



2001

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S RIGHTS
ACTION WATCH ASIA PACIFIC
ANNUAL REPORT**

THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTION WATCH-ASIA PACIFIC

ANNUAL REPORT JANUARY – DECEMBER 2001

PART I: BACKGROUND, PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND OVERVIEW OF THE IWRAW ASIA PACIFIC PROGRAMME

1.1 MISSION STATEMENT: RATIONAL AND OVERVIEW

Focus on the Women's Convention

The International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia-Pacific (IWRAW Asia Pacific) works through collaborative projects aimed at strengthening domestic application of human rights norms in relation to women's rights. Its major strategy is to monitor and facilitate the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (herewith after called the Women's Convention / the Convention). However, this primary focus in what is effectively a women's international bill of rights, does not preclude the use of other human rights instruments to advance women's rights.

IWRAW Asia Pacific recognises that rights guaranteed by international treaties and constitutions must be actively claimed by women. IWRAW Asia Pacific is committed to encouraging women's claims for human rights particularly the inclusion of women's experiences holistically. To facilitate this, the mobilisation, advocacy, and participation of women at all levels, national to international, for effective monitoring of the Women's Convention, is an essential precondition

Conceptual Framework

IWRAW Asia Pacific's programme has consistently emphasised the Convention's definition of equality, which IWRAW Asia Pacific calls 'substantive equality' or a *de facto* equality that is not limited to the creation of equal opportunities only. What the Convention advocates is an equality of opportunities and results, leading to true equality for women. To bring this about all obstacles that prevent access to the opportunities need to be identified and resolved. The domestic application of human rights norms requires both the enforcement mechanisms and the creation of a culture that encourages compliance with human rights principles and norms. The former refers to the courts and the legal system, which sets standards, appraises compliance and makes authoritative decisions forcing compliance. The latter deals with the business of defining rights, invoking rights and promoting rights so that a culture that recognises people's rights and demands for justice is formed. These two dimensions are mutually reinforcing. When rights are not enforced, it provokes a call for justice with more intensified articulation of the definition as well as the

invoking of rights. As the demands for rights mounts up, it influences the enforcement of rights.

A working premise that creates a synergy between the enforcement of rights and the culture of compliance with human rights norms is that a rights framework does not automatically confer rights; it only legitimises the claims for rights. Women have to be able to claim their rights and the programme targets this need. There are many barriers to women claiming their rights-these may be hostile culture or tradition, a gender bias in the administration of justice and many other reasons. Hence training and education of women and providing them with the support to enable them to claim their rights is essential.

Essentially, IWRAP Asia Pacific's programme is premised on the belief that, before women can access 'real' equality, several other conditions are needed:

- Standard setting at the international level that matches the realities of women at the local level
- A culture of compliance with gender sensitive human rights norms
- Women's ability to claim their rights
- Women forming a constituency with a strong voice to invoke their rights and push for political action and create the necessary political will. - this implies the need for capacity building and gender-sensitisation for women themselves, and for those bodies who would put the institutional changes in place e.g. judges, lawyers, bureaucrats, and parliamentarians.
- Mechanisms for enforcement that are gender sensitised and have the will to implement the Women's Convention.
- A mechanism for monitoring the fulfilment of State obligations under the Convention to track the progress in making equality a reality for women at the domestic level.

The above factors are interactive and reinforce each other. All of this requires a focus on various actors and types of action. Domestic applicability is all about enforcing universal minimum standards of rights thus reducing the effect of negative culture or selective and inconsistent application of norms and standards as a matter of political and economic expediency. Besides women, we need to impact on all branches of government, legislators, the bureaucracy and the judiciary. We need to look at various institutions within these branches of government or which have an effect on them. These segments of actors include, politicians, the bureaucracy at different levels, law enforcers, and prosecutors, specific institutions or mechanisms that monitor and or enforce human rights standards, judges and lawyers.

I.2 THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE PROGRAMME

The long-term goal of IWRAP Asia Pacific is to work towards the effective implementation of international human rights norms in relation to women's rights. Recognising the need to mobilise women at the national and regional levels to work with their governments to eliminate discrimination against women, IWRAP Asia Pacific objectives are:

Objectives:

To help develop skills in rights awareness and build capacity for domestic application and use in local activism of the Convention and the human rights instruments as part of the process of monitoring the implementation of the human rights chapter of the Beijing Platform for Action through technical support, Social Investigation Visits, orientations and training

- Social investigation visits to selected countries
- Producing training packages for women activists and government functionaries
- In-country training
- Development of regional pool of trainers
- Technical assistance to file test cases, law reform, campaign for the lifting of reservations, plan for the effective implementation of the Convention etc.

