on how companies operate using business and human rights lens (specifically on South Korea, China, and India).
6. One-page document to influence AIB to adopt gender policies as a preliminary initiative in their operations.
7. Studies on specific industries.
8. Engagement with the working group on inter-governmental treaty (UN mechanisms).
9. Mapping of existing initiatives that could be explored (the Due Diligence Project, gender and tax justice, other platforms of engagement on business and human rights).
10. Develop indicators for companies on gender equality (link with World Economic Forum).
11. APEC summit in the Philippines.
12. Capacity building on business and women's human rights for partners.
13. Take into account the three contexts of women affected by businesses – as workers, as consumers, and as community members (to also include in family in the latter category).

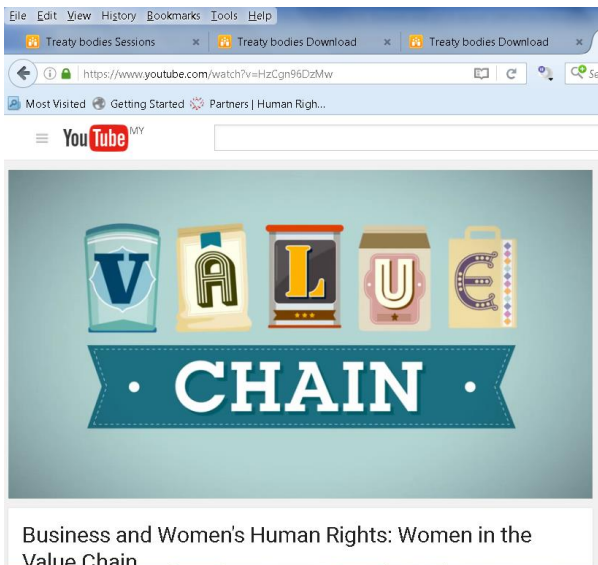
Enhanced access to tools and resources on CEDAW

On communication tools and other resources, in 2015 we created some tools to support women's groups in our network in using CEDAW and complementary frameworks to address the current context of development, the impact of private sector and the need to have tools for specific advocacy groups. These are available on request from IRAW AP.

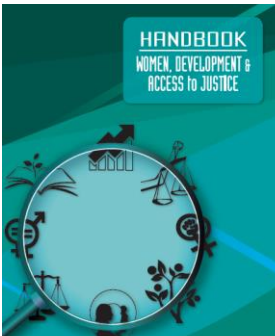
- Creation of infographics on [Business and women's human rights](#)



- Creation of online tools e.g. videos as supplemental aids for CEDAW trainers. Available on youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZVpLyVyfav3oyRd-uMbgmA>



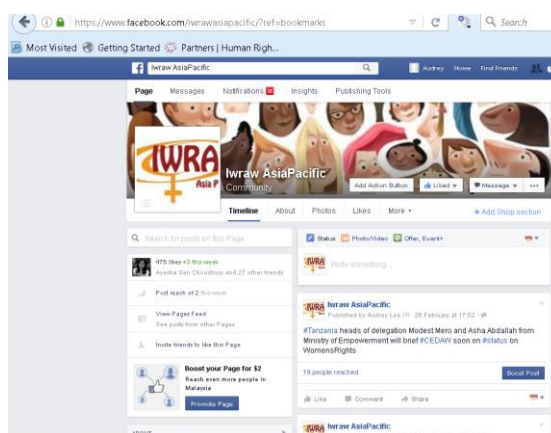
- [Handbook on Women, development and Access to Justice](#) was developed to support strategies addressing women's economic rights and access to justice.



- [Framework on Women's Economic Rights in ASEAN](#) was developed to support our 6 partner organisations Association for Development of Women and Legal Education (ADWLE), Gender and Development for Cambodia, NGO Gender Group, Myanmar, Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development (CGFED), Foundation for Women (FFW) and Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau (WLB), around 15 of their partners in the Women's Economic Leadership and Empowerment project to advocate for economic rights in ASEAN. Many of the ASEAN blueprints, declarations, plans and other documents (including those related to APSC and ASCC) contain human rights language that is not defined and for which no single definitive meaning prevails. In their advocacy on ASEAN economic integration, WROs have the opportunity to shape the meaning of key concepts, towards the goal of ensuring that women will enjoy their economic rights as integration proceeds and this resource supports them in that work.



- Dissemination of IWRAW Asia Pacific advocacy and progress on work through our online bulletin, twitter account, [facebook](#) and [website](#)



Outcome 3: Global and regional policy and standard setting processes are supportive of women's human rights or use a gender equality approach

a. Advocacy at the Commission on Status of Women



- We participated in the **Commission on Status of Women Conference** as part of the NGO CSW Steering Group of Asia Pacific in the women's rights caucus meeting to impact the intergovernmental process of the CSW at the United Nations in New York from the 9-20th of March 2015 in New York.

The main focus of the session was on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including current challenges that affect its implementation and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. In addition, NGOs took opportunity to engage with the UN and members states on the finalization of the Sustainable Development Goals which would be adopted by September 2015, to ensure greater accountability for women's human rights under the global development agenda. At the CSW the final assessment of the 20 year mark of the Beijing agenda showed marked inequalities still existed and questioned how the unfulfilled commitments of Beijing as well as the critical realities of the world post 2015 would have to be prioritised and addressed in the SDG framework and process to ensure that gender equality results from the global development agenda. Thus our participation in CSW was intended to surface ideas and strategies with women's rights networks at the CSW on ways to enhance state accountability for gender equality, CEDAW implementation, and commitment to the BPFA in the current context of increasing conflict, ensuring greater accountability for gender equality in the SDGs in order that the major challenges to feminism including rising fundamentalisms, rollbacks in recognition of the universality of women's rights and the slow progress for social justice and equitable development will find a response in the UN development agenda.

- Created visibility for the issue of accountability for gender equality in the SDGs.** IWRAW Asia Pacific held a side event titled - *Women's Human Rights and Equality in Post 2015 Development Agenda* on 14 March 2015. We invited inputs from civil society in reviewing the progresses on

SDGs and proposing an alternative approach to ensuring protection of human rights and interests of women through the development agenda. The speakers on the panel were Caroline Lambert, Maria Hermione Graterol, Shanthi Dairiam and Dr. Lia Nadaria. The panel was moderated by Dr. Lesley Ann Forster. The basis of our participation would be to reinforce the principle that achieving gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights are autonomous ends in themselves and not simply instruments to achieve economic growth. Our approaches was to capitalise on women's voice, mobilisation and 'power' – especially strengthening women's rights agenda through the political framework and constitutional reform. To achieve full recognition of women's rights and for people centred development to work it needs to also address socially constructed power relations, norms and practices which inform family dynamics, communities, religious bodies, states, institutions, and political parties as well as mass and social movements. The side panel ***enabled us to present a critique about the lack of accountability of the SDGs and the detached relationship to human rights standards.***



Our panelists and facilitators Maria, Caroline Shanthi , Lia and Lesley Anne

IWRAW Asia Pacific **also provided inputs on the necessity to utilize treaty body** reporting as a means for raising accountability and Women's Human Rights issues under the SDGs and the monitoring system of treaty bodies.

- **Pangea Side Event** - This Event was jointly sponsored by Pangea and WUNRN. We were part of the panelists and spoke on Ayesha Sen Choudhury from IWRAW Asia Pacific on CEDAW Shadow Reports and the Global to Local Programme. Other panelists included Ms. Megan Brady-Clark & Ms. Gemma Welsh from NAWO - UK National Alliance of Women's Organizations & UK NGO CSW Alliance who spoke about their experiences in drafting the Beijing + 20 Shadow Report; Ms. Kate McInturff from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Senior Researcher who presented on the Canadian Civil Society Mobilization at Beijing + 20; Ms. Giulia Barbucci from Cgil European Secretariat on behalf of Trade Unions CGIL and UIL, Italy who spoke about Strategic Tools to Support the Request for the Advancement of Women Work Rights, Ms. Simona Lanzoni of Pangea Foundation Italy Vice President on Italy Women's Platform and their experiences in drafting the Beijing+20 Alternative Report and the CEDAW Shadow Report; Ms. Katrien Van der Heyden, European Gender Expert who spoke about Using Gender Analysis & Research, for Strategic Shadow Reports; and lastly, Ms. Lois A. Herman from Women's UN Report Network who spoke about the UPR: UN Universal Periodic Review.
- We were also able to **contribute to CSO briefing documents** to enhance the deliberations of the intergovernmental process of the CSW to ensure a stronger focus on gender equality as a foundation for and outcome of the development agenda
 - Besides creating and disseminating our own resources on women's human rights and the development agenda, we also endorsed statements of other women's rights coalitions including [ARROW](#) and the [Women Major Group](#).
- **Engage with the CEDAW Committee** (CEDAW member from Georgia Ms Lia Nadaraia who was a panelist in our panel) to ensure linkages and synergies are made to improve monitoring of the MDGs/SDGs and the BPFA through the CEDAW review process

b. Advocacy with ASEAN

In 2015 we joined civil society organisations in Southeast Asia to engage at the ASEAN Civil Society Consultation/ ASEAN People's Forum in April 2015. Our engagement at the ACSC/APF focused on supporting our partners in the Women's Economic Leadership (WEL) Project and the Young Women making Change Project.

Young women's groups from Timor, Laos, Vietnam and Malaysia held a workshop on 23 April 2015 titled 'Young Women Making Change in SEA'. It **showcased the advocacy** of the young women in their specific issues, namely: the need for a stand-alone sexual harassment bill (Malaysia), creating awareness for dating violence (Vietnam), and the need for effective 're-entry' policy of young girls who dropped out of school due to early pregnancy (Timor Leste). Lao PDR's young women issue, access to education by young girls in rural areas was not discussed at length at this workshop.



Our young activist from Timor Leste, Abrantes was selected among the 1500 delegates of the APF to provide the closing speech, to mark the potential joining of Timor Leste to the ASEAN in the near future.



Planning for their exhibition and panel discussion at APF

Under the WEL project, IWRAW –AP supported and facilitated the participation of 12 women's rights activists from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand and Philippines in the ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ ASEAN People's Forum 2015 which was organized in Kuala Lumpur on 21-24th April 2015. The inclusion in the APF outcome statement of **stronger focus and language on women's human rights issues⁷ which include women's economic rights as a critical enabler for other rights** was a positive result of our participation and interaction with the APF – the norm has been that ASEAN civil society focuses more on the civil and political rights issues.

At the ASEAN level, in February 2015, the ASEAN Commission for the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) has been working on the [2016-2020 Work Plan](#) and in March 2015 a meeting on the impact of Climate Change on Women and Children. ASEAN level monitoring and information sharing on some common priority issues for women's rights such as trafficking, and stronger implementation of national and regional plans to protect women against violence continues to strengthen. IWRAW Asia Pacific participated in a regional consultation to strengthen

⁷ <http://aseanpeople.org/reclaiming-the-asean-community/>

CSO Statement for the APF 2015

4.4.1 Immediately adopt the definition of "non-discrimination" defined by international human rights law, particularly the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); and immediately eliminate all forms of discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of race, inter- and intra-religious practices or belief, ethnicity, nationality, age, **gender**, class, political and economic status, ability, geographic location, HIV status, marital and pregnancy status, and sexual orientation and gender identity/expression (SOGIE).

4.4.2 Recognise multiple sites and intersectionality of discrimination and realisation of substantive equality through guarantees of equal opportunities, equal access and equal benefits to all peoples, from all sectors, including, **women**, LGBTIQ persons, children, and youth.

4.4.3 **Eliminate public morality clauses and cultural relativist justifications used to deny and violate rights of the people, especially women**, LGBTIQ persons, and other marginalized and vulnerable groups; and create accountability mechanisms especially to address violations by non-state actors.

the Work Plan and provided comments to the draft workplan on Violence against Women in March 2015 to ensure compliance with CEDAW.

c. Advocacy with CEDAW Committee

In May 2015 we held a **Meeting On The Impact Of CEDAW, Its General Recommendations And Violence Against Women**, on 30 - 31 May 2015. Attended by 16 UN experts, academics and activists, this meeting was partly motivated by recent discussions around the desirability of a specific UN Convention on violence against women. Among the arguments put forward by the advocates of such a move is the absence from the CEDAW Convention of any explicit reference to violence against women. It is argued that general recommendations of treaty bodies, concluding observations and its decisions and reports under the Optional Protocol are not themselves formally binding, and the absence of an explicit obligation in relation to violence against women is not adequately remedied by the Committee's interpretations of States parties. Thus there is need to examine the status of General recommendations adopted by the CEDAW Convention, in particular those relating to violence against women, possibly in the broader context of the status of similar General recommendations and General comments adopted by the other UN human treaty bodies. This would involve not only an examination of their formal legal status, the way in which States parties' reactions to particular General recommendations might constitute subsequent state practice under the Convention that is relevant to its interpretation, and the response by States parties in practice to General recommendations. One key result of this meeting was the *development of a paper* on the practice of CEDAW and a comparison between different options for a mechanism/procedure on addressing VAW at the UN level which is going to be used as a basis for raising awareness on the legal and technical issues and on developing women's groups understanding of pros and cons of different approaches to implementing obligations to eliminate VAW.

In 2013 we also partnered with Global Initiative on ESC Rights in the CEDAW Committee's drafting of the **General Recommendation on the rights of rural women** presents an important opportunity for raising and addressing these issues and developing a framework that expands the interpretation of state obligation that ensures the elimination of discrimination and promotes substantive equality of rural women, particularly in the context of right to land and property. We continued to provide additional inputs to the Committee in 2015, and the Committee in March [2016 adopted the General Recommendation as GR No 34](#).

This new GR links the discrimination faced by rural women to larger factors which cause socio-economic and political inequality. It references the need to ensure national policies and strategies on the economy specifically address the rights of rural women and their empowerment and development, and notes the negative impact of fiscal, trade and tax policies on rural women. It focuses on the obligation of the state to mitigate threats to natural resources and the environment from various sources including the impact of climate change, natural disasters, land and soil degradation, water pollution, droughts, floods, desertification, pesticides and agro-chemicals, extractive industries, monocultures, bio-piracy, and loss of biodiversity, particularly agro-biodiversity. The GR makes clear linkages to the states' implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the CEDAW process in providing opportunities to strengthen the outcome and process indicators of the SDGs focused on the rights context of rural women. Taking on an intersectional approach the GR links other factors of marginalisation and disadvantage such as the context of indigenous; afro-descendent; ethnic and religious minorities; female heads of household; peasant; pastoralists; fisherfolk; landless; migrant; and conflict-affected areas. It also focuses on several key areas of concern for rural women including right to education, employment, health and right to land and natural resources. It also expands the scope of state obligation to include the extra territorial obligations of states to regulate private actors and to ensure their roles and initiatives in international cooperation and development assistance, whether bilateral or multilateral, advance the rights of rural women globally. The GR will strengthen our framework for accountability of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women especially those who are living and working in the rural context.

