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IWRAP ASIA PACIFIC ANNUAL REPORT 2004

[DOCUMENT SUBTITLE]

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IWRAW Asia Pacific Annual Report 2004

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The programme in 2004 focused on three strategies of Building Capacity for the Implementation of Women's Human Rights through training and technical assistance. Enhancing the Realization of Women's Human Rights through value adding to advocacy programmes nationally and facilitating international advocacy. The third strategy was Information and Dissemination, which supported the first two strategies. This was done through the facilitation of information updates to and experience exchange among all programme partners as well as individuals and organizations engaged in the implementation

of women's human rights using international norms and standards as well as through the creation of relevant knowledge. Programmatic and collaborative involvement took place at many levels, nationally, regionally and internationally. Specific achievements of the programme in 2004 that may be mentioned are as follows:

New areas of knowledge for advocacy

Through the Updating of Skills and Concepts Regional meeting in 2004, we explored the complexities of implementing human rights standards pertaining to women in new contexts such as globalisation and the disappearance of the validation of a rights approach. What this brought to the fore front was the need for women advocates at the national level to strategise on holding their governments accountable for their commitments made to respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights of their people, through treaty ratification, even as they entered into trade agreements or any other national fiscal or monetary policies as a result of conditionalities imposed by international financial institutions. In this regard, the implication for activists was that they needed to keep abreast of global economic trends and to develop capacity to analyse their impact on national economic policies generally and from a gender perspective, taking this analysis to impact of national macro policies at the micro level. Capacity building would also need to be developed for the formulation of a comprehensive national advocacy programme based on empirical evidence for alternative policies redressing negative impacts of global and national socio economic trends. The second major output of this regional meeting was the exposure given to participants on principles underlying a rights based approach, including socio economic rights, and a framework for the practical application of a rights based approach to programming. These developments were discussed at the Advisory Committee meeting and decisions taken that IWRAW Asia Pacific should embark on a campaign to promote a rights approach that would add value to the programmatic approaches projected by UN world conference outcomes and the MDG goals. This was seen as urgent as all evidence pointed to the erosion of the appreciation of using rights perspectives by UN agencies, governments and even NGOs.

It was also decided to start introducing issues pertaining to global economic trends into the 2005 Regional Thematic Meeting on Economic Opportunities in Laos.

Another important contribution to developing advocacy strategies in relation to global trade issues was the production of an occasional paper titled, "Lack of Access, Lack of Care: A Reference Guide to Women's Right to Health in the International Trading System."

Capacity building: National level

These trainings have been taking place over several years. But the emphasis currently is move towards training of trainers in order to develop national capacity to become self-sufficient in this area. IWRAW Asia Pacific sees its role as updating knowledge on emerging concepts, developing new areas of skills required to craft comprehensive strategies aimed at addressing specific problems using the CEDAW framework thus moving from an abstract understanding of CEDAW to a capacity for its practical application. This work would support national level training efforts. Other developments were the training in Sri Lanka for Tamil speaking participants, the refresher training in India for sharpening advocacy to hold the State accountable and to ensure the application of the CEDAW framework in their own organization and the training done for the Vietnam Women's Union to develop skills in alternative report writing that will integrate reporting requirements under Beijing Platform of Action and CEDAW.

Capacity building: Links to the Optional Protocol to CEDAW Campaign

We also went into new areas of skills development towards the exhaustion of domestic remedies. We did this through work on the development of a training package for lawyers to use when pleading cases of discrimination in court. This development of this package is a critical component of our capacity building work as it would form the basis of promoting the use of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW and the filing of cases with the CEDAW Committee. A rough assessment in the region had showed that there were very few cases on discrimination filed at the national courts and certainly very little capacity to use legal arguments based on substantive equality and indirect discrimination as provided for under the CEDAW Convention. So as the promotion of the exhaustion of domestic remedies is an essential component of promoting the claiming of rights utilising the Optional Protocol to CEDAW, this training package has much significance.

As the training package was being developed it was also pre tested at training for lawyers in Nepal, Bangladesh and India.

Enhancing national level advocacy

The consolidation of national learnings on the domestic application of international human rights standards in specific contexts took place through a Regional Thematic Meeting on Women's Political Participation. This meeting was the second a series of four meetings held to share knowledge of and strategise over the utilization of the findings of

a research based collaborative programme implemented over a period of years, called "Facilitating the Implementation of State Obligation towards Women's Equality" which attempted to develop a framework for monitoring the implementation of state obligation to women's equality in specific thematic contexts.

Another activity has to consolidate and enhance national level advocacy was the regional South Asia Consultation to discuss the possibility setting up national resource centres as a next phase to the programme, *Facilitating the Implementation of State Obligation towards Women's Equality*. These centres potentially could perform a range of functions including being national depositories of information on CEDAW and women's human rights, develop a cohesive strategy for monitoring CEDAW implementation and consolidate training efforts for advocacy.

The South Asian Meeting discussed the scope of the centres and developed national action plans.