To contribute to the strengthening of the implementation of the Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action through:

- Creation of sub regional monitoring mechanisms to assess the fulfilment of State obligations
- Supporting advocacy for the adoption of an optional protocol
- Publicising the Convention
- Developing model legal briefs
- Facilitating the participation of women in post Beijing activities

To contribute to the enhancement of CEDAW's effectiveness and to engage in international advocacy for drawing accountability for governments to implement the Convention at the national level through:

- Assistance to local groups in the formulation of alternative reports to CEDAW
- Facilitating the flow of alternative information to CEDAW
- Facilitating the presence of women at the CEDAW sessions when their governments are reporting and mentoring them to play a positive role in the context of the CEDAW State party dialogue
- Contributing to CEDAW's formulation of general recommendations
- Publicising the work of CEDAW

To promote the development of region-specific gender-sensitive human rights scholarship, strategies and implementing tools through: -

- Developing conceptual clarity on the gender dimensions of human rights norms

To strengthen international and regional linkages

- Participation in and contribution to relevant programmes of other organisations, attendance at regional and international meetings and conferences

To strengthen IWRAW Asia Pacific's institutional capability for greater efficiency in and sustainability of its work

- Hiring staff
- Forming pool of consultants
- Establishing linkages with donors and other institutions

1.3 WHO THE ORGANISATION SERVES

IWRAW Asia Pacific is not a membership organisation. It has identified women's groups at the national level, as primary partners. From 1993 to 2001, it has worked in 14 Asian countries. In each country at least 20 to 35 groups working on a wide range of issues have participated in the orientations and training in the first phase of the programme. The aim of IWRAW Asia Pacific has been to raise the awareness of these organisations about the significance of dealing with discrimination against women regardless of the issue they are working on. In the second phase, the involvement of these groups will be focused towards specific actions for eradicating discrimination and holding their governments accountable at the national and international levels. These actions could revolve around filing test cases in court challenging discriminatory laws, campaigns for the withdrawal of reservations, advocacy at the national level for domestic receptivity of the principles of the Convention etc.

IWRAW Asia Pacific has also identified lawyers and judges as groups to work with in order to sensitise them to the need to use a human rights framework in courtroom advocacy.

A third category that IWRAW Asia Pacific plans to work with is government bureaucracies at the national level, parliamentarians and human rights commissions.

PART II: IMPLEMENTATION ACCORDING TO PLAN

Specific activities were planned for 2000 to achieve the stated objectives of IWRAW Asia Pacific. A narrative account of activities implemented is given below. This narrative also includes activities that were not initially planned for but were implanted in response to requests made to IWRAW Asia Pacific

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION BY OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: To help develop skills in rights awareness and build capacity for domestic application and use in local activism of the Convention and the human rights instruments as part of the process of monitoring the implementation of the human rights chapter of the Beijing Platform for Action through technical support, Social Investigation Visits, orientations and training

Related activities were the following:

1.1. TRAINING

1.1.1 NATIONAL TRAINING FOR LAWYERS

**1.1.1 (i) Training of Lawyers in India organised by NAWO, Bangalore, India: 22-24 October
Tulika Srivastava, Geetha Ramasheshan and Priya S.K were resource persons**

1.1.2 TRAINING FOR NGOS

**1.1.2 (i) Training on the Convention organised by National Alliance of Women (NAWO): in Gujerat, India: 19-20 October
Madhu Mehra, Ruth Manorama and Geetha Ramashashan will be resource persons,**

**1.1.2 (ii) Training of Thai NGOs on the Convention Organised by Gender and Development Working Group (GADW), Wang Yang Resort in Supanburi province, Thailand: 1-4 November
Eleanor Conda and Madhu Mehra were resource persons.**

1.1.2 (iii) Training of NGOs on the Convention organised by IWRAW AP and MASUM, Bombay, India: 19-22 December

1.1.3 TRAINING FOR GOVERNMENTS

- 1.1.3 (i) Training for the representatives from the Iraqi government**
- 1.1.3 (ii) Training of Senior Policy Makers and Planners on the State Obligation, Laos: 15-17 August**
IWRAW Asia Pacific conducted training on State obligations under the Convention for senior policy makers and planners from the Lao government. SD and Madhu Mehra were resource persons.
- 1.1.3 (iii) Orientation on the CEDAW Convention at the central level for representatives from the Prime Minister's Office, Party Organisations, Ministry of Culture and Information, Committee for Planning and Cooperation, Committee for Rural Development, Human Resource Development and Governance in Vientiane, Lao PDR : 27-28 November**