Outcome 4: Increased private sector sensitivity towards benefits of gender equality approach

Developed a project with Oxfam Novib to address women's economic leadership in ASEAN including addressing the role of private sector in realizing gender equality

In July 2014 we successfully developed a project to strengthen women's economic leadership and empowerment in ASEAN by help our partner groups influence laws and policies in the ASEAN economic. The key strategy will be to increase the engagement of WROs in ASEAN region by using the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) review as an avenue to raise awareness of priority issues for women's economic leadership in ASEAN countries. We help an inception meeting to develop the project and agreement on the priority areas for advocacy⁸, including the role and impact of business/private sector on women's human rights and how our strategies could focus on the role of companies and obligations of the state to ensure women's economic rights are prioritised in the regional economic plans of ASEAN.

Engagement with other stakeholders in private sector responsibility for women's human rights



In 2015 we explored engagement with other stakeholders in sensitising private sector/business actors on gender equality. This includes trade unions as peers. This one-day seminar was the first step in establishing a collaboration between IWRAW Asia Pacific and NUBE in building the capacity of union members in understanding CEDAW and other international standards/norms. This seminar was the first step in establishing a collaboration between IWRAW Asia Pacific and NUBE in building the capacity of union members in understanding CEDAW and other international standards/norms. This seminar is hopefully the precursor to future work.

1. ⁸Natural resource governance
 - a) Women's limited participation control and knowledge over such processes
 - b) Impact of infrastructure development (linked to natural resource governance, leading to change in choice of employment by women)
2. Role and impact of Multinationals (MNCs) (principles and modality on engaging) – to examine regulatory framework and modalities engaging with MNCs, TNCs, IFIs
3. Rights of Women Migrant Workers (unprotected/ unregulated categories of work – including domestic/unskilled workers; linked to lack of regulation, protection mechanism and monitoring; redress; push and pull factor) _ Human trafficking
4. Contribution of women in informal sector (domestic workers) and unpaid work – triple burden (reproduction, house work & paid work) and predominance in unskilled sectors
5. Strengthening ideas on Gender and value chain as a strategy for economic growth and poverty reduction that enhances women's economic rights
6. Sexual Harassment at the workplace
7. Gender wage gap and minimum wages (impacting choice of work, access to livelihood; SRHR; housing)
8. Knowledge and access to resources – credit and lack of subsidies for women small farmers, lack of credit capital for women.
9. Lack of recognition of ILO and Decent work standards in legislations in ASEAN – this issue is also linked to other issues
10. Diverse groups are affected and their needs and socio-political contexts are different
11. Lack of access to information and Unequal access to education for women and girls

BROADER IMPACT OF CEDAW AND OUR WORK

Some of the direct impact of our strategies and activities have already been highlighted in the above section of the report. Here we highlight higher level changes in the environment.

Facilitated inclusion of women in human rights standard setting processes at the national regional and international level.

Throughout January –June 2015 we continued to implement the From Global to Local Training programme to provide women activists at the national level familiarity and skills to directly engage with the international framework for driving policy change such as through UN mechanisms like CEDAW and to build understanding of women's groups on how to use the CEDAW review to mobilise support and raise concerns about the continued existence of gender based discrimination and inequality.

- At the 60th – 62nd CEDAW Session we trained **97 NGO activists** from Azerbaijan, Denmark, Ecuador, Eritrea, Gabon, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Tuvalu, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Croatia, Gambia, Namibia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Spain, Viet Nam, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Timor-Leste, United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan in the From Global to Local programme – these activists were able to engage directly with the CEDAW Committee. IWRAW Asia Pacific supported more than 70 of these activists.
- **NGO alternative / shadow reports:** We supported NGOs in submitting 52 shadow reports and more than 70 oral statements to the Committee thus contributing to the relevance of concluding observations so that they can then be used as a tool for advocacy at the national level. Specific priorities were given to encourage women from marginalized groups to be part of the CEDAW reporting process. We also supported the NGOs in 21 lunch briefings with the CEDAW Committee.
- A key indicator of success was the relevance of CEDAW advocacy for women's human rights activists who noted a **sense of empowerment and recognition of the legitimacy of CSO initiatives** that the women experience when they interact with the CEDAW Committee and the legal obligations of the state to demonstrate their plans and actions comply with the standards for gender equality and the needs of women. Many of them experience a sense of achievement when they hear the CEDAW Committee 'voicing' their concerns during the state review. The CEDAW Committee on numerous occasions use the information provided by the NGOs to frame their questions to the state. The information provided by the NGOs in the Shadow reports (available from OHCHR website) also allowed for more effective questioning by the CEDAW Committee during the state review as they provided much needed context to many of the activities carried out by the state.
- **Bringing marginal or invisibilised issues to the centre** for advocacy is part of the logic of the From Global to Local Programme focusing on ensuring that marginalised women and their issues have a place and space in the CEDAW process. Often marginalised groups face many obstacles in accessing policy spaces or lack political influence thus the CEDAW level is an important conduit to bring their issues to the attention of the state. In this year we were able to facilitate the sharing and advocacy of 14 activists from marginalised communities with the broader community of women's rights activists as well as in highlighting their issues to the state – these include: **Azeri activists working on rural women's issues, Ecuadorian indigenous women (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador), rural women's rights activists from Gabon, Sex worker activists from Kyrgyzstan, activists on Lesbian/Bi/Trans rights from Kyrgyzstan, Indigenous women activists from Bolivia, young women activists from Vietnam, sex worker activists from**

Russia, Young women activists from Timor Leste working on the issue of right to education for girls, LBT rights activists from Russia , young women’s rights activists from Portugal, Portuguese LBT activists, and rural women’s rights activists from Liberia. This improved advocacy for the recognition and protection of rights of minority groups, religious minorities, migrant workers, LGBT, HIVAIDS, to the mainstream groups toward a common platform for advocacy and to ensure that an intersectional approach to women’s discrimination will be addressed through the CEDAW review process. This happened for all countries as they shared training, mentoring and lobbying spaces, as well as developed joint strategies to leverage individual organizational strengths and networks.

- Recognition of the importance of the role of NGOs was once again highlighted by the CEDAW Committee. In its report to the Third Committee of the General Assembly, [the Chair of CEDAW Ms Yoko Hayashi stated that the participation of NGOs enhanced the review process](#) and thanked IWRAW Asia Pacific for facilitating this engagement. The recognition of NGOs in the CEDAW process affirms **the role of NGOs at the domestic level, providing a policy conduit where women’s groups may not have much access to state agencies and processes of policy making.** Again the process showed that it is especially critical for the NGOs working on marginalised contexts to engage with the CEDAW reporting process. It is important that they bring in to the Committee nuanced knowledge and analysis on specific category of discrimination against women or against a group of women, but they are also aware of and can provide information to the Committee on overall/holistic realization of human rights by women. This is critical as the Committee from its experience of 30 years do acknowledge that NGOs and groups addressing a range of issues and contexts of women’s human rights are not able to participate at the CEDAW review session, and at the same time, the Committee would like to have an independent analysis of the situation on ground for women in the context of CEDAW implementation.
- ***Impact of NGO information on CEDAW review*** - Finally we look at the impact of NGO information by looking at whether specific NGO priorities and recommendations informed the CEDAW Committee’s development of the key recommendations to the State in the Concluding Observations. **We saw many NGO issues taken up in the dialogue with the state.** Clear direction was given to State delegations that the CEDAW’s framework of substantive equality and non-discrimination is required to be integrated in the existing legislative and policy framework implemented within the country context. Committee also made it clear to the state delegations that CEDAW is one of the human rights standards that they need to adhere to achieve gender equality and protection of women’s human rights, and the Convention gives a framework to implement rights under other human rights treaties and MDG commitments for diverse groups of women in realisation of their rights in civil, political, economic, social and cultural spheres. And availability of resources or traditional values and custom cannot be argued as a ground for evading or delaying implementation of its obligations under the Convention. The follow-up questions were primarily to get direct and precise responses from the state delegation and indicating to the government delegation that the answers provided are not adequate and to the satisfaction of the Committee. Some examples of success of NGO advocacy include
 - Vietnamese NGOs at the 62nd CEDAW Session in October/November 2015 (Geneva) succeeded in getting the Committee to recommend to the State to take all appropriate measures to deal with the issue of dating violence, now recognized as part of violence against women (Vietnam Concluding Observations 19a)
 - Timor Leste reported to the CEDAW Committee on Wednesday, the 11th of November 2015 - Timor NGOs succeeded in getting the Committee to recommend to the State to take all appropriate measures to deal with the issue of re-entry policy/ drop-out cases of young women from schools due to pregnancy (Timor Leste Concluding Observations 27c), women’s groups also focused on the issue of abortion which continues to be criminalised, with no exception even in cases of rape and incest and the lack of gender sensitive institutions and access to justice further re-victimised them by this punitive provision Timor Concluding Observations 31)

- For a more comprehensive analysis of some successful examples of NGO advocacy with CEDAW in 2015 please refer to [*the table in the annex showing specific impact*](#)⁹ which shows 23 specific instances where NGO advocacy correlates to the recommendations made by the CEDAW Committee as key priorities for action and ensured prioritization of a specific gap in implementation.

CEDAW's impact on domestic law and policy reform

Mid term observations on CEDAW's impact on domestic law and policy reform and the impact of our advocacy

In 2015 we were pleased to monitor and follow-up with the progress of our partner NGOs who previously attended our From Global to Local training, and had engaged with the CEDAW Committee and made recommendations which the state later implemented. These are some of the **observable achievements of our partners and various actors** who contributed to domesticating CEDAW's principles and standards into national legal systems. There are also observational changes reported as news from partners and stakeholders. Increase the demand for accountability of governments and regional bodies like ASEAN by women's organisations, including with regard to budget commitments and agreements on CEDAW and human rights instruments in general

In 2015, some priorities and highlights by the CEDAW Committee through the dialogue with the states and in its issuance of the Concluding Observations shows continued focus on identifying and amending discriminatory laws and policies. These trends reveal the practice of the Committee in addressing structural gaps as well as past discrimination and to strengthen the states capacity to implement its obligations. These are useful entrypoints for women's rights activists to ground their advocacy with the state.

a. Harmonising legal environment for CEDAW Compliance

- Thailand - [Thailand's new Gender Equality Law came into effect in early September 2015](#), in an effort to harmonise the countries laws with that of CEDAW standards, and the gender equality protections of the act are enlarged to include protection for bi, trans and intersexed women. This was part of the recommendations to Thailand given by the CEDAW Committee in its [2006 Concluding Observations](#)¹⁰ for which NGOs provided their feedback on the lack of a coherent legal environment and policy for enacting gender discrimination laws.

b. Addressing existing discriminatory laws/policies

- In [January 2015](#), assembly persons of Gabriela, a women's rights party in the Philippines, filed bills seeking to amend or scrap certain provisions of the Code, particularly those on property rights and issues of infidelity. The measure would amend Articles 96 of the Family Code of the Philippines, which strikes out the phrase "*in case of disagreement, the husband's decision will prevail, subject to recourse to the court by the wife for proper remedy*" in the joint administration and enjoyment of community property. Another aspect of discrimination in the law was the law on adultery and concubinage. The bill seeks to make laws on adultery equally applicable to men and women since the law on concubinage which applied to men was hard to prove. CEDAW compliance was recognised as the key objective of these bills "...the measures were filed in a bid to make the Philippines comply with the provision in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) that compels governments to "accord women equality with men before the law."
- As of March 2015, [Philippines has decriminalised 'premature marriages'](#) where women who remarried within 301 days of her husband's death were penalised. The old law discriminated against women and no longer served a purpose. It was supposedly to avoid confusion on paternity

⁹ Table on impact of NGO advocacy on CEDAW recommendations in Annex

¹⁰ Para 16-19 Thai Concluding Observations - CEDAW/C/THA/CO/5

and filiation of a child who might have been conceived during the previous marriage but born during the subsequent marriage. In [March 2015, Philippines Congress responded by denying their assent](#) on a proposed law allowing men and women to obtain a divorce based on irreconcilable differences which was proposed by the Gabriela Women's party, despite strong public support for this law.

