

A FEMINIST APPROACH TO ECONOMIC JUSTICE

WHO WE ARE

International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAW) Asia Pacific is an international women's human rights organisation working across the Global South and beyond. We use an intersectional feminist approach to demystify international human rights standards to make them relevant to women's lives.

WE AMPLIFY:

VOICES
AGAINST
VIOLATIONS

DISSENT
AGAINST
DISCRIMINATION

PROTEST
AGAINST
PATRIARCHY

NARRATIVES
AGAINST
NEOLIBERALISM

SUPPORT FOR
SUSTAINABLE
SOLUTIONS

WHAT WE WORK FOR

OUR APPROACH TO ECONOMIC JUSTICE ENVISIONS A DIGNIFIED AND DECENT WORLD OF WORK FOR WOMEN. WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

Strengthen capacity of women's rights organisations to organise and advocate for the rights of women workers in every sector

Improve responsiveness and effectiveness of legal and social protection systems for women's economic rights

WE AIM TO:

Create space for diverse groups to share their perspectives on business and women's human rights, to identify common areas of concern and priority issues

Increase civic outreach and facilitate sensitisation of state and business actors to accelerate accountability and gender equality

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO



CORPORATE CAPTURE

The world's leading economic actors are corporations that are wealthier and have more clout than most governments. Trade and investment agreements prioritise corporate interests over the public interest, while sustainable development solutions are marginalised. The absence of binding mechanisms to hold corporate actors accountable for their impact on human rights creates impunity for abuses.



EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Women are overrepresented in informal and precarious work environments characterised by unsafe working conditions, low wages, job insecurity and no social or legal protections. Women workers also face sexual harassment and pregnancy-related discrimination.



DEVALUATION OF WOMEN'S WORK

Gender stereotypes about women's work result in job segregation and gendered wage inequalities. Women disproportionately shoulder the responsibilities of unpaid care work. When public services become inaccessible or unavailable due to privatisation or reduced government expenditure, the unpaid labour of women and girls is used as a substitute.



THREATENED LIVELIHOODS

Largescale exploitation of natural resources significantly impacts ecosystems, often making communities more vulnerable to natural disasters and climate change, displacement, destroyed livelihoods and food insecurity. Such projects are often approved without the consent of affected communities. Bearing primary responsibility for care of families, women face additional burdens as resources are depleted.



THREATENED LIVES

Women who speak out against exploitation and the collusion of corporate and state power face heightened risks of being targeted for reprisals, because in challenging power relations and systems of governance, they are also challenging traditional gender roles. Tactics being used to silence critical voices include restrictive legislation, surveillance and militarised responses to protests.



BARRIERS TO JUSTICE

Women are marginalised through biased laws and patriarchal systems. Multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination present heightened challenges to women from marginalised groups, such as indigenous women, undocumented migrant workers, trans women and domestic workers, in accessing justice in the face of abuses. Additional barriers include distance, language, high costs, and unequal power relations.

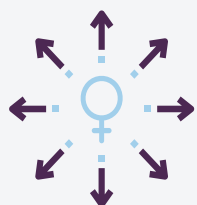


DISCRIMINATORY LAWS AND PRACTICES

Labour laws discriminate against certain categories of workers; for example, they often exclude domestic workers. Policies on migration subject women migrant workers to pregnancy tests, and some women are required to obtain written permission from male relatives before getting a passport or migrating. Women are still not recognised as heads of household, and women's rights to land and natural resources are still negated, excluding them from decision making and from access to financial support.

WHAT WE ARE DOING

IWRAW Asia Pacific takes multiple interconnected approaches to address women's human rights in the face of these inequalities. Our convenings, capacity-strengthening activities and advocacy work lead to building relationships and alliances across movements, such as the women's rights, trade union and labour, tax justice, indigenous rights, disability and rural women's movements. We build bridges and strengthen connections, especially between groups of women facing multiple discriminations.



WE CREATE SPACES

for women human rights defenders, civil society organisations, workers, trade unions, feminist economists and social movements to engage with governments, business and human rights mechanisms. In these spaces, **people work together** to examine evidence, identify priorities, and exchange strategies on women's human rights. This learning and sharing of experiences amplifies women's voices and provides the evidence needed **to influence national, regional and international policies**.

Based on a consultation we organised in Cambodia, we collaborated with women's rights organisations and civil society networks on a submission to the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, highlighting the gendered dimensions of access to remedies in the context of business activities. Our input is reflected in the analysis and recommendations of the UN Working Group's 2017 report to the General Assembly.



WE PROVIDE SUPPORT

to women human rights defenders and organisations, civil society, lawyers, judges, national human rights institutions and government agencies on the application of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** and other human rights standards. We reach out to new constituencies to increase their awareness of the **UN treaty body system** as an avenue for state accountability.

In Cambodia, we conducted training for lawyers to litigate on women's land rights, and we are providing technical assistance to workers' rights groups to utilise UN human rights mechanisms to seek redress for systemic gender-based discrimination in the garment sector.



WE ENGAGE IN ADVOCACY

at a regional and international level, informed by the lived realities of women at the local level. We use **human rights frameworks** to advocate for the progressive interpretation and realisation of women's human rights in all spheres. We engage in dialogues and peer advocacy forums and aim to influence standard-setting processes on **state and corporate accountability**.

We are part of Feminist Group for the Binding Treaty, an alliance that advocates for an intersectional feminist approach and analysis in the binding instrument currently being drafted, as mandated by the UN Human Rights Council, to address human rights abuses committed by transnational corporations and other business enterprises.



WE CREATE RESOURCES

to **provide interpretation of women's human rights in different contexts**, using CEDAW and human rights frameworks as the basis for our **law and policy analysis**. Our knowledge products have been used by women's rights organisations around the globe and some have been translated into national languages.

We developed a guide for women's rights activists to use the UN human rights treaty bodies to hold states accountable for protecting and fulfilling women's rights to work and women's rights at work in formal and informal employment. We also developed a shadow report guide on CEDAW and the rights of sex workers. Both guides were developed in consultation with women workers, labour unions and women's rights activists from East and Southern Africa, Central and Southeast Asia, and the Balkans.

WHO WE WORK WITH



National, regional and global civil society and women's rights organisations and networks



Women workers and their unions



Feminist economists and human rights experts



United Nations treaty bodies, special procedures and mandate holders



Indigenous and disability rights movements



National human rights institutions

We bring together groups and activists across regions, drawing connections around the world and identifying common issues and challenges.

GET INVOLVED!

Contact us to discuss how you can join or support our work:

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