1.3 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

The specialised and complex nature of the Convention-related advocacy has necessitated continuing assistance as initial efforts get channelled into specific advocacy at the national level. This assistance has been through various forms, as follows:

1.3.1 INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Response to requests for information

- Carolyn Hannan of DAW, United Nations for information on case studies on gender mainstreaming policies in the ESCAP region (September).
- Ms. Toni Kasim for information on the campaign on the Optional Protocol to the Convention (March)
- Ms. Asha Dhillon for information regarding the Reservation made by the governments on the Convention (December).

(List from Tashia to be inserted here)

1.3.2 RESEARCH / PAPERS WRITTEN:

Objective 2: Contribute to the strengthening of the implementation of the Convention and the Beijing Platform of Action

2.1. FACILITATING THE FULFILMENT OF STATE OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS WOMEN'S EQUALITY (1997 AND ONGOING)

Overview

This is a long-term project that aims to gradually build capacity of national level groups to systematically monitor the improvements in women's access to justice and equality as a result of their governments fulfilling their international commitments towards this end. The project will focus on commitments of the governments under the Women's Convention while at the same time taking on board the contexts provided by the Beijing Platform for Action. This process will also facilitate purposeful and structured networking among the groups at the national level as they will share a common goal with specific tasks and shared responsibilities. Similar networking on a regional basis is also envisaged. As a common framework will be used for the monitoring, there is a potential for cross-country sharing of results, comparative analysis and regional and sub regional activism.

The project is implemented as two sub regional components, South East Asia (1997 onwards) and South Asia (1998 onwards).

Rationale and Goals

- 1). This project envisions the creation of a monitoring mechanism to assess and facilitate the fulfilment of State obligations toward women's equality in line with their commitments as States parties to the Convention and as parties to the Beijing Platform for Action.
- 2). The outcome of this will also facilitate sustained activism and demands for reform that is specific to the situation and substantiated by a sound information base. The aspiration of this project is to provide the basis for moving from rhetorical demands to concrete action demands.
- 3). This project will help women develop skills in rights awareness-raising and build capacity for the domestic application and use in local activism of the Convention and other human rights instruments as part of the process of monitoring the implementation of the human rights chapter of the Beijing Platform for Action.
- 4). The project envisages a collaborative NGO-State partnership through which the results of the project can be shared and specific actions and strategies developed. The monitoring will not only surface continuing areas of disparity and discrimination but also positive measures put in by the State and their effectiveness.

Overall Project Objectives

Long Term

- Contribute to the implementation of the Women's Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action
- Achievement of equality
- Strengthen NGO capacity for advocacy

Short/Medium-Term

National

- Establish a foundation for sustained and effective NGO led system for monitoring State compliance with and fulfilment of obligations under the Convention.
- Contribute to the determination of indicators by which to assess advances in the achievement of equality
- Increase awareness on the Convention and involvement by women and NGOs in CEDAW processes
- Contribute to the implementation of the Convention and the Beijing Platform of Action, focusing on law and policy and identify where state action is lacking.
- Track and demonstrate best practices and positive national level activities that have led to the successful impact on government legislative and exchange this information for use by others
- Strengthen capacity of women and NGOs to actively engage in national advocacy and to intervene in CEDAW processes.

Sub regional/Regional

- Generate systematised, processed and analysed data and information pertinent to the implementation of the Convention
- Formulate strategies, facilitating factors, barriers etc. for advocacy
- Contribute to the intra sub regional and regional flow of critical information among NGOs and other institutions
- Contribute to a drawing up of a sub regional picture of State compliance.

Geographical spread

The project is working within seven countries in South East Asia, namely:

- Laos
- Indonesia
- Malaysia
- Mongolia
- Philippines
- Thailand
- Vietnam

Though Mongolia is not part of the South East Asia region, they were included in the project due to their overwhelming response and enthusiasm to participate.

In South Asia, the project was implemented as planned in:

–		B
–	angladesh	
–		I
–	ndia	
–		N
–	epal	
–		P
–	akistan	
–		S
–	ri Lanka	

Long-term Implementation Plan

Facilitating the Fulfilment of State Obligations towards Women's Equality project is expected to be implemented in several phases.