- Saudi Arabia – There has been incremental change in the legal environment in Saudi Arabia recognising women's equal rights and agency (legal personhood) which has always been a priority issue. At the 2008 CEDAW review the CEDAW Committee had [recommended for change to ensure gender equality in public and family life was entrenched in the law](#) as women were excluded from the first municipal elections in Saudi Arabia. In 2015, the state [made changes to the election laws to allow women to be candidates in local elections](#),
- Vietnam – In March 2015 it is reported that Vietnam's Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs MOLISA approved of ILO Convention No 100 on Equal Remuneration and began [a process to address the gender pay gap](#). MOLISA also reports that the department will work on the [30% allocation of seats in political leadership to ensure it is reachable by 2020](#) and communicating more information on the Law on Gender Equality to raise people's awareness on the issue and inclusion of policies on gender equality in socio-economic programmes in localities. These were issues raised by the [CEDAW Committee in Vietnam's previous reviews](#) in 2001 and 2007 in Para 24 on closing the wage gap and in Para 8 and 9 on effecting the Gender Equality law to harmonise its domestic legal framework with CEDAW and use the instrument as a way to address social change on women's rights and goes a significant way in implementing its obligations under CEDAW.
- Indonesia – In the 2012 Concluding Observation to Indonesia, the Committee highlighted the issue of the problem of decentralisation causing different gender equality standards to proliferate, especially in Aceh province. There had been very discriminatory laws enacted in that region based on restrictive reading of the Islamic Sharia limiting women's physical mobility, ability to work and rights in marriage. IWRAW Asia Pacific had held a followup meeting in 2014 to strengthen the state's understanding and response to the question of discriminatory bylaws or provincial laws which have jurisdictional autonomy and a strategy was developed by the different ministries involved including the Ministry of Justice Education and Women's Empowerment. [In a different region, in recent case in February 2015](#) a local authority had to retract its plans to perform these tests on school girls as part of passing school exams. It is to be noted that when the proposal was defeated in local parliament, the main Islamist party and the religious department, Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) met with the Jember city council and voiced their disapproval, saying it was discriminatory and opposed to proper Islamic teachings.
- Gambia – A [presidential ban on female genital mutilation](#) was announced in November 2015. NGOs working on the issue lauded this decision of the president and hope there was legislative follow through in the year ahead. FGM was a priority issue at the review of Gambia by CEDAW in July 2015.
- Philippines- In May 2015, the [report of the CEDAW Committee](#) pursuant to their findings under the OPCEDAW inquiry procedure on Executive Order 003 was publicly released. The [key finding of the CEDAW committee](#) was that it found the Philippines accountable for the violations of rights of women and girls as the State party "failed to address the effects of the implementation of EO 003 and EO 030 and, between 2004 and 2010, has at times either supported or condoned the policies of the City of Manila," lasting for more than 12 years, during the successive terms of two different mayors of Manila. Some of the key initiatives proposed by the finding are for the state to ensure:

- access to the full range of methods of contraceptives impacted women's rights such as employment and education "by limiting women's rights to freely choose the number and spacing of their children, women and girls were effectively undermined in accessing and pursuing the same education and employment opportunities as men, and thereby driven further into . . . poverty."
 - take up such measures as making modern contraceptives including emergency contraceptives accessible, removing all barriers that result in unequal access to sexual and reproductive health services including limitations pertaining to women's marital status, age, and number of children.
 - establish health care protocols to prevent and sanction discrimination against women, and guarantee separation of the Church and the State to protect women's' sexual and reproductive health rights through sensitizing members of Congress and national and local governments to eliminate all ideological barriers that limit women's access to sexual reproductive health services, commodities and information.
 - amendment of articles 256 and 259 of the Revised Penal Code to "legalize abortion in cases of rape, incest, threats to the life and/or health of them other, or serious malformation of the fetus and decriminalize all other cases where women undergo abortion.
- Iraq – In its review of Iraq in 2014, the Committee noted that there was contradictory information on whether women could apply for a passport without consent from a legal guardian as the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issuing passports, seemed to require consent which was captured in the [summary records of the review](#) as well as recommended for action in the [Concluding Observations](#) at para 19 and 18 that the state "...guarantee equal treatment of women and men with regard to the requirements for obtaining a passport". The [current website](#) no longer includes any requirement of consent by legal guardian.
 - In Vietnam a [new law was passed by the National Assembly](#) in November 2015 which legally allowed sex reassignment surgery and introduced the right to legal gender recognition. The law will come into effect early in 2017 and individuals who undergo transgender change will have the right to register under their new gender. This is in keeping with the 2012 [CEDAW Committee's General Recommendation No 28](#) on the Core Obligations of States Parties under Article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to all states party to CEDAW to ensure elimination of discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation as part of their treaty obligations.
 - In line with the recommendations of CEDAW in 2010, in November 2015, [the Tunisian Parliament finally affirmed a new law recognising the equal role of women and mothers in making decisions for their minor children](#). The Tunisian authorities had a long-established practice of preventing women from leaving Tunisian territory with their children without the father's authorization. The new law prohibits the authorities from discriminating against women this way by adding an article to the Tunisian law on passports allowing either parent to authorize a minor's travel. This law came about with the removal of reservations by Tunisia in 2014, which had exempted Tunisia from amending the domestic laws to ensure on equality in family laws. This issue of the role of man as sole guardian over children was [an issue taken up by NGOs in 2010 at the last CEDAW review of Tunisia](#) which was reflected in the [paragraph 60 of the Concluding Observations to the state of Tunisia](#).

c. Special measures and Temporary special measures as critical to realise gender equality

- Ireland in [2012 instituted a quota for women in elections to strengthen participation of women](#) in political and public life, which was part of two key recommendations to the state in its [2005 review](#)

in considering the use of temporary special measures as part of its constitutional guarantee of equality to fast-track women into priority areas of participation and to recognise the gender gap in their representational political system. A court decision was made at the end of 2015 affirming that gender quotas were legitimate and reasonable methods for raising participation of women in electoral politics and did not constitute gender discrimination.

- Similarly in March 2015 [Germany effected a gender quota for management boards of companies](#) taking into consideration the [Committee's recommendation from 2009](#) to "...monitor developments with regard to the participation of women in top management positions, with a view to further supporting such participation through legislative or policy initiatives..". This issue had been prioritised by the women's groups in Germany (Germany Alliance of Women's Groups) who argued for both a quota policy and incentivised system to encourage businesses to increase women in management¹¹.
- Egypt has a [new legal quota](#) on women's participation in elections which has the effect of guaranteeing 70 seats for women candidates out of the total of 596 seats. This was an issue prioritised from the last CEDAW review.

d. Strengthening structures for gender equality compliance

Focus on working with national human rights institutions for strengthening environment for CEDAW compliance - After holding 4 workshops with NHRIs from Indonesia, Thailand Philippines and Timor Leste, to support the development of greater CEDAW compliance through the NHRI mandates, plans were made by each NHRI to develop their report to CEDAW.

- The Provedor's Office in Timor Leste did make a submission in February 2015 for Timor Leste's CEDAW pre-session. (Submission enclosed in annex) It is noted that the submission highlights two key issues raised and discussed in the two workshops with the Provedor on access to justice for women (especially on the issue of protection of witnesses especially in cases of domestic violence and gender based violence) and the proposed law on gender equality which comprehensively addresses discrimination. Also included in the pre-session report was the issue of incest which was specifically covered in the workshop. Recommendation in the pre-session report- the need for a comprehensive definition of incest also stemmed out of workshop discussions.
- In the current political context of Thailand, the CEDAW State Report may not be a viable expectation. As such IWRAW AP, the NHRCT and the UNW Thailand agreed to focus on the issue of Business and women's rights to take advantage of various convergences and events in 2015 such as the ASEAN regional Integration and the Global Sustainable Development Goals finalized in 2015, for which states will have to monitor and implement the various goals, while independent institutions like NHRIs will also have a critical role to play. The Thai NHRCT Workshop was a space to build capacity of the NHRCT to analyse the impact of businesses on women's rights as well as a space to make an assess of the role and influence of the NHRCT to work with the business sector.

¹¹ Germany Alliance input and recommendation to CEDAW Committee in their report of 2009 :

"Women have never been as qualified as they are today. The percentage of women in business management positions has nevertheless remained unchanged and marginal. The percentage of women in management positions declines with their number of children, their increasing age, and company size. The Committee already recognized this Problem 2004 and recommended "the adoption of proactive measures to remove existing obstacles and where necessary, to implement temporary special measures, as provided for in article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention." None of these steps were taken. In order to achieve significant improvement, we suggest the implementation of equality legislation for the private sector. Such a law would enable to counter segregation in the labor market and to enable greater access to higher and better paid company positions for well-qualified women – including after periods of unemployment due to family-related or other circumstances. Suitable draft legislation has long been available. Instead of enacting this equality legislation for the private sector the German Government has limited itself to voluntary agreements with private industry which are clearly ineffective. Another instrument could be linking government contracts with affirmative action programs for women. Government contracts should only be awarded to companies that systematically promote women. The Federal Equality Act, which is supposed to use various instruments to promote equal opportunity for women and men in federal government jobs, lacks such a link. Through a Gender Budgeting implementation the Government can as well fix such measures to the various budget articles especially the investigative budget amounts and all budget which will be spend for secondary beneficiaries as to the private companies. .

Another practical output from the meeting was the focused discussion and examples on Thai development and rights contexts and analysis of the areas of discrimination that are happening for women in the transport industry, the construction industry and the impact of large scale land acquisition on women and communities.

- From conversation with the Philippines Commission on Human Rights at the workshop in 2013, it similarly will be collecting data relevant for monitoring of the states CEDAW obligations but because the government has not yet submitted the state report the NHRI has not constructed their NHRI report which is meant to review the state's implementation.
- In 2015 the gender equality architecture of Philippines was amended. The Philippines Commission on Human Rights is now the Gender Ombuds mandated to monitor and provide extra judicial decisions to cases which have a gender discrimination element. This provides a an agency and a framework for a strong mechanism for women's rights claims and for influencing gender equality policy reforms.

Focus on state machinery on priority issues

- [Vietnam's multisectoral approach to addressing Violence against Women was highlighted in its November-December 2015 campaign](#) which was organised by the four ministries of culture, sports and tourism; labour, invalids and social affairs; health; and public security, besides the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour, the Farmers' Union and the Women's Union in collaboration with the United Nations in Viet Nam.
 - With the recent electoral change in Myanmar, there are greater expectations for opportunities to address discrimination faced by women and especially women from marginalised groups. In December 2015 the government [established a Union Peace Conference for 12 January 2016](#) however this peace building process is limited in its lack of inclusion of women in the peace process and mechanisms. Women in Myanmar have been consistently excluded from the various peace negotiations and their continued absence will undermine the ability of any peace talks and reconciliation policies aimed at ending long-running ethnic conflicts that have displaced more than half a million people.
- e. Addressing intersectional discrimination, strengthening rights for marginalised and/or vulnerable groups.
- Thailand – It is the 11th country in a list of countries with highest number of teen pregnancies and in September 2015 the Cabinet approved a [new draft law addressing teen pregnancies](#) in Thailand which had been drafted by the Public Health Ministry, the Prevention of and Solutions to Teenage Pregnancy Bill. It was highlighted for both positive elements in the law as well as negatives. The law provides more support for comprehensive sex education in schools, access to and requirement for health services to provide condoms, and other contraceptives. The proposed law will also require schools to allow pregnant teens to continue their education. In terms of gaps the law does not address the support system/welfare system for young mothers and also provides powers to enforcement agencies to monitor the public behaviour of young people.
- f. Domestic legal standards enhanced using CEDAW through the judicial system
- Philippines - In June 2015, Philippina female flight attendants [won a case based on the discriminatory policies](#) of the Philippines Airlines which required female attendants to retire at age 55, five years earlier than their male counterparts.
 - United Kingdom - The [High Court in Northern Ireland had decided that the ban on abortion without exemption especially in cases of sexual violence is incompatible with human rights](#). The

[decision of Justice Horner](#) cited Northern Ireland's need to comply with its international obligations including CEDAW.

g. NGO Advocacy on laws and policies enhanced using CEDAW

- In October 2015, women's [organisations working on reproductive health and indigenous women's rights protested](#) the Department of Health (DOH) issued Administrative Order 0029 known as "Implementing Health Reforms for the Rapid Reduction of Maternal and Neonatal Mortality" which "discouraged home deliveries" which impacted rural and indigenous Filipina women as childbirths mainly happened in the home in these areas (about 60%) which had less access to public health and obstetric facilities. Fining homebirths would effectively create greater financial strain over limited household resources to care for mother and child, and endanger further these women and children. They ***used discrimination under the CEDAW Convention as an argument*** against the policy as it did not take into account the different circumstances of the various communities.
- In December 2015, [NGO CEDAW Cambodia, the coalition that presented their information to CEDAW were able to raise concerns](#) on the limitations of the implementation of the Domestic Violence Law. The groups said this after a national survey was conducted to monitor implementation of CEDAW recommendations which showed 1 in 5 women faced domestic violence and less than 6% of cases were reported. The [CEDAW Committee had prioritised the issue for a followup report](#)¹² by the state due in October 2015, this the state will have to work on this recommendation as a priority.
- In November 2015 [Malawi NGOs were able to hold a media conference](#) on the need to amend the age of majority ***after the CEDAW review***. The conference reached out to country level constitutional law experts who advised on the need to revise the conflict in the laws to ensure that the Constitution upholds CEDAW standards in relation to right to marriage equality which is hampered by the different ages of majority for men and women. The issue had been a priority under the [NGO coalitions shadow report](#).
- Myanmar - In the [Committee's Concluding Observation](#) of 2008, it addressed various gaps in Myanmar's 30 Year Long Term Education Plan including the fact that the plan did not particularise education as a key to the advancement of women and that the low level of education of women and girls remains one of the most serious obstacles to their full enjoyment of their human rights. In February 2015, civil society groups supported [students protesting the draft Education Bill](#) has caused both female and male students and academics being threatened, harassed and monitored. The draft proposes to centralise all educational institutions from the central level, which civil society, students and academics denounce as stifling academic independence. More worrying is that the level of state investment is only 6% of the GDP and there is little in the form of enabling conditions for girls in accessing especially higher education, which is a concern as the [literacy rate of girls compared with boys is almost 20 percent lower](#). This is a key issue for the CEDAW review of Myanmar which is happening in 2016.

¹² Paragraph 21 of Concluding Observations to Cambodia 2013. 21.

Recalling its general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women and its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/KHM/CO/3, para. 16), the Committee urges the State party:

- (a) To intensify efforts to train judicial and law enforcement officers on the strict application of the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims to ensure that cases of violence against women, including domestic and sexual violence, are effectively prosecuted and not systematically diverted to mediation;
- (b) To encourage women to lodge formal complaints about domestic and sexual violence, by destigmatizing victims and raising awareness about the criminal nature of such acts;
- (c) To continue public awareness-raising campaigns on all forms of violence against women, in particular in rural areas;
- (d) To provide information in the next periodic report on the number of protection orders issued during the reporting period and the number of shelters available for women victims of violence.