International advocacy: Standard setting at the international level and the creation of new instruments

Work related to the UN Human Rights System: Our work in standard-setting continued through our participation at the Sixtieth Session of the Commission on Human Rights. We also participated and made interventions on the UN Treaty Body Reform process activities at the Third Inter-committee Meeting of the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies and in the Annual Chairs of the Treaty Bodies Meeting in Geneva. We further attended and gave inputs at the Eleventh Annual Meeting of Special Rapporteurs, Special Representatives, Independent Experts and Chairpersons of the Working Groups of the Commission on Human Rights.

IWRAW Asia Pacific has shown particular involvement in the work of the Special Rapporteurs on Violence against Women, The Right to the Highest attainable Standard of Health and on Right to Adequate Housing.

Advocacy around the Optional Protocol to CEDAW: The Third Advisory Group Meeting of the Global Campaign for the Ratification and Use of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW was held in Kathmandu, Nepal. The main agenda was the preparation for the Global Consultation on the Ratification and Use of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW to be held in 2005. The members of the advisory group who represent various regions also took the opportunity to be resource persons at the Nepal National Consultation on the Optional Protocol to CEDAW held back to back with IWRAW Asia Pacific's Advisory Group meeting.

Focus on economic, social and cultural rights: Since 2003, IWRAW Asia Pacific has been actively seeking to influence processes that relate to the progressive interpretation of economic, social and cultural rights. In the area of international advocacy, we continued our activism for the creation of a new instrument the Optional Protocol for the Covenant on Economic and Social Rights (CESCR). While many international NGO were engaged in this advocacy, IWRAW Asia Pacific was the only one

that mobilised a small team of national level NGOs and facilitated their participation in Open ended Working Group set up by the Human Rights Commission to look into options to an Optional Protocol to the CESC. These NGOs were from Brazil, Poland, India, Australia, and Nepal. We saw this work as an extension of our advocacy on the Optional Protocol to CEDAW and aimed at introducing an equality and non-discrimination perspective into the dynamics of claiming rights under the CESC. This was also done on the basis of our realization of the need for a mutual synergy between the equality and non-discrimination principles of CEDAW and the promotion of economic and social rights under the CESC.

Contribution to the development of CEDAW's General Recommendation on State Obligation: We contributed to the development of CEDAW's General Recommendation 25 on State Obligation (article 2) – a work in progress. The IRAW Asia Pacific of team of three made presentations at the day of general discussion that was held to gather views from a broad audience on the scope of this general recommendation at the 30th session of CEDAW. Their presentations touched on the legally binding nature of state obligation, the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil rights of women, the obligations of the state under CEDAW during armed conflict and in the context of internal conflict and sectarian violence.

International Advocacy: Facilitating the participation of women in the CEDAW review process

For the eighth successive year IRAW Asia Pacific ran its successful programme facilitating the participation of women from reporting countries into the CEDAW review process at the United Nations in New York. This programme called "From Global to Local" enables the women concerned to contribute their perspectives internationally to the monitoring of CEDAW implementation in their countries and to the interpretation of state obligation under the CEDAW Convention. Through this process, they are empowered to apply such international developments and meanings of rights at the domestic level. They do this by presenting shadow or alternative reports to the CEDAW Committee that is mandated to conduct this review and by observing the review process. This experience in turn is communicated by them to the national level and enhances advocacy for the application of international standards at the national level. In 2004, 34 women from Belarus, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Nigeria, Angola, Argentina Bangladesh, Latvia and the Ukraine participated at the 30th and 31st sessions of CEDAW in January and July respectively.

UNIFEM, which has been a key funder of this programme conducted an evaluation of the programme in 2004. The findings revealed that the programme has been successful in achieving its aims. One of the key findings was that the programme has contributed to increased government transparency and GO NGO interaction.

To date, over a period of eight years, this programme has facilitated the participation of women in the CEDAW review process from more than 100 countries that are states parties to the CEDAW Convention.

A significant contribution of IWRAP Asia Pacific to this process is that it has been designated as the conduit through which NGO shadow reports from around the world will be forwarded to the CEDAW Committee.

Information dissemination

Several activities were conducted to allow for the systematic collection and dissemination of information that would increase awareness of international norms pertaining to women's rights as well as initiate and expand local activism. These included the acquisition of human rights materials web site, the occasional paper series and the cedaw4change listserv. This listserv has 700 members.

In relation to the website, we completed uploading the materials on the OP-CEDAW and were in the process of completing Spanish translations for this section, expected to be ready by the end of 2005. As a result of efforts to improve the accessibility of the web site, its ranking in Google using the key word "CEDAW" rose from being in the mid 20s to number 6. Another indication of its increase in popularity and hence accessibility is the number of web sites that are linked to it rising from 26 in November 2003 to 72 in just over a year.

BACKGROUND

In 1993, the International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP Asia Pacific) was established to fill the gap between the promise of women's rights, and their actual realisation. Since then, the organisation has concentrated its efforts on building capacity for the domestic implementation of international human rights standards, in particular, that of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (the CEDAW Convention). Where possible, it has also started to do the same with related standards of other treaties and mechanisms of the United Nations (UN).