Method of Implementation

- 1). Core groups would be set up in each country to act as monitors. They would take responsibility for the first activity of the project which is the research and writing of preliminary baseline reports and engage in advocacy based on the findings of the report.
- 2). Production of baseline reports that would identify the status of women and contributory causes as relevant to a particular issue of priority as well as the gaps in the fulfilment of state obligation with regard to this issue. The preliminary baseline report would be based on secondary information that is already available, with primary research to be conducted for gaps surfaced in the research. The findings of the reports would be used for large scale advocacy
- 3). The first level advocacy would be followed by ongoing monitoring and further advocacy
- 4). Periodic regional meetings would be held to evaluate and plan the ongoing implementation of the project.
- 5). Collaborative meetings between NGO and State through which the results of the project can be shared and specific actions and strategies developed.

➤ **Activities/Outputs undertaken in 1997**

- 1). The project started in 1997. The first sub-regional regional meeting was held for the South East Asian region to develop a framework for monitoring and information gathering and to endorse short term and long term plans with indicators to assess State obligation to women's rights.

Below is a brief description of the different elements that make up the monitoring framework:

Evidence of Disparity: this refers to the presentation of the existing situation of women when compared to men by use of statistics, data and anecdotal examples.

Contributory Factors: this refers to the identification of the causes and barriers to women's equality. The section should be dealt with from a macro and micro perspective.

Effects on women: analyses the effect of discrimination on women.

State Interventions: assesses State obligation in addressing the discrimination women face. This section refers to the full range of State obligations that should address the causes and barriers in Column 2, the list of what the State is doing and whether it is doing it effectively. In other words, what should the State do, what is it actually doing and how should it do it.

Recommendations: deals with prioritising the recommendations on critical areas that the State should address within the next four years. This will be taken from what the State is not doing and what steps it should take to make it more effective.

- 1). Issues for the South East Asian countries were identified¹ and there was an agreement of the methodology that would be used by each core group as well as the agreement of a work plan by which to follow. It was decided that each baseline report would address one priority issue in the country.
- 2). Core groups were set up in South East Asian to act as monitors to assess the fulfilment of State obligation under the Convention
- 3). Starting of the research for the preparation of the South East Asia country specific preliminary baseline reports using the framework developed at the sub-regional meeting. Monitoring the implementation of State obligation to women will take place on the basis of the baseline report.

➤ **Activities/Outputs undertaken in 1998**

¹ Priority issues identified by each South East Asia country were:

- Indonesia: Violence against Women in Conflict Situations
- Laos: Livelihood for Rural Areas Rural Women
- Malaysia: Rights of Women in Marriage
- Mongolia: Employment
- Philippines: Violence Against Women
- Thailand: Trafficking in Women
Women and Labour
- Vietnam: Women and Livelihood

- 1). Production of preliminary baseline reports by the South East Asia and South Asian groups.
- 2). Consultations by the core groups with other women's groups at the national level to validate the data in the baseline report and to collectively agree on advocacy recommendations.
- 3). First South Asia regional meeting to get a commitment from the core groups for long term participation, to have the monitoring framework endorsed, to identify issues for monitoring to develop some skills in the use of the framework and to develop a tentative work plan for the production of the baseline reports².
- 4). Second South East Asia regional meeting to collectively assess the quality of the preliminary baseline reports and plan the next steps.

➤ **Activities/Outputs Planned and Undertaken in 1999**

1). Baseline Reports

- South East Asia and South Asia
All countries produced a draft of the baseline report. These reports were assessed at the second regional meeting and feedback given for refinement. The reports have gone through several refinements to which feedback has been given.

The section on State obligation and recommendations is the weakest part in most reports.

2). Regional Meetings

- South Asia Regional Meeting
18-22 of May 1999, The Second South Asia Second Regional Meeting on Facilitating the Implementation of State Obligation to Women's Equality held in Sri Lanka. Core groups from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participated. One of the Sri Lanka core groups CENWOR provided the logistical support.

² The South Asia core groups identified the following issues for research:

- India: Political Participation/Governance
Women in Armed Conflict
Rights in the Family/ Marriage
- Bangladesh: Violence against Women
- Nepal: Unequal Inheritance Rights
- Pakistan: Political Participation
- Sri Lanka: Violence against Women

The meeting assessed the quality of the base line reports and planned for follow up. Facilitators were Shanthi Dairiam (director) and Eleanor Conda (advisory committee member). Audrey Lee and Simran Gill (programme officers) documented the proceedings

A full report is available from IWRAW Asia Pacific.