- Cambodia – Monitoring of labour laws and participation rates. In a recent report in March 2015, [labour laws in Cambodia](#) are flouted routinely to allow girls to work in the garment industry which is rife with abuse, exploitation and lack of protections for workers. Some cases indicate problems in the effectiveness in [charging perpetrators under the 2005 Cambodian Domestic Violence Law due to its linkage to the Penal Code](#) – which only allows for criminal prosecution under assault categories if blood is shed. Challenges of accessing the legal system to address violence against women was raised in the 2013 Concluding Observations in Paragraph 20 and 21, while in Paragraph 34 and 35 addressed the lack of protections for women in the garment industry and the steps that Cambodia needed to take to ensure compliance with CEDAW. Following from recommendations to increase the quota of women in employment and especially in civil service ¹³the government announced [in December 2015 to increase female intake in Cambodian civil service to 50% by 2016](#), which should be monitored by women’s groups to ensure progress as a key indicator of CEDAW implementation.
- In Malaysia, NGOs are using the CEDAW Framework in their public advocacy to argue for the use of equality and discrimination standards compliant with CEDAW obligations. [The National Commission of Women’s Organisations recently wrote a public response to the custody case](#) of Indira Gandhi commenting that the state institutions in Malaysia had yet to fully comply with CEDAW in the treatment over the plural legal system which should ensure. The Committee recommended in 2006 that the legal questions whether civil or Syariah law applies to the marriages of non-Muslim women whose husbands convert to Islam was a priority to be resolved in compliance with CEDAW. Similarly in Indonesia public discussions are arguing for Indonesia’s compliance with CEDAW as a basis for ensuring equality and non discrimination of women. [An opinion in the Jakarta post identified the lack of progress in Indonesia’s gender equality bill](#) and the rising number of fatwas in the autonomous region of Aceh curtailing the rights of women, as symptomatic of the continuing state of cultural resistance of gender equality as a norm, which has to be addressed by the state of Indonesia.

h. Local governments and CEDAW –

- A recent trend in anti-discrimination and gender equality implementation has been to explore the use of CEDAW at the local government unit (LGU) level with the CEDAW Ordinance project in San Francisco. In the last few years campaigns like the [Cities for CEDAW](#) have also developed. There are positive trends in state practice on implementing international norms despite domestic legal frameworks which have not yet fully incorporated or have difficulty in ensuring comprehensive compliance due to the complex legal issues related to federated systems of government or autonomous regions.
- In Philippines [anti discrimination laws at the local level ensuring LBT women will not face discrimination at the workplace, in education, in obtaining health services](#) and the like, based on their gender identity which is a category of discrimination protected under CEDAW, has been discussed for implementation by municipal units. This is to ensure that in the absence of a national law, some local government units (LGUs) are able to implement their own ordinances. As of 2015, there are 15 LGUs implementing anti-discrimination ordinances, according to the University of the Philippines.
- Similarly in [Vietnam city level implementation of gender equality](#) targets have been noted, and could be monitored and its successful approaches shared. In Can Tho city, the number of local government officers increased to 15% from under 10%, while the number of women employed in the city or conducting their own business increased to 47%.

¹³ Concluding Observations to Cambodia, Item 28 and 29, CEDAW/C/KHM/CO/4-5.

Supporting Women's inputs into the creation of new interpretations through the General Recommendations

- In 2015 the CEDAW Committee announced that it was Updating General Recommendation 19 on Violence against Women. IRAW Asia Pacific along with other Asia Pacific groups held a Consultation in May 2015 to analyse the utility of CEDAW General Recommendations¹⁴, its monitoring /review mechanism towards common advocacy on strong international mechanisms, frameworks and legal obligations to address VAW.
- On 7 July 2014, the Committee held a half day discussion to commence the Committee's process of elaborating a "General Recommendation on girls'/women's right to education". The purpose of the general recommendation is to provide appropriate and authoritative guidance to States parties to the Convention on the measures to be adopted with a view to ensuring full compliance with their obligations under article 10 of the Convention to respect, protect and fulfil the right of women and girls to education. [IRAW AP's statement](#) focused on some specific aspects of CEDAW obligation to Article 10 on women and girls right to education including education as an enabler that opens up opportunities and choices, Comprehensive sexuality education, academic freedom, principle of progressive realization, the need to strengthen justiciability of right to education, education and employment, cultural and other barriers to girl's right to education and CEDAW as a mechanism to hold states accountable to global development goals and targets, and what suitable indicators would be used to track implementation of State Obligation on right to education.

Bringing marginalised issues to the fore

In 2014 we were able to provide targeted support to 20 women's NGOs representing marginalised. These groups have limited **access to spaces for public dialogue, attention, or policy focus** to facilitate **better strategic linkage, partnership and normative agreement between mainstream women's rights groups and marginalised, thematic and/or sectoral groups**. Recognising the difficulty faced by marginalised rights groups our programme provided platforms for sharing, exchange and joint strategizing. We enhanced strategic link of national rights advocacy and international standard setting and interpretation, especially in raising the voices of marginalised women and recognition of their rights especially those working on HIV AIDS, harm reduction, sex work, rural women, LGBT rights, minority populations and trafficked women. It helped the women activists see the relevance of their work, even though it focused on specific rights/violations such as domestic violence, to the larger lobbying and mobilisation for change which recognises a culture of adherence to women's human rights. These are extremely relevant approaches for countries which are facing which is facing both internal and external pressures to reform and at the same time to preserve the status quo which is not supportive of equality. In these climates, women's rights will tend to be marginalised, and the CEDAW Review represents a useful spotlight on critical issues and specific grave violations that need to be recognised and addressed.

Providing greater reach to the CEDAW as a treaty body to impact country level and community level discussion on women's human rights

Through a [webcasting](#) strategy we provided public access to the CEDAW review to enable more women to join the review online thus disseminating the impact of the review globally. The CEDAW review is broadcast online on the internet to allow CSOs who cannot attend the review in person to listen to the questioning and answers delivered by our governments on results and actions taken for gender equality. This method allows for greater sharing on NGO information as well as information and pledges given by the state to which NGOs can use to discuss further follow-ups with the governments after the review.



Our support to the OHCHR and the CEDAW Committee - webcasting the review online to reach women across the world.

¹⁴acific which will be circulated in 2016.

Developing Conceptual Tools on CEDAW and Critical Women's Human Rights Priorities

Five conceptual tools were developed and disseminated this year. Through our consultation in May we developed **a position paper** detailing the different types of mechanisms that could be adopted to strengthen the legal framework and implementation of state obligations to eliminate violence against women. We also were able to **develop a position paper analyzing the gaps in the current SDG framework** and the need to establish alternative methods of accountability and monitoring including through the CEDAW review system.

In terms of tools to support capacity building of partners, we developed a **draft guideline to develop Shadow Reports using GR 30** on rights of women in conflict and post conflict.

We also developed various resources to enhance advocacy on women's economic rights and access to justice , with a specific focus on the ASEAN context, for women through the **Framework on Women's Economic Rights in ASEAN** and the **Handbook on Women Development and ASEAN**. The impact of these tools is seen in the 4 trainings already held by partners in Vietnam Thailand, Myanmar and Cambodia using the tools and translating and contextualizing for their own purposes. Another result is that the trainings enabled the group to plan further strategies on how to connect community level issues of women's rights to the ASEAN as a mechanism for raising issues and seeking solutions.

Beneficiaries Table

	Activities (and budget line items)	Beneficiaries
1.	Young Women Making Change Project	Total beneficiaries of the project include 130 young women activists from Timor Leste Laos Vietnam and Malaysia. Indirect beneficiaries include state and ASEAN stakeholders 40.
2.	Women's Economic (Rights Empowerment and Leadership) Project in the ASEAN (WEL)	6 partner organisations in Thailand Laos Vietnam Myanmar Philippines and Cambodia. Individual members from these organisations which have participated and contributed to the project number around 70 in Trainings, expert group meetings and in CEDAW initiatives. Participation at country level trainings on WEL number around 100 individuals. Total – 170 direct beneficiaries.
3.	Commission on Status of Women	Participation of 2 IRAW AP representatives into the global dialogues of NGOs to make recommendations to the agreed conclusions of the CSW. About 30 activists attended our panel events on CEDAW. Total of around 35 direct beneficiaries. Indirect beneficiaries are about 500 the number of state and civil society delegates of the CSW.
5.	ASEAN People's Forum	Total of 16 partners and activists were beneficiaries. All were women. 10 were young women under 30. 8 women were from our WEL project. Indirect beneficiaries were about 1500, the total participants of the forum.
6.	UN Summit on Sustainable Development Goals	About 30 activists attended our panel events on CEDAW. Total of around 35 direct beneficiaries. Indirect beneficiaries were about 500
7.	Gender Machinery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thailand 	22 staff of the ministry
8.	Conflict Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writershop on GR 30 on rights of women in conflict 	20 women
9	Marginalised Women Strategy	Total direct beneficiaries were 4 activists from sex worker groups and 22 CEDAW members who attended our briefing
10	CEDAW Review - Global to Local (60-62 CEDAW Sessions)	Total of 97 NGO activists from 22 countries were direct beneficiaries.(92 female and and 5 male activist) Our outreach of the CEDAW review through the webcasting is potentially thousands.
11	Shadow Report Trainings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Armenia Myanmar Vietnam 	25 women from various women's and community level groups 21 women from various women's and community level groups 36 activists from the three main coalition. 7 were men.
12	Law and litigation strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judges Training in Macedonia Lawyers Training in Africa Cambodia 	20 Judges 12 lawyers 20 lawyers
13	CEDAW GR on Violence Against Women	16 beneficiaries
14	Outreach through Videos, social media and other resources on CEDAW	Not quantifiable
	Total	Direct beneficiaries - 705 persons Indirect beneficiaries – more than 4000

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS

These are some lessons and core questions about rights we have surfaced from the work in 2015.

1. Basic compliance with CEDAW is still a challenge –impediments in incorporation and reforming primary legal instruments

It is critical to re-engage on CEDAW as the framework for gender equality and the need to reassert the equality framework in articulating the human rights of women. CEDAW is recognized by both State and non-state parties as a framework for institutionalizing gender equality and change in public policy but there are constraining factors to the practical realisation of women's human rights. However in many countries there are primary legal impediments to adopting the equality framework of CEDAW. Legal clarity and usage by women of the laws on equality and anti-discrimination is rare, and in many cases discriminatory laws abound and there are conflicting laws which may affect the implementation of positive laws. In the 2015 sessions the CEDAW Committee continued to request from the states priority action in addressing constraints that affect the legal relevance of CEDAW. The Committee queried several states to ensure that constitutions or specific legislations that adequately define and address non-discrimination and equality and that CEDAW is incorporated in the domestic law of X countries, namely Tuvalu, St Vincent, Denmark, Eritrea, Gabon, Maldives, Senegal, Lebanon, and United Arab Emirates . In some cases the laws in some way do define the legal significance of CEDAW in the legal hierarchy or define the right to equality and non-discrimination, but there are other limitations in the law or procedural obstacles in using the law or conflicting laws such as in Azerbaijan, Ecuador, Kyrgyzstan, Bolivia, Gambia, Croatia, Namibia, Spain, Vietnam, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Timor Leste and Uzbekistan. In just 2015, 33% of states reviewed still had not domestically incorporated CEDAW or provided legal definitions to equality and non-discrimination. Those that did still did not ensure that these laws were comprehensive or procedurally useable by women to claim their right to equality.

2. Gender equality

The understanding of substantive equality remains key to the understanding of inequality and discrimination. There has been good standard setting and drafting of various instruments at treaty body level and specifically with CEDAW General Recommendations but there are less efforts in integrating these principles into laws and policies. There is currency and a strengthening of the feminist discourse on equity, and a related questioning of the equality standard. This is also undermining the general discourse on equality. There is an opportunity and a need to push for linking the Sustainable Development Goals especially through Goal 5 with an understanding of CEDAW's substantive equality. This allows for stronger mainstream of the understanding of substantive equality when states report on the implementation of the SDGs.

IWRAW Asia Pacific learnt a lot in terms of the different approaches to the gender equality and women's empowerment perspectives of different thinkers in the feminist alliances. There are key distinctions from the approach of those groups who want to critically engage on the foundation of global economics and challenge the primacy of the model of neo-liberal political economy that is being protected as status quo by the current SDG framework under discussion. There are also those feminists who feel that the current SDG framework while problematic has many more elements which are framed to address inequality, in comparison to the MDGs. This fundamental difference may call for different strategies of engagement from women's groups, based on their political context and capacity to engage with the current framework to be truly effective in terms of mobilizing for change and greater results under the new SDG framework.

3. Critical focus on rights of marginalised women, especially in areas of women's human rights where there are divisions and fundamental differences of opinion

There is a need to continue engagement by the groups with the CEDAW Committee in order to ensure consistent expansion in the application of CEDAW to issues relation to rights of marginalised women , e.g. women who use drugs and women sex workers. There is specific need to engage with the Committee on creating a nuanced understanding of various models of decriminalization, and the impact of recommendations such as “take measures for the reduction of demand for prostitution” on the rights of women sex workers. IRAW Asia Pacific will therefore need to consider strategies around supporting other countries from within the EECA region and beyond in representing WUDs and women sex workers especially in follow-up activities for implementation of the Concluding Observations. Further there is a need to address the impact of culture and religion in the promotion and protection of the rights of women for the Eastern European region, removing the issue of ‘sex work’ or women who are in prostitution, from the religiosity and protective overtones that currently surround the issue. Related to this is the need to address the political strategies employed by women’s human rights groups who use the framework of rights and gender equality to expand current state protections.

4. Working through the ASEAN system in 2015

ASEAN underwent some changes in 2015 including the process for reviewing the ASEAN Political Security, Economic and Socio-Cultural Community Pillars’ Blueprints which dictate the regional process for integration. There is a measure of stocktaking this year and an opportunity to engage with structural (Secretariat, ASEAN Ministerial Summit etc) as well as human rights bodies (ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission of Human Rights (AICHR), ASEAN Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) and ASEAN Committee on Migrant Workers (ACMW)) on strengthening women’s rights through the ASEAN system.

In 2015 Malaysia chaired the ASEAN. NGO groups geared up for a limited participative space because of the political context of Malaysia. Constraints were being put on raising sensitive issues of indigenous rights, human rights violations faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people, the lack of transparency in governance and high rate of corruption in ASEAN states.

There is a need to strengthen the linkages between ASEAN as a regional level system for monitoring and raising accountability on gender equality and to connect this to the CEDAW review as Laos, Myanmar and Philippines that will be reporting in 2016. As women’s economic rights are cross-cutting there is a need to build capacity of WROs in understanding all these instruments of regional policy and after which to engage with the different ASEAN bodies tasked to review and implement the final blueprints. Opportunities need to be explored to address the specific regional character of ASEAN and how it may hamper CEDAW implementation and how there may be opportunities to address trans-boundary women’s rights issues in ASEAN.

The Blueprint review process towards a new post 2015 ASEAN work plan is also activity oriented and not outcome or process oriented especially in relation to strengthening the ASEAN cooperation framework and structures to ensure compliance with human rights and gender equality. The 2015 Blueprint work plan is driven so far by action lines consisting of lists of meetings and workshops which may not substantively, procedurally nor strategically deliver the outcomes for which they were crafted. In order to address the possible changes to the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint there is a need to learn the internal deadlines and opportunities for WROs to feed their recommendations on WEL to impact the final version of the instrument.