➤ **Activities/Outputs Planned and Undertaken in 2000**

➤ **Activities/Outputs Planned and Undertaken in 2001**

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

Implementation according to plan

1). Research Activities

a) Baseline Reports

South East Asia

Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam revised the baseline report.

- *The summary of each report inserted here?*

South Asia

All countries from South Asia revised their baseline report prior to the South Asia Writing Workshop in Kota Bahru in August 2001.

Full draft base line reports are available from IWRAW Asia Pacific

b) Regional Meeting

South Asia Writing Workshop: Kota Bahru, Malaysia: 6-11 August

c) Technical assistance given by IWRAW Asia Pacific for the baseline report

Electronic communication has been essential in the progress of the reports. Most reports have gone through at least two reviews in order to facilitate the progress of the project in line with the research framework. The research framework developed is complex and shows the inter-relatedness of rights. Though only one issue as chosen by the core groups in each country, the research surfaces how discrimination in one right violates another right. IWRAW Asia Pacific has continued to play an important role in ensuring that the report is rigorous and makes the logical connections between the status of women, causes and barriers and effects. Attempts are also made to identify the non-availability of data, which requires primary investigation.

South East Asia

Technical assistance given to the core groups in Laos (July), Indonesia (August), Vietnam (August), the Philippines (November), and Malaysia (December).

South Asia

c) Technical Assistance Visits under "Facilitating the Fulfilment of State Obligation towards Women's Equality":

- Technical Assistance Visit to the Philippines: Manila, the Philippines 6-7 June. 2001
- Technical Assistance Visit to Sri Lanka: Colombo, Sri Lanka: 8 October
- Meeting with the India Core Groups: 13 December

Training

North East Workshop on Tribal Customary Laws & Practices on Women's Rights in Marriage: Shillong, India: 2 - 7 April

d) Treaty Law Incorporating Research

e) Treaty Bodies Project

Treaty Bodies Meeting Colombo, Sri Lanka. This is a collaborative project jointly organised by the Law and Society Trust of Sri Lanka, IWRAW Asia Pacific, Interights-London and Forum Asia. 7-12 December

Shanthi Dairiam and Tashia Peterson attended the meeting. SD and Andrew Byrnes are resource persons.

2). Advocacy Activities

a) **In-Country Processes and Consultations**

In-country network and process

Part of the in-country process in developing the baseline report envisaged that other women's groups besides the core groups would be drawn in to provide support and information as well as advice to the country core groups. The wider group of NGOs was important so as to validate the research and be constantly updated on the progress of the work. It is hoped that this entire process would serve to give women's groups ownership of the project and to draw in the support of mass based organisations for the advocacy phase of the project.

As it stands, all core groups are committed to and have further expanded the group through in-country meetings. The importance of a process that will validate and provide sources of information to the baseline report has been accepted as a necessity to future advocacy strategies.

In addition to communications, review and feedback through electronic communications, IWRAP Asia Pacific has also played and continues to play a role in in-country consultations. Technical assistance was given to Malaysia in this regard.

South East Asia

- Meeting with the Malaysia Core Group
Core Committee Meeting: 3 October 2001:

South Asia ?

b) **A process involving NGOs and Governmental Organisations (GO)**

A process involving NGOs and GO was also agreed upon. This project takes the position that under the human rights treaty regime, governments are the key responsible parties in realising equality and human rights for women. However, the project maintains that women and the society at large are major stake holders and should assume responsibility in the achievement of that goal, not only through the direct work that they undertake but also through their government-directed advocacy. The project principally banks on the dynamism, commitment and wealth of experience, especially of NGOs and women advocates, to make possible, the achievement of its objectives. But an additional character of the project is the emphasis on the need for State-NGO collaboration. This kind of collaboration is the key to facilitating the fulfilment of state obligation under the Convention. In particular the process promotes the strengthening of the National Machinery for Women to play an "insider" advocacy role. So the process envisages the links with the national machinery at the first level, sharing information and recommendations with them so that the NGOs and the National Machinery can speak to the rest of the Government

agencies with one voice. Thus, this activity seeks to link with the National Machinery for Women in order to create a better understanding of the potentials of the Women's Convention and to share the findings of the research.

South East Asia

Informal meeting with the National Machinery for Women (Ministry for Women and Family Development) of the Malaysian government Planning meeting with the Ministry of Women and Family Development- 26 September 2001 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia:

The core group held a meeting with the Ministry for Women and Family Development (MWFD) to discuss plans to organise an inter-ministerial meeting with all relevant ministries and government departments. It was a significant event since MWFD agreed and committed to the plans presented by the core group. The first inter-ministerial meeting was held on 12 November.

South Asia??

3. Sectoral meeting with relevant ministries on relevant issues

Malaysia

The sectoral meeting with government: 12 November: KL, Malaysia

First sectoral meeting with relevant ministries was held to provide an in-depth understanding of CEDAW, its principles of non-discrimination and the obligations on government.

2.2 Participation in relevant donor meetings

2.2.1 UNDP APGEN: Mid-Year Tri-Partite Meeting on Promoting Gender Equality in the Asia Pacific Region (APGEN) Bangkok, Thailand: 17-18 June

On 17th June, IWRAW Asia Pacific organised a meeting with the APGEN representatives and the implementing partners to discuss the progress of the Facilitating Project under APGEN and to prepare for the Mid-Year Tri-Partite Meeting on the 18th June. Shanthi Dairiam, Tashia Peterson and Miki Ueda represented IWRAW Asia Pacific at the meeting, Rosanita Serrano and Marion Tan represented UNDP APGEN and the following implementing partners also participated:

- Ivy Josiah from Women's Aid Organisation
- Leelangi Wanasundera from CENWOR
- Bundith Prathoumvan from Lao Women's Union

On 18th June, APGEN held a half-day meeting to report on the progress of APGEN for the period January - June 2001 and to discuss a new regional gender project for 2002-2006. Shanthi Dairiam reported on the activities and progress of the IWRAW Asia Pacific component of APGEN on Facilitating CEDAW Implementation from Jan to June 2001. Leelangi from CENWOR shared progress and developments under this project implemented in Sri Lanka.

2.2.2 Meeting organised by UNDP APGEN to formulate the UNDP Regional Cooperation Framework for the Gender Equality Programme for Asia and Pacific Region, 2002-2006, Colombo, Sri Lanka

2.2.3 Meeting with the SEAGEP consultant: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: 1 March

A meeting took place at the IWRAW Asia Pacific to discuss the programmes funded by CIDA SEAGEP. The consultants were on a "Scooping Mission" to explore possibilities for a new regional gender project after SEAGEP closes its project in June 2001. Tashia Peterson and Miki Ueda held discussion with the CIDA consultants.

2.4 World Conference against Racism

Background

Preparatory Committee

National workshop on Caste Based Discrimination: New Delhi, India: 24-25 February

A national meeting was held to identify gender perspective in caste based discrimination as preparation for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR). The local partners were the National Federation of Dalit Women and National Alliance of Women (Ruth Manorama).SD was a resource person.

IWRAW Asia Pacific Activities

Workshop on the CEDAW and Racism, Durban, South Africa: 6 September

IWRAW Asia Pacific and UNIFEM conducted a panel presentation on the Convention and Racism, focusing on perspectives on the intersectional nature of racism and rights. SD was the moderator of the panel discussions.

Maria Graterol (representing Human Rights Institute of Columbia University and the Race, Ethnicity and Gender Justice Project in the Americas) made a panel presentation on

an Intersectional Perspectives to Temporary Special Measures. This paper was jointly prepared by IWRAW AP and the Human Rights Institute of Columbia Law School.

Inter-governmental Process

Post World Conference against Racism Activities

2.5 Campaign to Promote the Ratification and Use of the Optional Protocol to the Convention

Regional consultations

Latin American Consultation on the Optional Protocol to the Convention: Costa Rica 1-2 March

A regional consultation took place for the Latin America and Spanish speaking Caribbean countries. The meeting brought together activists from the region to discuss strategies to achieve ratification of the OP, and integration of OP campaign activities with the Inter-American system. SD was a resource person and CL attended the meeting.

Steering Committee Meeting

Steering Committee Meeting of the Optional Protocol to the Convention Campaign: Costa Rica: 3-4 March

The Steering Committee members discussed and planned strategies to run the more effective OP campaign.

Email List

To facilitate communication amongst members of the network, an email list has been established. It has been used periodically by organisations, though more work is needed to ensure that people share information on their activities. An update was sent out in November. It is appended to this report.

Ratification Advocacy Kit

With funds received from UNICEF, a ratification advocacy kit is being developed for distribution to organisations interested in working in their own countries. Ana Elena Obando has been hired as a consultant to produce the kit.

National level activities

Campaign activities have occurred in Latin America, Europe and Southern Africa.