5. Our Advocacy with the CEDAW Committee

Practice of the CEDAW Committee

The CEDAW Committee continues to focus on specific priorities though its constructive dialogue with the state. In 2015 some of these focus areas include:

- Identifying gaps in originating instruments (constitutions)
- Identified conflicting provisions to be resolved to ensure applicability and visibility of CEDAW
- The Committee identified discriminatory laws and policies that had to be removed
- Identification of intersectional discrimination, emerging issues and clarification of new forms of violations
- Clarification of state obligation in relation to intersectional discrimination

- Focused recommendations to the states on women's access to justice, rights of women in conflict and post conflict rights of rural women, discrimination faced by LGBTI women
- Focused recommendations to states on addressing harmful practices and violence against women as a central pillar in eradicating discrimination against women.
- Focus on rights fulfillment (using the RFP framework for state obligation) as well as negative obligations
- Due diligence in addressing violence against women
- Extraterritorial obligation of the state
- Ensuring responsibility of non-state/business sector to respect and protect women's rights
- The Sustainable Development Goals and the development and monitoring of the indicators to ensure gender equality results.

New procedures at CEDAW Review

The [Committee has grown its internal mechanisms¹⁵ for addressing procedural, thematic and structural issues arising in their review](#) of state compliance to CEDAW through the working groups and focal points on Working Methods, GR 19, conflict, rural women, pre-session, disaster and climate change, right to education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, Gender and HIV/AIDS, cooperation with treaty bodies, and cooperation with regional bodies.

Substantive issues considered by the CEDAW Committee

In November 2015 the CEDAW Committee also held a side event to discuss [Connecting CEDAW and the Women Peace and Security Agenda](#)". The discussion explored the added-value of integrating a human rights element in the WPS agenda and the monitoring role that CEDAW can play for an increased and more effective implementation of the Agenda.

In July 2015, the Committee began to plan for an [update to GR 19 on the application of CEDAW obligations to address violence against women](#)¹⁶. In this session the CEDAW Committee also held a morning discussion on 6th July to discuss [the link between CEDAW and the SDGs](#). The goal driven process of the SDGs will need a framework of analysis and this should be the CEDAW framework – thus further visibility and systemic tie-ups need to be made to ensure state accountability for CEDAW *will be enhanced by the SDGs and not create more layers of work on gender equality that is without monitoring and supported implementation*.

In February 2016 The CEDAW Committee will hold a Day of Discussion with experts and public to develop their general recommendation on the impact of climate change on women.

The Committee finalized its Draft General Recommendation on access to justice in 2015. In 2016, the Committee will work on integrated normative approaches and report that they are working with the Human Rights Committee on [strengthening their joint jurisprudential approaches to abortion and minimum age of marriage](#).

New General Recommendations

In July 2015, the Committee finalized its [General Recommendation on Access to Justice](#). As the CEDAW framework on access to justice, the GR will define access to justice as a human right in itself and a right which enables the exercise of other rights. This general recommendation expands and clarifies state obligations under CEDAW in terms of women's access to justice. It clarifies that the right encompasses the protection of women's rights against all forms of discrimination with a view to empowering them as individuals and as rights holders. It emphasizes that effective access to justice is a critical area of rule of law and optimizes the emancipatory and transformative potential of law to change the culture of compliance for gender equality. The GR covers applicable concepts related to governance, law and human rights applicable to access to justice, and procedures and quality of justice for women at all levels of justice systems, including specialized and quasi-judicial mechanisms.

¹⁵ CEDAW/C/2015//CRP

¹⁶ CEDAW/C/2015//CRP

ANNEX 1:

Table on Impact on CEDAW Process

This table compares between recommendations and priorities of the NGOs and the issues highlighted by CEDAW in its questions to the States.[A comparison is usually done against the Concluding Observations but as these are not yet released we have used our own observations of the questions of the Committee]

Country	Issue	Comparison between NGO priorities and CEDAW Comments during the Constructive Review	
Lebanon	Lack of laws criminalising child marriage	New draft law proposes regulation of child marriage but comes short	<p>Concluding Observations of Lebanon</p> <p>Marriage and family relations</p> <p>45. The Committee is concerned that the multiplicity of personal status laws in the State Party on account of its religious diversity, is resulting in discrimination against women within their sect, and inequality among women belonging to different sects in key aspects of their lives, including marriage, divorce, and custody of children. The Committee is concerned that the process to regulate civil marriage in the State party has stalled and regrets the absence of an optional civil personal status law despite increasing demands from different sectors of civil society. The Committee is also concerned that the Court of Cassation has little oversight over religious courts, which tend to rule in favour of the husband in divorce, alimony and child custody proceedings. The Committee is further concerned about a draft law intended to regulate marriage among minors instead of prohibiting child marriage, and about the high incidence of child marriage among rural girls, which is disproportionately high compared to the national average.</p> <p>46. The Committee recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Adopt an optional civil personal status law based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination and the right to choose one's religious affiliation in order to protect women and alleviate their legal, economic and social marginalization;</p> <p>(b) Require religious sects to codify their laws and submit them to Parliament for review of their conformity with the Constitution and the provisions of the Convention; establish an appeals mechanism to oversee religious court proceedings and ensure that judgements of religious courts do not discriminate against women; and</p> <p>(c) Set the legal minimum age for marriage at 18 years for girls and boys, in line with international standards, and take the measures necessary to effectively prevent child marriage among rural girls.</p>
Lebanon	Lack of strong national agency	The necessity of establishing a Ministry of Women's Affairs in Lebanon: The National Committee for Lebanese Women is working hard but only has a consultative role. This means that they have little or no decisional power.	<p>National machinery for the advancement of women</p> <p>23. The Committee regrets the institutional weakness, the limited status, the insufficient decision-making authority, human, technical and financial resources of the national machinery for the advancement of women and the obstacles faced concerning coordination and</p>

		<p>We believe that establishing a Ministry of Women's Affairs will ensure that women's rights will be dealt in a more comprehensive and systematic manner. This will allow for effective implementation and monitoring of CEDAW and further strengthen the protection of Women's Rights. The Ministry of Women Affairs must be provided with sufficient resources both financial and human.</p> <p>The establishment of a Ministry of Women's Affairs will also allow for better coordination between all ministries, especially the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior Affairs.</p> <p>If there is a Ministry of Women's Affairs, this could establish a stronger protection mechanism especially for cases of violence against women where decisions made by judges will be carried out effectively by the interior forces.</p>	<p>gender mainstreaming throughout all government bodies. The Committee is concerned about the low level of coordination between the gender focal points within the line Ministries with the Department of Women's Affairs of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Committee is also concerned about the limited and inadequate information provided on the implementation of the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon.</p> <p>24. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/LBN/CO/3, para. 21) that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Give urgent priority to strengthen the institutional capacity of the national machinery for the advancement of women, and provide it with the mandate, decision-making power and human, technical and financial resources that are necessary to work effectively for the promotion of equality of women and men and the enjoyment of their human rights;</p> <p>(b) Institutionalize and strengthen the system of gender focal points in line Ministries and other public institutions in order to achieve an effective gender mainstreaming strategy throughout its policies and programmes;</p> <p>(c) Ensure coordination between the national machinery and its cooperation with civil society and women's non-governmental organizations to promote a participatory planning for the advancement of women; and</p> <p>(d) Accelerate the implementation of the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon by adopting a plan of action that clearly defines the competencies of national and local authorities regarding the National Strategy, and supported by a comprehensive data collection system to monitor its implementation.</p>
Uzbekistan	Lack of a gender equality law	<p>Uzbek Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law Shadow Report Priority Issue</p> <p>Initially the draft of the law on guarantees for equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men contained definitions missing in Uzbek law, such as direct and indirect discrimination, gender, gender equality, gender statistics, gender expertise and sexual harassment.</p> <p>Unfortunately, up to the date this law was not adopted and the Parliament does not provide a clear time frame for the discussion and adoption of the law. Government is reluctant to adopt anyhow progressive laws on women's rights, as the promotion of such rights is contradictory to the State policy of preserving national values, which sees woman as subordinate to man, a housewife and mother.</p>	<p>Concluding Observation to Uzbekistan</p> <p>While appreciating that the State party's legal system recognizes the precedence of international law over domestic law, the Committee is concerned that the State party has not undertaken a comprehensive legislative review or enacted new legislation to incorporate all the provisions of the Convention into domestic law. It notes with concern that, in the absence of such incorporation, the Convention is rarely directly applied in national courts. It is further concerned that a number of draft laws with an important bearing on women's rights such as the draft Law on the guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for men and women and the draft Law on violence in the family, have been pending for many years.</p> <p>10. The Committee urges the State party to:</p> <p>(a) Carry out, within a clear time frame, a comprehensive legislative review and adopt new legislation in order to bring its domestic law in line with the provisions of the Convention; and</p> <p>(b) Accelerate the adoption of the <u>draft Law on the guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for men and women</u> and the draft Law on violence in the family and ensure that they fully comply with the Convention.</p>

	<p>Lack of clear recognition of domestic violence as a crime and the lack of law on domestic violence</p>	<p>In today's Uzbek society, women are suffering from violations of their rights to a greater extent than men, regardless of the declaration on gender equality that exists in the 1992 Uzbek Constitution. The reason for this is that the women role in the society is taken by the state as a vital part of national culture, opposed to the expansion of western gender equality ideas with its "perverse" influence on "tender and modest, highly moral oriental woman." Therefore, "The Program on increasing national spirituality and protection from ideas and phenomena alien to our people's mentality and way of life" was adopted in April 2009. Early marriages, polygamy, domestic violence are interpreted as woman protection, or otherwise as a punishment she deserved for not respecting patriarchal patterns of behavior.</p> <p>The problem of domestic violence remains urgent in Uzbekistan as being continuously silenced by the Government. The draft of the Law on Domestic Violence has been lost in the governmental offices for several years already. It is even not included in the agenda of the Parliament for the nearest future. Domestic violence remains common in Uzbekistan, and it has all possible forms, including physical, sexual, psychological, economic and emotional abuses. The criminal law provides punishment for in general cases of physical abuses, which in turn not considering peculiarities of crimes conducted as domestic violence. Moreover the government continues the policy of terminology substitution, the literal translation of "domestic violence", "gender", "discrimination" are not used in the official vocabulary. Instead, "family conflicts" wording is being offered, which is perceived by people as something private, normal and natural like the notion of family itself. This combination blurs the extent of domestic violence in Uzbek society, perpetrators are assured it is normal, while victims see no way out of it.</p> <p>Similarly, marital rape as such is not addressed by Uzbek legislation although the Criminal Code prohibits rape, and includes provision for "close relative".</p>	<p>10 (b) Accelerate the adoption of the draft Law on the guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for men and women and <u>the draft Law on violence in the family and ensure that they fully comply with the Convention.</u></p>
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		<p>attempts of women was 1150. In 2011 World Health Organisation reported 1551 suicide deaths in Uzbekistan. Although this statistics include both sexes, at least one quarter of this figure belongs to women, it can be surely said, that in patriarchal society as in Uzbekistan, the majority of women suicide cases are caused by family problems. The following suicide case of Gulmira Malikova- young woman from Samarkand region of Uzbekistan, who put herself fire, from December 2014, can be an example that supports our assumption.</p>	
Russia	Lack of policy, structures and resources to combat domestic violence	<p>Currently the Russian legal system does not recognize domestic violence as a separate crime. The system does not recognize the relationship between perpetrator and victim. The main obstacle to prosecuting domestic violence is that it is prosecuted through private prosecutions.</p>	<p>Concluding Observation to Russia</p> <p>Violence against women</p> <p>21. The Committee remains concerned at the high prevalence of violence against women, in particular domestic and sexual violence, in the State party and the lack of statistics disaggregated by age, nationality and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator of violence against women and of studies on its causes and consequences. While noting the information provided by the delegation during the dialogue that the draft law on domestic violence is currently undergoing a second reading in Parliament, the Committee is concerned that cases of violence against women are underreported, as they are considered a private matter, and that victim protection services, such as crisis centres and shelters, are insufficient.</p> <p>22. Recalling its General Recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women, the Committee urges the State party to:</p> <p>(a) Adopt comprehensive legislation to prevent and address violence against women, including domestic violence, introduce ex officio prosecution of domestic and sexual violence and ensure that women and girls who are victims of violence have access to immediate means of redress and protection and that perpetrators are prosecuted and adequately punished;</p> <p>(b) Provide mandatory training for judges, prosecutors, the police and other law enforcement officials on the strict application of criminal law provisions on violence against women and on gender-sensitive procedures to deal with women victims of violence;</p> <p>(c) Provide adequate assistance and protection to women victims of violence, including sexual violence, by establishing shelters both in urban and rural areas, and enhancing cooperation with non-governmental organizations providing assistance to victims; and</p> <p>(d) Collect statistical data on domestic and sexual violence disaggregated by sex, age, nationality and relationship between the victim</p>

			and the perpetrator.
Malawi	Delivery of justice to women is a key problem in the legal system	<p>3. Access to Justice and Implementation of gender related laws- Women largely continue to access justice from informal sectors rather than formal due to a number of factors including long distance to the courts, lack of resources among others. Some of the institutions which are supposed to ensure implementation of gender related laws such as Malawi Human Rights Commission, Malawi Police, and Legal Aid Bureau are heavily underfunded as such they are not able to deliver the required services. For example, the Legal Aid Bureau, it is underfunded and understaffed. The Legal Aid Bureau also requires that a client pays a little fee dependent on the income status of the person which has potential to limit women's access to justice.</p>	<p>Concluding Observations for Malawi.</p> <p>Access to justice and legal aid</p> <p>12. The Committee notes the adoption of the Legal Aid Act in 2010. The Committee is, however, concerned that women continue to face multiple barriers in obtaining access to justice, including the unavailability of courts, legal fees and women's lack of legal literacy, particularly so in the rural areas. It is particularly concerned that customary judicial mechanisms, to which women have to resort, are not gender-sensitive and continue to apply discriminatory provisions. The Committee notes with concern that insufficient human, technical and financial resources have been allocated to the Legal Aid Bureau and that its services are not yet available in all areas of the State party.</p> <p>13. Recalling its general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, the Committee recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Ensure that women have effective access to justice throughout the State party, by the establishment of courts, including the use of mobile courts, as well as enhancing women's legal literacy, raising awareness of their rights, providing legal aid and ensuring that fees are reduced for women with low incomes and waived for women living in poverty;</p> <p>(b) Enact legislation to regulate the relationship between formal and customary justice mechanisms and strengthen measures to ensure that customary judicial mechanisms comply with the Convention, including gender-sensitive training and capacity-building for customary justice authorities;</p> <p>(c) Provide adequate human, technical and financial resources to the Legal Aid Bureau to ensure its effective functioning and facilitate access to it by all women, with particular attention to remote areas; and</p> <p>(d) Monitor and assess the impact on women of efforts to improve access to justice, including gender-sensitive customary justice mechanisms.</p>
Madagascar		<p>In Madagascar there is an absence of specific law on Gender Based Violence. Despite the fact that data (according to the National monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals in 2012/2013,) more than 30% of women are victims of several types of violence. The most common is domestic violence, especially psychological violence. Still according to the research, 73.5% of survivors of violence have never tried to find assistance.</p> <p>Access to justice of women survivors is a main concern. Costs borne by victims are estimated to be high, non-gratuity of the medical certificate as well</p>	<p>Concluding Observations to Madagascar</p> <p>Access to Justice</p> <p>12. The Committee notes that the State party intends to strengthen and increase the number of legal clinics. However, it notes with concern the persistence of many barriers to women's access to justice, particularly in cases of divorce and gender-based violence, such as women's legal illiteracy, the lack of awareness in the State party of women's rights and relevant domestic legislation and gender stereotyping, including among law enforcement personnel, and traditional chiefs, the subjection of women to customary and traditional legal systems, corruption within the judiciary, the unavailability of courts in rural areas, legal fees, and the cost of medical certificates borne by victims of violence.</p> <p>13. Recalling its general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, the Committee recommends</p>