In Southern Africa, a meeting has been held for Anglophone campaigns, and another is scheduled for January to discuss how to integrate work on the OP with broader campaigns on CEDAW. In South Africa, the campaign team is working with members of the parliament to lobby for the ratification of the OP, and to follow-up work on CEDAW. Masimanyane is running a postcard campaign for adoption of the Optional Protocol during the 16 days of Activism, addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In South Africa the National Institute for Public Law and Research held a conference on the Adoption of the Optional Protocol.

In Europe, a coalition of women's organisations have come together to develop a regional approach to the issue.

The IIDH (Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos) is coordinating a campaign on the OP in Central America. The campaign team have conducted several meetings through Latin America, including a meeting with women leaders from every state of Mexico, a one day workshop on CEDAW and the OP at a university in Ecuador, and a conference at the Ecuadorean Parliament, the establishment of an Andean network for the OP, and activities scheduled for Peru, Colombia and the Dominican Republic.

A campaign has also been established in Australia which is responding to the Government's reduced engagement with the UN. A Queensland Women's Domestic Violence Service have printed postcards with the text "Food, Water, Shelter, Air, OP to CEDAW" urging the Prime Minister to ratify the OP to CEDAW.

Objective 3: To contribute the enhancement of CEDAW's effectiveness and to engage in international advocacy for drawing accountability from governments to implement the Convention at the national level.

3.1 FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL: a project that facilitates the presence of women at the CEDAW sessions when their governments are reporting and mentoring them to play a positive role in the context of the CEDAW state party dialogue (annual since 1997)

3.1.1 Introduction

“FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL PROJECT” facilitates the presence of women at the CEDAW committee meetings when their governments are reporting and mentors them to play a positive role in the context of the CEDAW State party dialogue. This is the fifth year of implementation.

The long-term goal of IWRAW Asia Pacific is to work towards the effective implementation of international human rights norms in relation to women's rights. The key focus of IWRAW Asia Pacific is to monitor and facilitate the implementation of the Women's Convention.

The strength of the Women's Convention rests on the international consensus (165 ratification /accession) of support for the mandate of equality between women and men. This internationally supported mandate is a strong counter to claims that equality is contrary to culture and tradition. At the ground level, the advocacy for the application of the norms of the Convention has to be linked to this international mandate. This linkage also requires the establishment of a relationship between women's groups and CEDAW. This will have the synergistic effect of strengthening women's capacity to claim their rights while enhancing CEDAW's ability to monitor state compliance and interpretation of the Convention. This will be of tremendous benefit to both sides. The women in particular will be able to be more strategic in their own activism when they return as they would have first hand knowledge of CEDAW's recommendations to their government. This is the only project that attempts facilitate the participation of women in the reporting process in a structured and purposeful manner.

The reporting process is the only monitoring mechanism set up by the UN. The participation of women in directly observing state party performance in reporting to the CEDAW and in interacting with CEDAW members to raise their awareness about issues critical to the women in their country is a strategic method to enhance the effectiveness of this monitoring mechanism.

Women's interaction with CEDAW can help integrate their perspectives into the interpretation of the Convention's articles. This in turn will increase the Convention's scope for domestic application while contributing to the development of women's rights

jurisprudence within the United Nations system. Women can thus transform the Convention into a truly living instrument.

The project focuses on the participation of women in two inter related aspects. One is in the setting of norms and standards for human rights practice and the other is to challenge non-compliance of their governments with the standards to which they have committed themselves internationally. Through this process international human rights norms can be made applicable at the domestic level as result of women's activism.

3.1.2 Objectives of the project

3.1.3 Specific objectives of the project

3.1.4 Participants

3.1.5 Project implementation

The 24th CEDAW Session. 8-23 January

Participating countries facilitated by IWRAW Asia Pacific were Burundi, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Maldives, Egypt, Jamaica, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Sweden, Vietnam, and the Netherlands. SD was a resource person and TP provided administrative assistance.

The 25th CEDAW Session from 2 - 20 July.

- SD was present for the first half of the CEDAW session. She briefed Singapore NGO on the processes to follow as they had not been present for the January Global to Local and took care of administrative matters for the other participants from Vietnam, Sweden and Netherlands.
- SD conducted a briefing for the CEDAW members on the need for affirmative action targeted towards women who are disadvantaged on the basis of minority status, ethnicity etc. This briefing was done on the basis of a paper jointly prepared jointly by the Human Rights Institute of Columbia University, IWRAW Asia Pacific and the Ethnicity and Gender Justice Project of the Americas.. It is meant to serve two purposes- as input into the General Recommendation on affirmative action currently being prepared by the CEDAW Committee and to be presented at a workshop at the WCAR organised by UNIFEM and IWRAW AP.