		<p>as the cost of the legal proceedings. Legal aid provided by law is not effective (e.g. free defence services for women and children victims of all forms of violence is just available in the capital while Madagascar has 6 provinces). These facts favor the impunity of perpetrators.</p> <p>The state party doesn't provide facilities, for example shelters to accommodate survivors of violence which would allow them to leave the household where the perpetrator lives.</p> <p>The 20 counselling and Advice Centers mentioned in the Government's response to the list of the issues are opened by the Ministry in charge of gender supported by UNFPA. However, some of them are now closed (e.g. in the East of Madagascar, 4/6 centers are in this case) due to a lack of resources. The state has not undertaken to contribute financially to the proper functioning of such centers.</p> <p>In the south of Madagascar, insecurity is rampant. Bandits called the "Dahalo" have been reported to have raided and burned villages. . Media reports highlight allegations of sexual violence in these incidents. Despite such reports, the State has not taken any measures to investigate and address the impact of this insecurity on women.</p>	<p>that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Strengthen and increase the number of legal aid clinics, enhance their availability and quality in all provinces, and ensure appropriate resources for their operation and for the free provision of effective legal aid before all courts;</p> <p>(b) Enhance women's awareness of their human rights and implement legal literacy programmes to empower women to claim their rights under the Convention;</p> <p>(c) Remove obstacles faced by women victims of violence in gaining access to justice including through an exemption from fees for medical certificates;</p> <p>(d) Develop and implement gender-sensitive capacity-building programmes for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, the police and for legal practitioners providing legal aid;</p> <p>(e) Allow women's organizations with qualified legal expertise to prosecute cases on behalf of women victims; and</p> <p>(f) Extend current plans for data collection concerning violations of women's rights of in criminal cases to cover civil case as well.</p> <p>Violence against women</p> <p>20. The Committee is concerned that:</p> <p>(a) There is no legislation specifically criminalizing violence against women, in particular child and/or forced marriage, and marital rape, and that there is no comprehensive policy framework to address such violence;</p> <p>(b) Gender-based violence against women in the domestic sphere is not considered by courts in child custody or visitations decisions, thus forcing women to continue facing their abusers and risking further exposure of children to violence;</p> <p>(c) Domestic and sexual violence appear to be socially legitimized and accompanied by a culture of silence and impunity;</p> <p>(d) Cases of violence against women continue to be underreported, due to an apparent lack of trust in the judicial institutions (CEDAW/C/MDG/CO/5, para. 18), and that the frequent resort to conciliation in cases of violence against women may be detrimental to women due to the prevailing gender bias in society; and</p> <p>(e) There is a lack of data on the crimes investigated, prosecuted and sanctioned as well as the reparation offered to the victims by the police and before the courts.</p> <p>21. The Committee calls upon the State party to:</p> <p>(a) Adopt legislation to criminalize all acts of violence against women, specifically criminalizing domestic violence, including marital rape, child and/or forced marriage, and all forms of sexual abuse, and formulate a comprehensive strategy to ensure the implementation of legislation;</p> <p>(b) Adopt and implement legislation requiring that gender-based violence against women in the domestic sphere be taken into account in child custody proceedings or visitation decisions, and sensitize the judiciary</p>
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			<p>on the relationship between that kind of violence and the development of the child;</p> <p>(c) Ensure that women and girls who are victims of violence have access to effective redress, including compensation, and protection, and that perpetrators are prosecuted and adequately punished;</p> <p>(d) Guarantee resources for finalizing and implementing the national strategy to combat gender-based violence;</p> <p>(e) Provide adequate assistance and protection to women victims of violence by establishing shelters and providing counselling and rehabilitation to victims of violence, especially in rural areas, and through coordination of interventions and of support services and cooperation with non-governmental organizations and international partners;</p> <p>(f) Continue to raise public awareness, through the media and educational programmes and implement mandatory capacity-building programmes for law enforcement officials, health-service providers, teachers and traditional chiefs on gender-sensitive support to victims, and ensure that victims are destigmatized and encouraged to report incidents of domestic and sexual violence against women; and</p> <p>(g) Collect statistical data on violence against women disaggregated by age, nationality and relationship between victim and perpetrator, and undertake studies and/or surveys on the extent of violence against women and its root causes.</p>
Slovakia	Rights violations faced by minority/marginalised women	Human rights violations and differential impact faced by minority women especially Roman women – including insufficient access of Romani women to justice in cases of their multiple discrimination, discrimination in education, health care and missing compensation and safeguard provisions for involuntary sterilisation of Romani women	<p>Disadvantaged and marginalized groups of women</p> <p>36. The Committee notes with concern the impact of intersecting forms of discrimination on disadvantaged and marginalized groups of women in the State party. In particular, the Committee is concerned about:</p> <p>(a) The persisting segregation of Roma in separate settlements, including by constructing walls and other physical separations, Roma women's limited access to land tenure, the reports on frequent violent raids by the police in Roma settlements resulting in casualties and displacements of residents, including women and children, and the lack of investigation into the excessive use of force and misconduct by the police;</p> <p>(b) Heightened risk of violence and labour exploitation and racially-motivated acts faced by migrant women;</p> <p>(c) When trying to change their legally recognized gender, transgender and intersex women are reportedly required to undergo medical treatment which does not respect their freedom to control one's body; and</p> <p>(d) The lack of comprehensive data on women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, which prevents obtaining a basis for informed and targeted policy to address their situation with regard to all areas covered by the Convention.</p> <p>37. The Committee urges the State party to:</p>

			<p>(a) Review its laws and policies on land and housing, including the Construction Act, with the participation of Roma women, to ensure these women can fully enjoy their rights to adequate housing, education and family and private life without discrimination and fear of segregation, forced eviction and displacement and establish and enforce a strict code of conduct for the police so as to effectively guarantee respect for women's human rights, in all its operations;</p> <p>(b) Introduce protective measures for all migrant women, including undocumented migrant women, at particular risk of violence and strengthen labour inspections of workplaces, including private households and take concrete measures to protect them from racially-motivated acts; and</p> <p>(c) Review current laws and take measures to ensure respecting and protecting the rights of transgender and intersex women and girls to control their body and to be free from non-consensual medical treatment, including by abolishing the requirement of compulsory sterilization and surgery for transgender women who wish to obtain legal recognition of their gender.</p> <p>38. The Committee recommends that the State party enhance the collection of data disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, geographical location and socioeconomic background, in all areas covered by the Convention, in particular on women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including women belonging to Roma and other ethnic minorities, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women, women with disabilities and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women. In doing so, the Committee encourages the State party to:</p> <p>(a) Collect data on ethnicity based on the principle of self-identification and anonymity;</p> <p>(b) Involve the surveyed population groups in the data definition and data-collection processes; and</p> <p>(c) Ensure stringent protection of personal information throughout the data collection process, including collection, processing and dissemination of data.</p> <p>39. The Committee is further concerned at recent resurgence of negative discourse by political leaders, private organizations, and religious groups and violence directed against Roma women and women belonging to other ethnic minority groups, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women.</p> <p>40. The Committee urges the State party to:</p> <p>(a) Amend legislation to explicitly prohibit hate speech based on being lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women as an independent crime;</p> <p>(b) Ensure that the prohibition of hate crimes and hate speech under the Anti-discrimination Act and the Criminal Code is strictly enforced and that judges, prosecutors, the police and other law enforcement officials are adequately trained to recognize and</p>
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			<p>effectively address such incidents;</p> <p>(c) Publicly condemn racially-motivated and homophobic discourse and violence, including manifestations of racism and homophobia in the media and on the internet, and strengthen efforts to promote tolerance and respect for diversity; and</p> <p>(d) Take an inclusive and non-selective approach in upholding the principle of non-refoulement and take a gender-sensitive approach towards the ongoing refugee inflows, as well as to the asylum claims, including in procedural matters, in line with the rights covered in the Convention and its General Recommendation No. 32 (2014) on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women.</p>
Slovenia	Impact of austerity programming on women	<p>On Economic independence of women</p> <p>From 2008 onwards according to the financial and economic crises many austerity measures has been adopted, which are gender blind, not gender neutral. They mostly affected women working in public sector by cutting wages, pensioners by keeping pensions at the same level already several years, adopted pension reform which affected mostly women. Also new social legislation was adopted. Economic situation worsened significantly especially for women who suffers multiple discrimination; single mothers, which constitute more than 3/4 of single parents, elder women, who live in poverty more than twice more as elder men, women who are majority recipients of social benefits</p>	<p>Concluding Observations of Slovenia</p> <p>General context</p> <p>7. The Committee notes with concern that austerity measures, adopted in an effort to stabilize public finances, have a detrimental and disproportionate impact on women in many spheres of life. The Committee further notes that very few studies and evaluations have been conducted to monitor the gender-specific effects of such measures. The Committee wishes to emphasize that the concerns expressed below take into account the exceptional circumstances that the State party has faced during the last years and is still facing. However, the Committee reminds the State party that even in times of fiscal constraints and economic crisis, special efforts must be made to respect women's human rights, sustain and expand social investment and social protection and to employ a gender-sensitive approach, giving priority to women in vulnerable situations.</p> <p>8. The Committee recommends that the State party conduct a comprehensive study on the consequences of the austerity measures on women and design an action plan to mitigate the adverse effects of such measures as well as seek assistance and support from the European Union and IMF for its implementation.</p> <p>Economic empowerment of women</p> <p>33. The Committee is concerned that austerity measures, in particular the reduction in child allowances and pension benefits, have had a disproportionate effect on women, as they are the main recipients of social services provided by the welfare State. It is further concerned that low levels of social benefits and very strict eligibility criteria result in a situation in which many women living in poverty, in particular single mothers, older women and those without previous employment, are excluded from social protection.</p> <p>34. The Committee recommends that the State party integrate a gender perspective into its austerity laws and policies, to ensure respect for women's human rights, in particular in times of fiscal constraints and economic crisis; conduct a systematic assessment of the impact of such laws and policies on the lives of women and their families; review austerity laws that</p>

			<p>disproportionately affected women, in particular those related to child allowances, social benefits and pension schemes; and closely monitor the National Programme on Social Security and ensure that it is implemented in a gender-sensitive manner.</p> <p>Rural women</p> <p>35. The Committee notes the various programmes aimed at the economic empowerment of rural women. It is, however, concerned that only 27.3 per cent of family farms are run by women, as a result of traditional and social patterns by which husbands predominate as registered owners of farms.</p> <p>36. The Committee recommends that the State party develop special policies and programmes aimed at economic empowerment of rural women, including through promoting their ownership over land.</p>
United Arab Emirates	Framework for equality diminished by the lack of political will to address discrimination in personal status laws	2005 Personal Status Law retains the classical legal framework in Muslim family law, which regards the husband as the head of the household with a duty to protect and provide, in return for the wife's duty of obedience and sexual availability. The issue here is not about Islam or Shari'ah, but whether the State Party has the political will to end discrimination against women, its convenient use of Islam to justify male authority over women, and its decision to legitimise only certain voices as the authority on matters of religion.	<p>Concluding Observations of United Arab Emirates</p> <p>Definition of equality and non-discrimination</p> <p>13. The Committee is concerned that, in spite of its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/ARE/CO/1, para. 15), the principle of equality of women and men has still not been enshrined in the State party's Constitution and its domestic legislation, and that discrimination against women has not yet been defined in accordance with article 1 of the Convention and prohibited in the State party's legislation. The Committee is also concerned about the maintenance of discriminatory provisions in its legislation, such as of the concept of male guardianship and the obligation imposed on women to obey their husband (article 56 of the Personal Status Law), which are incompatible with the State party's obligations under the Convention.</p> <p>14. The Committee calls upon the State party to incorporate, without further delay, the principle of equality of women and men in its Constitution, in line with its commitment made during the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) (A/HRC/23/13, para. 128.85), and to prohibit and sanction all forms of discrimination against women, encompassing both direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres, in line with its obligations under articles 1 and 2 of the Convention. The Committee urges the State party to repeal as a matter of priority all legal provisions which continue to discriminate against women, including those contained in the Penal Code and the Personal Status Law.</p>
Timor Leste	Addressing gaps in the education system to ensure rights of young women and girls – education as a critical enabler of all other rights.	<p>Need to have a School Re-Entry Policy to ensure right to education for young women and girls.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The right to access to education is a fundamental Right that the State needs to attend in order to ensure Human resources for the nation of Timor-Leste, However the Ministry 	<p>Concluding Observations to Timor Leste</p> <p>Education</p> <p>26. The Committee welcomes that the State party is taking steps to ensure equal access to education for girls. The Committee also welcomes that in 2011 the Ministry of Education initiated a “Zero Tolerance” policy against administrative malpractice in the education sector covering sexual violence, corporal punishment, and other forms of violence in schools but regrets the lack of its</p>

		<p>of Education today has not ensured Women's right to access to Education by creating a Return to School Policy to facilitate Women Students with early pregnancies to continue the learning process after labour.</p>	<p>effective implementation. The Committee is further concerned that:</p> <p>(a) The rate of school dropout among girls remains very high at almost 50% between the primary and secondary levels due to early pregnancy, gender-based violence and the lack of adequate sanitation in schools, particularly in rural areas;</p> <p>(b) The efforts to eradicate the high percentage of female illiteracy have not been sufficient;</p> <p>(c) The re-entry policy enabling young women to return to school after pregnancy, whose necessity has been under discussion since 2010, has still not been developed;</p> <p>27. The Committee recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Increase efforts to retain girls and young women at all levels of education, including by providing adequate and gender-sensitive sanitation facilities and safe transportation to and from schools, as well as safe educational environments free from discrimination and violence, strengthening incentives for parents to send their daughters to school, eliminating child, early and forced marriages, and raising awareness among communities, families, students, teachers and community leaders, especially men, about the importance of girls' and women's education;</p> <p>(b) Strengthen its efforts to eradicate illiteracy, particularly among rural women, by conducting literacy programmes in local languages as well as Portuguese;</p> <p>(c) Adopt and implement without further delay an official re-entry policy for young women and girls who have dropped out of school due to early pregnancy and prohibit disciplinary actions against pregnant girls in both public and private schools;</p>
Timor Leste	<p>Abortion continues to be criminalised, with no exception even in cases of rape and incest. Women and girls who have experienced sexual violence are re-victimised by this punitive provision</p>	<p>Abortion</p> <p>The Committee in its concluding observations called on Timor-Leste to "review the legislation relating to abortion with a view to removing the punitive provisions imposed on women who undergo abortion".</p> <p>However since 2009, Timor-Leste has further restricted women's access to safe and legal abortions. On 15 July 2009, article 141 of the Penal Code (Decree Law 19/2009) was amended to provide that an abortion is only legal where necessary to protect the life of the mother or foetus, and in such cases must be authorised by a panel of three doctors. The amendment also allows other health professionals to lodge an objection to the proposed abortion. A woman who consents to an illegal</p>	<p>Concluding Observations to Timor Leste</p> <p>31. The Committee recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Review article 141 of the Penal Code to legalize abortion in cases of rape, incest, threat to the health of the pregnant woman and serious impairment of the foetus, and remove the requirement of authorization by a panel of three doctors;</p> <p>(b) Consider the technical guidance on the application of a human rights-based approach to the implementation of policies and programmes to reduce preventable maternal morbidity and mortality, drawn up by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/21/22), and increase efforts to reduce maternal mortality by ensuring adequate sexual and reproductive health services, including access to antenatal, delivery and postnatal services, and prevention and treatment of anaemia, and by establishing maternal deaths as a notifiable event, institutionalizing their mandatory review, and creating a high level inter-ministerial committee to monitor the maternal death review and response system in</p>

		<p>abortion faces a sentence of up to three years in prison. This amendment means that it is very difficult for women to obtain legal abortions, particularly given the shortage of qualified doctors.</p> <p>A 2009 report found that 40 percent of all emergency obstetrics care was managing and treating complications from early pregnancy losses (both abortions and miscarriages). There are currently no exceptions in cases of rape, incest or harm to the psychological health of the mother. We are deeply concerned with the lack of an exception in such cases given the high rates of sexual assault and incest in Timor-Leste. The criminalisation of abortion re-victimises women and girls who have suffered sexual assault and incest.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We call on the government to amend Article 141 of the Penal Code to remove the requirement to obtain approval for an abortion from a panel of three doctors, and withdraw punitive sanctions against women who undergo abortions in cases of rape, incest or harm to the psychological health of the mother. 	<p>the country;</p> <p>(c) Strengthen measures to reduce malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies targeting adolescent girls, pregnant women and children and establish mechanisms to track financial allocations and actual expenditures by the line ministries and other state institutions;</p> <p>(d) Strengthen measures to ensure that all young women, adolescent girls and rural women have access to sexual and reproductive health services and emergency health care, and to improve the quality of family planning services, awareness-raising and counselling services, particularly in rural areas, as well as access to confidential, age-appropriate, youth-friendly and youth-sensitive sexual and reproductive health information for all women and girls, irrespective of marital status.</p>
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Country	Issue	Comparison between NGO priorities and CEDAW Comments during the Constructive Review	
Vietnam	Young women activists were focused on the issue of dating violence as a key gap which did not have much attention from the state although there were new laws and resources working on domestic violence. The context of dating violence and violence within family/marriage was different and needed to be looked at differently.	<p><u>Young Women's Groups Statement.</u></p> <p>Media stories on dating violence appear increasingly in Vietnam. Being very concerned of the issue, we conducted a survey, which showed alarming results. For instance, 41% of female youth were mentally abused and 11% were sexually abused by their dating partners. However, despite these serious numbers, there has not been any state-level research and response on dating violence as yet. Moreover, most of the female youths do not recognize their right to be free from violence by their partners, and the victims have no idea where they could go for help. Without any measure to raise female youth's awareness on this issue, all legal regulations to protect women from violence become insignificant. We call for attention from the state for this burning issue.</p>	<p>Vietnam Concluding Observations</p> <p>18. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control in 2007 and the revised Labour Code in 2012 which prohibited sexual harassment at work. However, it is concerned about:</p> <p>(a) The high prevalence of violence against women and girls, including dating violence, violence in public spaces and sexual harassment at the work place, as well as against older women and women in prostitution;</p> <p>(b) The absence of legal provisions explicitly criminalizing marital rape; the low rate of reporting and conviction of perpetrators of violence against women; excessive use of reconciliation procedures to address domestic violence; and over-reliance on forensic evidence in investigating physical and sexual violence ;</p> <p>(c) The inadequacy of victim assistance and rehabilitation services;</p> <p>(d) The lack of systematic collection of comprehensive data on violence against women.</p> <p>19. Recalling its general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women, the Committee recommends that the State party:</p>

		<p>First, there must be a nation-wide research on dating violence. We recommend that indicators of gender – based violence including youth dating violence must be taken as the official index in the national gender statistics.</p> <p>Second, we highlight that awareness raising on youth dating violence must be included in the National Action Plan on Gender Equality, 2016-2020 and the National Strategy on Youth, 2020.</p>	<p>(a) Revise the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code and criminalize all forms of violence against women, including marital rape, dating violence, violence in public spaces and sexual harassment;</p>
Croatia	Systemic and communal discrimination and even violence faced by LBT women and their lack of access to justice.	<p>Information from the Croatian Women's Network on violence faced by LBT women.</p> <p>In the Criminal Code - violence against women members of minorities</p> <p>There are significant problems with implementation of the hate crime provisions in relation to violence against lesbian women (Criminal Code) at all levels – the police (insulting victims, not taking complaints, being physically aggressive towards victims, violating privacy of victims), the state attorney (rejecting complaints without reasonable explanation) and the courts (violating victims rights, negative verdicts).</p> <p>In one of the cases the police officers were abusing lesbian woman for three years. She was continuously interrogated (for more than 12 hours in duration); police officers insulted her, sexually harassed her and threatened her, and denied her medication and she was subject to other actions under the excuse that the police are investigating a supposed crime committed more than 25 years ago. The case was reported to the State Attorney's office; criminal complaint was filed and it was reported to the Ministry of Interior, however since there were no adequate actions by state institutions, case was filed to the ECtHR and it was communicated this year.</p> <p>Our recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic education of the police, public prosecutors and judges at civil, criminal and misdemeanor courts. 	<p>Croatia Concluding Observations</p> <p>Lesbian, bisexual and transgender women</p> <p>38. The Committee notes with concern discrimination, including by the judiciary and law enforcement personnel, against lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, in addition to the inadequacy of measures taken to combat hate speech against them, including the tendency to prosecute such offences under misdemeanour law rather than hate crime provisions.</p> <p>39. The Committee recommends that the State party take appropriate measures to enable lesbian, bisexual and transgender women to fully enjoy their human rights. In doing so, the State party should pay particular attention to ensuring the training of its judiciary and law enforcement personnel on non discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, pursuant to its Gender Equality Act of 2008 (arts. 6, 13, 16, 31 and 36). It should also take measures to ensure adequate protection from hate speech and the prosecution of perpetrators with timely and commensurate sanctions.</p>
Bolivia	Despite the premise of the current government being based on	Statement by Indigenous Women's Group	Constitutional and legislative framework

	<p>returning political power to indigenous people's of Bolivia, there is still a lot of discrimination faced by this group of women. One main issue is that education and language are barriers and these women do not know they have rights under the Constitution.</p>	<p><i>La Confederación Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas de Bolivia (CNAMIB) agradece al Comité por la oportunidad de intervenir y punto seguido expresa sus preocupaciones, a saber:</i></p> <p>1. Las mujeres de los pueblos indígenas somos víctimas de una política de colonización histórica, a la que se le suma la apropiación de nuestros territorios y la explotación de los recursos naturales, trayendo como consecuencia la marginalización y el aumento de nuestra vulnerabilidad como mujeres.</p> <p>2. Adicionalmente, la apropiación por parte del Gobierno de las instituciones y sistemas de gobernanza indígenas de las cuales muchas de nosotras hacíamos parte, ha afectado el derecho a participar en nuestras organizaciones y asociaciones legítimamente constituidas, incumpliendo lo contemplado en el artículo 7 parágrafo c de la Convención.</p> <p>3. El gobierno boliviano autoriza (por ejemplo ver el Decreto 2366 de 2015) la exploración y explotación de gas, petróleo y minerales en áreas protegidas, que también son territorios indígenas (TIPNIS, PILON LAJAS, MADIDI, AGUARAGUE y otros), lo que conlleva a un desconocimiento de disposiciones constitucionales sobre el dominio ancestral de los pueblos indígenas sobre sus territorios y la libre determinación, así como la obligación de consulta previa.</p> <p>Estas medidas traen como consecuencias despojos, contaminación de tierras y aguas, junto a la disminución del suelo agrícola apto para consumo, precarizando la condición de las mujeres indígenas de nuestras comunidades, poniendo en riesgo la supervivencia de nuestras familias, y causando un impacto negativo a la salud contrario a los artículos 12 y 14.2.b de la convención.</p> <p>4. La actividad extractiva también atenta contra la integridad de muchas de</p>	<p>8. (e) Enhance women's awareness of their rights and the means to enforce them, targeting specific groups of women such as indigenous women, Afro-Bolivian women living in rural and remote areas and women with disabilities, including by facilitating access to information on the Convention in indigenous languages and accessible formats aimed at reaching women with disabilities, in cooperation with civil society and the media.</p>
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		<p>nuestras mujeres, pues debido a que la mayoría de trabajadores son hombres ajenos a la comunidad, se aumenta la prostitución y trata de mujeres indígenas que habitan en dichos territorios contrario al artículo 6 de la Convención. Sin datos desagregados que incluyan la dimensión indígena es imposible encontrar una solución al problema.</p> <p>5. La Agenda Patriótica al 2025, aprueba la ampliación de la frontera agrícola en 13 millones de hectáreas, a la fecha el avance es de casi 3 millones, por lo que el desbosque por año podría ser hasta más de un millón de hectáreas, poniendo en riesgo la existencia misma de los pueblos indígenas y de las mujeres que allí habitamos.</p> <p>6. El Estado no garantiza el acceso a la justicia para las mujeres indígenas. No se han resuelto casos como la intervención violenta a la Marcha Indígena del TIPNIS en Chaparina y la “violación colectiva” de 7 mujeres y 2 niñas indígenas Tacanas de la Comunidad “El Retorno”, Departamento de Pando, aspecto relacionado con la falta de independencia del sistema judicial</p>	
Gambia	<p>Women’s groups from the coalition led by TANGO focused on violence against women and lack of implementation of new domestic violence laws. The use of the existing Penal Code to prosecute such cases causes obstacles and raise issues of implementation of the new laws.</p>	<p>Statement of TANGO On Violence against women</p> <p>It is noted that violence against women is a common practice, is on the increase, and affects women and their children in a number of ways. Implementation of the Domestic Violence Act 2013 and the Sexual Violence Act 2013 to address violence against women is inadequate. There is no official data to indicate how often the provisions of these legislations have been invoked before the Courts. Instead, matters of violence against women are still adjudicated under the Criminal Code Act 2007 and not the two mentioned above which are specifically for violence against women. We request that the state party be urged to repeal provisions in the Criminal Code which relate to issues addressed in the</p>	<p>Gambia Concluding Observations</p> <p>Violence against women</p> <p>22. The Committee notes the adoption in 2013 of the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act, but is concerned that violence against women remains widespread. It is particularly concerned about:</p> <p>(a) The lack of criminalization of marital rape and the unclear provisions in the Domestic Violence Act relating to the definition of “aggravated” domestic violence and allowing for out-of-court settlements, which often do not take into account women’s best interests;</p> <p>(b) The insufficient implementation of the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act owing, for example, to a lack of resources and the absence of regulations, guidelines and effective reporting mechanisms;</p> <p>(c) The lack of support for women who are victims of violence, which is preventing them from gaining access to justice effectively, and the insufficient</p>

		<p>Sexual Offence Act 2013 and to raise awareness ensure distribution and sensitization to the public on the provisions of the specific Acts that address Gender Based Violence</p>	<p>support and rehabilitation services available to them;</p> <p>(d) The lack of official disaggregated data relating to violence against women and girls, including on the number of investigations, prosecutions, convictions and sentences, as well as out-of-court settlements.</p> <p>23. The Committee urges the State party:</p> <p>(a) To amend its legislation to ensure that marital rape is explicitly criminalized and adequately sanctioned; that the definition of “aggravated” domestic violence is based on objective elements, in line with international standards, and explicitly covers all forms of violence, including psychological violence; and that provisions allowing for out-of-court settlements are repealed or accompanied by adequate legal safeguards to ensure that mediation is not imposed on the victim;</p> <p>(b) To implement the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act effectively throughout the territory of the State party by adopting the necessary regulations and guidelines, reinforcing reporting mechanisms, allocating adequate resources and strengthening the Victims of Violence Advisory Committee;</p> <p>(c) To guarantee that women, including refugee women, have effective access to justice by making available confidential and gender-sensitive complaint mechanisms, reinforcing legal aid programmes, ensuring that alleged perpetrators of violence are duly prosecuted by a competent criminal court, and protecting and compensating victims;</p> <p>(d) To strengthen psychosocial rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for women who are victims of violence;</p> <p>(e) To establish a reliable system for the collection of statistical data on violence against women, disaggregated by age, form of violence and the relationship between the victims and the perpetrator, and on the number of complaints, out-of-court settlements, prosecutions, convictions and sentences imposed on perpetrators, as well as on reparation provided to victims.</p>
Senegal	NGOs focused on the lack of compliance of the laws on abortion as a key issue and the issue of FGM.	<p>Senegal ratified in 2004 the Protocol to the African Charter on Human Rights and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women, which in its Article 14 imposes on the States Parties the obligation to provide access to safe abortion for women and girls bearing pregnancies resulting from rape, incest or other sexual abuse, or when the</p>	<p>Senegal Concluding Observations</p> <p>Health</p> <p>30. The Committee welcomes the numerous measures taken by the State party to address maternal mortality and expand universal health coverage, but remains concerned about:</p> <p>(a) The persistently high rates of maternal mortality, the limited health infrastructure for pregnant women, the insufficient number of skilled personnel attending births and women's limited</p>