3.1.6 Follow up Activities

Objective 4: To promote the development of region-specific gender sensitive human rights scholarship, strategies and implementing tools

Related activities that were undertaken were the following

- 4.1 IWRWA AP website
October - December
Launching the IWRAW AP website**

(TO BE FILLED BY ANGELA?)

- 4.2 Resource Centre
January - December
Resource centre collection classification and cataloguing**

(TO BE FILLED BY Lia)

Objective 5: To strengthen international and regional linkages (networking)

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

Related activities that were undertaken were the following

Global Conference against Racism and Caste-based Discrimination: Occupation and Descent-based Discrimination against Dalits: New Delhi, India: 1-4 March

Global Conference against Racism and Caste-based Discrimination was conducted as part of preparatory meeting for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR) Sapan Malla (Nepal) attended the meeting on behalf of IWRAW AP.

Training for NGOs on Human Rights of Women: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: 28-30 March
WAO organised the above training. SD & Ivy Josiah were resource persons.

Workshop on the Impact of Globalisation on the Full Enjoyment of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and the Rights to Development in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: 8-10 May

Regional Partner's Meeting Organised by Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (ARROW) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: 16 May

SD conducted a session 'Using the Convention and International Treaties for Monitoring and Advocacy on Women's Health.

Asian Women's Conference on GAD, the BPFA, and CEDAW "Asian Women 2000: Sharing Greater Visions, Strategies, and Actions for Gender Equality, Development and Peace" in Bangkok, Thailand: 16 June

TP and MU attended the Conference organised by the Philippine NGO Beijing Score Board and the Philippine Women's Network in Politics and Governance.

Workshop on the Draft Domestic Violence Bill in Phnom Penh, Cambodia: 18-19 June

SD participated in the workshops to discuss the draft DV bill and to discuss collaborative work that IWRAW AP can do in Cambodia. Discussions on this were held by SD with the Minister for Women and the OHCHR in Cambodia.

Regional Workshop on Women's HR and CEDAW organised by Latin America and Caribbean Youth Network on Reproductive and Sexual Rights in New York, USA:13-17 July

TP attended the workshop

Regional Seminar on Using Legal Instruments to Combat Trafficking in Women and Children organised by ESCAP in Bangkok, Thailand: 1-3 August

SD made a presentation on CEDAW and trafficking in women.

Meeting for Lawyers on the Optional Protocol to the Convention, organised by University of Michigan, USA , Equality Now, WEDO- .USA and DAW: 9 -11 November
Shanthi Dairiam, and Maria Graterol (OP Campaign Steering Committee Member) attended the meeting

Support to the Preparation of State Parties Reports to CEDAW: Auckland, New Zealand 13-15 February

SD was invited to a meeting of Pacific governments on the ratification of the CEDAW Convention and the significance of reporting to CEDAW. The meeting was organised by the UN Division for the Advancement of Women and hosted by the New Zealand government. SD made a presentation on the role of NGOs in the CEDAW reporting process.

Meeting on the Application of Human Rights to Reproductive and Sexual Health in Geneva, Switzerland: 25-27 June

The UNFPA and the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights organised the above meeting. Shanthi Dairiam presented a paper on Discrimination against Women and its Implication on Women's Capacity for Self-determination in the Areas of Reproductive and Sexual Health.

Seminar on "Globalisation, Gender and Development" organised by the Women's Division of the United Malays National Organisation, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: 28 July

Shanthi Dairiam made a presentation on the Convention and gender mainstreaming policies to be implemented by the government.

The National NGO Workshop on Rio+10: Preparing for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg 2002, KL, Malaysia, organised by World Wild life Fund, Malaysia: 24-26 September

SD presented a paper on the Convention and women's rights as related to sustainable development issues

Impact of the Violence and Armed Conflict organised by the Ministry for Women and Family Development, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: 20 November

SD presented a paper on _____

International Colloquium on Empowerment of Women's Through Law

Delhi, India organised by the Lawyers Collective 4-16 December

SD will be presenting a paper the international perspectives and the development in Malaysia and other countries in the area of Family laws and gender equality

Objective 6: To strengthen IWRAW Asia Pacific's institutional capability for greater efficiency in and sustainability of its work

6.1 Application for the ECOSOC Status
IWRAW Asia Pacific has an ECOSOC status.

6.2 Office Equipment

6.3