		<p>mental or physical health of the pregnant woman is in danger or when there's risk for life of the pregnant women or girl. But criminal law considers abortion as a serious offense. (See section 305 of the Penal Code)</p> <p>And the Code of ethics of physicians authorize abortion only "when the mother's life is seriously threatened (see Art. 35 Decree No. 67 of February 10, 1967 -147 constituting the code of medical ethics).</p> <p>Yet Article 98 of the Constitution of Senegal states that: "Treaties or agreements duly ratified or approved shall, upon publication, is superior to that of national laws. However, despite the clear and precise provisions of Article 98 of the Constitution, prohibiting abortion remains the principle in Senegal.</p> <p>Because of this ban, women obtain unsafe abortions resulting in 8 to 13% of maternal deaths per year according to WHO. In 2012 there were 51,500 induced abortions in Senegal at a rate of 17 abortions per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 years. This means that each year about 2% of women in Senegal have induced abortions (According to a study by the Guttmacher Institute published in Dakar in April 2015).</p>	<p>access to essential obstetric care;</p> <p>(b) The lack of comprehensive education on sexual and reproductive health and rights and family planning services, and the limited access to modern contraceptives;</p> <p>(c) The criminalization of abortion (art. 305 of the Penal Code); the restrictive conditions under which abortion is available under the code of professional conduct (i.e. only in cases of threats to the life of the pregnant woman); and the draft revised legal provisions that, while seeking to legalize abortion in cases of rape and incest, require the pregnant woman to prove such rape or incest;</p> <p>(d) The disproportionately high number of women living with HIV, in particular women in prostitution, given the low prevalence in the population in general.</p> <p>31. The Committee recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Strengthen measures to reduce the maternal mortality rate and ensure the provision of essential obstetric care for pregnant women;</p> <p>(b) Introduce age-appropriate school education in sexual and reproductive health and rights, conduct awareness-raising campaigns about modern contraceptive methods in local languages, and increase access to safe and affordable contraceptives throughout the State party;</p> <p>(c) Amend article 305 of the Penal Code, the code of professional conduct and relevant legal provisions to decriminalize abortion and ensure that it is legally available in cases of threats to the life or health of the pregnant woman, rape, incest and serious impairment of the foetus; and remove from the draft new legal provisions the burden of proof for pregnant women to show that their pregnancy is the result of rape or incest;</p> <p>Stereotypes and harmful practices</p> <p>18. The Committee welcomes the adoption of Law No. 99-05 of 29 January 1999 criminalizing female genital mutilation and of a second national action plan to accelerate the elimination female genital mutilation (2010-2015), as well as the measures taken to raise public awareness of harmful practices. It is concerned, however, at the persistence of adverse cultural norms, practices and traditions as well as patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles, responsibilities and identities of women and men in the family and society. It notes that stereotypes contribute to the persistence of violence against women as well as harmful practices, including female genital mutilation, levirate and sororate,</p>
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		<p>Statement by NGO coalition</p> <p>Undertake effective implementation and monitoring of the law and action plan on FGM.</p>	<p>child marriage, polygamy, repudiation, and food prohibitions or taboos. The Committee is also concerned that the State party has not taken sufficient action to modify or eliminate such stereotypes and harmful practices.</p> <p>19. The Committee recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Ensure the effective implementation of Law No. 99-05 of 29 January 1999 criminalizing female genital mutilation and of the second national action plan to accelerate the elimination of female genital mutilation (2010-2015);</p> <p>(b) Put in place a comprehensive strategy, in conformity with articles 2 (f) and 5 (a) of the Convention, to eliminate stereotypes that discriminate against women and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, levirate and sororate, child marriage, polygamy, repudiation, and food prohibitions or taboos. Such measures should include concerted efforts, within a clear time frame and in collaboration with civil society, the school system, the media and traditional leaders, to educate and raise awareness about negative gender stereotypes and harmful practices, targeting women and girls and men and boys at all levels of society.</p>
Spain	Impact of Austerity on gender equality policies was the first issue identified by the Spanish Platform for Women	<p>Firstly, on the issue of the backlash in equality policies, there have been cutbacks and imbalances in the development and implementation of policies. In the central State, policies and equality bodies have been cut up to 50%. The Autonomous Communities have cut, on average, up to 32%. Gender equality mechanisms have not only been amended but have also suffered a regression. The former Women's Institute has been substituted by the current "Institute for Women and equal opportunities" where women are placed only as a target group diluting gender as a cross cutting element. At the local level, gender equality competences have also been removed contravening paragraph 14 of the last Concluding Observations (COBs).</p>	<p>Spain Concluding Observations</p> <p>General context</p> <p>8. The Committee notes with concern that the financial and economic crisis and austerity measures taken by the State party to address it have had negative effects on women in all spheres of life. The Committee also notes with concern that no study or evaluation has been conducted to monitor the gender-specific effects of the crisis. The Committee takes into account the exceptional circumstances that the State party has been facing during the past few years. It reminds the State party, however, that, even in a time of fiscal constraint and economic crisis, special efforts must be made to respect women's rights, sustain and expand social investment and social protection and employ a gender-sensitive approach, according priority to women in vulnerable situations and avoiding retrogressive measures.</p> <p>9. The Committee encourages the State party:</p> <p>(a) To undertake the studies and evaluations necessary to monitor the gender-specific effects of the financial and economic crisis;</p> <p>(b) To ensure an internal redistribution of its resources to overcome the consequences of the crisis, according priority to measures that support gender equality in all</p>

			fields, and devise an effective strategy to ensure the full implementation of the Convention; (c) To collect statistics disaggregated by sex in all relevant areas, especially on all aspects of employment in the public and private sectors.
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Country	Issue	Comparison between NGO priorities and CEDAW Comments during the Constructive Review	
Azerbaijan	Domestic Violence and the Weakness of the Gender Machinery	<p>To elaborate working mechanisms and take special measures for implementation of the enacted and amended laws to address discrimination in general and high number of cases of domestic violence and early/forced marriages in particular as well as to increase women's access to justice;</p> <p>To work out the overall 4-year National Action Plan on Women's Issues, which would coincide with the CEDAW 4-year reporting cycle, that can be a valuable strategic planning tool as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanism for implementation of the CEDAW-concluding observations and recommendations;</p>	<p>Concluding Observations to Azerbaijan</p> <p>Violence against women</p> <p>22. The Committee welcomes the information provided by the State party's delegation concerning the current consideration by the Cabinet of Ministers of the national strategy and the national action plan on the prevention of domestic violence, and the establishment of an online database on violence against women. The Committee remains concerned, however, at:</p> <p>(a) The lack of implementation of the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence, as reflected by the modest number of cases reported and long-term and short-term protection orders issued;</p> <p>(b) The lack of systematic collection of data on domestic violence;</p> <p>(c) The limited number of support and referral centres for victims of domestic violence, which are mainly run by non-governmental organizations;</p> <p>(d) The small number (currently only three) of State-funded shelters for women who are victims of domestic violence, under the authority of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour Protection;</p> <p>(e) The delay in the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.</p> <p>23. Recalling its general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women, the Committee urges the State party:</p> <p>(a) To adopt without delay the national strategy on the prevention of domestic violence and the national action plan on the prevention of domestic violence, and allocate adequate resources for their implementation;</p> <p>(b) To put in place a system to collect comprehensive data on all forms of violence against women, disaggregated by age, urban and rural areas and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator;</p>

			<p>(c) To establish State-funded support and referral centres for victims of violence throughout the country and strengthen cooperation with relevant non governmental organizations in this respect;</p> <p>(d) To increase the number of State-funded shelters for women who are victims of violence, especially in the regions, and establish a round-the-clock national helpline for victims;</p> <p>National machinery for the advancement of women</p> <p>14. The Committee notes with concern that, despite support from the political leadership, efforts by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs to promote the advancement of women are hampered by an unclear and fragmented mandate as well as a lack of authority to effectively ensure Government-wide mainstreaming of a gender equality perspective in all policymaking processes. The Committee is further concerned that gender focal points in the relevant government institutions are not positioned at decision-making levels, have not been established in all regions and are unable to effectively promote a gender perspective in all legislation, policies, programmes and projects. The Committee is also concerned that there is still no national plan of action to promote gender equality and to address the gaps between de jure and de facto equality.</p> <p>15. The Committee recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Strengthen the capacity of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs by upgrading it to a fully fledged ministry in order to improve its effective functioning as a national machinery responsible for the advancement of women and the full implementation of the Convention; establish clear terms of reference for gender focal points in government institutions; and provide them with adequate human, financial and technical resources;</p> <p>(b) Adopt a national action plan on gender equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, recommendations in the present concluding observations;</p> <p>(c) Develop focused terms of reference for gender focal points in all regions and branches and ensure that they occupy decision-making positions.</p>
Kyrgyzstan	Bride kidnapping	NGO recommendation and information 1. Kyrgyz Government	Concluding Observations to Kyrgyzstan

		<p>should undertake measures to ensure the full respect of the laws penalizing bride abduction, forced marriage, and polygamy.</p> <p>2. State bodies should take appropriate measures in order to have all cases involving these phenomena recorded, investigated, and prosecuted, even in the absence of a formal complaint.</p> <p>3. Government should take urgent and effective measures, including the training of the judiciary and law enforcement officials.</p> <p>4. State bodies should run constant and large public awareness-raising campaigns, to eliminate these practices. The role of the media must be of crucial importance in this respect.</p> <p>5. State bodies should analyze implementation of the articles 155-154 of the Criminal Code of Kyrgyz Republic. At the same time Government should accumulate of the data/statistics on initiated and taken to court criminal cases.</p> <p>6. To undertake measures in order to have all cases involving these phenomena recorded, investigated, and prosecuted.</p> <p>7. To develop qualitative new methods for evaluation of the effectiveness of investigators</p>	<p>Stereotypes and harmful practices</p> <p>15. The Committee remains concerned about the persistence of deep-rooted patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and society, which discriminate against women and perpetuate their subordination within the family and society. Those attitudes and stereotypes are reflected in women's educational and professional choices, their limited participation in political and public life, their unequal participation in the labour market and their unequal status in marriage and family relations. The Committee recalls that such stereotypes are root causes of violence against women and expresses its concern at the high prevalence of harmful practices that discriminate against women, such as child marriage and bride kidnapping, and that to date, the State party has not taken sustained measures to modify or eliminate discriminatory stereotypes, negative traditional attitudes and harmful practices.</p> <p>16. The Committee urges the State party:</p> <p>(a) To put in place, without delay, a comprehensive strategy with proactive and sustained measures that targets women and men at all levels of society, including religious leaders, to eliminate stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and society and harmful practices that discriminate against women;</p> <p>(b) To expand public education programmes on the criminal nature and adverse effects on women of harmful practices such as child marriage and bride kidnapping, in particular in rural and remote areas;</p> <p>(c) To use innovative measures targeting the media to strengthen understanding of substantive equality of women and men and use the education system to enhance positive and non-stereotypical portrayals of women;</p> <p>(d) To monitor and review the measures taken in order to assess their impact and take appropriate action.</p>
Eritrea	Constitutional issues in domesticating CEDAW and the effect of greater militarization on society	<p>Until recently, the fact that the 1997 Constitution remains unimplemented has never been contested by the Government itself. The constitutional crisis is adequately explored by a plethora of reports from different sources, becoming a most embarrassing issue to the Government. In</p>	<p>Concluding Observations of Eritrea</p> <p>Legislative framework</p> <p>10. The Committee is concerned that the failure to implement the Constitution of 1997 effectively has had a negative impact on women's rights and the rule of law. While noting</p>

		<p>response to a growing international censorship, the Government is resorting to a typical tactical manoeuvre, which depicts a situation where the Eritrean Constitution of 1997 is actually implemented (or is in force). This dishonest ploy is clearly observable in the Reports in which the Government makes frequent references to the provisions of the 1997 Constitution as if the constitution is implemented or in force.</p> <p>The family as the fundamental unit of the Eritrean society is disintegrating in alarming scale. The core problem in this regard is the increased level of militarisation in the country. In Eritrea, every adult member of the society (men and women) are continuously conscripted in the army under the government's controversial "national service programme," which is not limited by time and scope. When it started, the policy of conscription was limited to a maximum of 18 months.</p>	<p>the plans of the State party to review the Constitution, the Committee regrets the lack of information provided on the time frame and modalities for such reform. In view of the State party's dualist system, the Committee remains concerned that the provisions of the Convention have not yet been incorporated into national law and, as a result, are not enforceable in the national courts.</p> <p>11. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendations (see CEDAW/C/ERI/CO/3, paras. 7 and 11) and urges the State party:</p> <p>(a) To ensure the effective implementation of the Constitution of 1997 and expedite the planned constitutional review process, within a clear time frame and with transparent procedures, taking into account the views of all women and girls, including those belonging to disadvantaged groups, those holding divergent opinions and women in exile;</p> <p>(b) To ensure that the provisions of the Convention, including a definition of discrimination against women in line with article 1, are duly incorporated into national law and enforceable in the national courts.</p> <p>Access to justice</p> <p>12. The Committee is deeply concerned about the numerous obstacles faced by women and girls in gaining access to justice. It is also concerned about the lack of measures taken by the State party to eliminate those obstacles and to ensure the independence, professionalism and gender sensitivity of the judiciary at all levels.</p> <p>13. The Committee recommends that the State party:</p> <p>(a) Design a comprehensive judicial policy to eliminate the institutional, social, economic, technological and other barriers faced by women and girls in obtaining access to justice and provide adequate resources and a monitoring mechanism for its implementation;</p> <p>(b) Initiate fundamental reforms to ensure that the judiciary is impartial, professional, gender sensitive and independent, in particular from the Government and the military, as a means of safeguarding the enjoyment of women's rights;</p> <p>(c) Ensure that women who are victims of sex- and gender-based discrimination have access to effective redress and facilitate their access to legal aid;</p> <p>(d) Ensure that all cases of violence and discrimination against women covered by the</p>
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