Underlying past, present and future work is a cross-cutting premise that the mobilisation of women's groups at all levels is necessary to draw accountability from governments on the domestic application of these human rights standards. At the same time the organisation has facilitated advocacy by NGOs for standard-setting at national and international levels. Having developed a significant presence in 12 countries in South and Southeast Asia during its initial phases of operation, IWRAP Asia Pacific has grown in recent years and created a presence in many other parts of the region and the world as well. Using a rights-based approach, it works with women activists and NGOs, human rights advocates, lawyers, international bodies and governments.

Philosophy, Vision and Mission

Philosophy: As a human rights organisation, IWRAP Asia Pacific places women at the centre of our work. We are committed to generating conditions and spaces, which nurture opportunities for sharing, creating awareness of and realising human rights for all women. We seek to accomplish this through a spirit of respect for and mutual cooperation with those we work with.

Vision: IWRAP Asia Pacific envisions a world where there is full realisation and enjoyment of human rights by all. Women's equality is integral to this achievement. We believe that through these societies can be transformed so as to achieve a balance of power, and sustainable and equitable development conducive to realising human rights.

Mission: To achieve our vision, we adopt a human rights approach and focus on the experiences of women from the South. We see ourselves as catalysts in building

capacity for change and in enhancing the realisation of the human rights of women through:

- The effective implementation of human rights standards, as seen through the lens of CEDAW and other international human rights mechanisms, at all levels of society.
- The inclusion of women in standard-setting processes at the national and international levels, and in the formulation of policies and laws.
- The development of new knowledge and methodologies.
- The mobilisation of women to bring about good governance and sustainable change.

Governance

- **Board of Directors:** Shanthy Dairiam, Ivy Josiah, Maznah Mohamad, Rita Raj and Noor Farida Arrifin.
- **Advisory Committee:** Andonia Piau-Lynch (Vanuatu); Andrew Byrnes (Australia); Eleanor Conda (Philippines); Miho Omi (Japan); Ruth Manorama (India); Sapana Pradhan Malla (Nepal); Savitri Goonesekere (Sri Lanka); Shireen Huq (Bangladesh). In August 2004, Eleanor Conda resigned from the Advisory Committee while Andonia Piau-Lynch and Miho Omi officially came on board.
- **The IWRAP Asia Pacific Team:** Shanthy Dairiam (Executive Director); Yew Bee Yee (Deputy Executive Director); Maria Herminia Graterol (Programme Officer); Rea Chiongson (Programme Officer); tan beng hui (Programme Officer); Rozana Isa (Programme Officer); Hasnizuraini Hassan (Programme Officer); Azlini Abdul Ghani (Administration and Finance Officer); Liew Siew Yan (Administration and Finance Officer); and Rosfaizai "Ezza" Che Ramli (Administrative Assistant). *Part-time staff:* Tashia Petersen (Librarian); Smita Sharma (Research Assistant); Brenda Campbell (cedaw4change moderator); Ezrena Marwan (webweaver).

The year saw several changes in the IWRAP Asia Pacific team. In March, Yew Bee Yee took up the newly created post of Deputy Executive Director; in April, Rozana Isa took on the training portfolio as Programme Officer; and in September, Hasnizuraini Hassan was employed as the organisation's Research and Publications Officer. Towards the end of the year, two key members of the organisation left, Maria Herminia Graterol (October) and Shanthy Dairiam (December).

From May to August, IWRAP Asia Pacific also hosted three student interns, Jaime Kelly and Liz Sepper from the United States of America, and Mante Molepo from Canada.

- **Various Resource and Programme Management Teams**

Pool of resource persons: Dianne Otto (Australia); Sara Hosian, Faustina Pereira (Bangladesh); Geeta Devi, Madhu Mehra, Manisha Gupte, Ruth Manorama, SK Priya, Shantha Mohan, Tulika Srivastava (India); Sapana Pradhan-Malla and Sabin Shrestha (Nepal); Muhammad Younas Khalid (Pakistan); Kumudini Samuel and Sudarshana Gunawardena (Sri Lanka).

From Global to Local Project Management Team: Alda Facio (Women, Gender and Justice Programme – ILANUD); Debra Liebowitz (Drew University); Lee Waldorf (UNIFEM New York), Rea Chiongson (IWRAP Asia Pacific).

OP-CEDAW NGO Campaign Advisory Group: Alda Facio (Costa Rica); Amal Abd El Hadi (Egypt); Barbara Limanowska (Poland); Donna Sullivan (USA); Leslie Anne Foster (South Africa); Marlene Libardoni (Brazil); Tulika Srivastava (India); and Shanthi Dairiam (IWRAP Asia Pacific).

Funders

IWRAP Asia Pacific received funds from the following donors for its activities in 2004:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands
- Ford Foundation, Delhi
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), New York

STRATEGIES

In line with IRAW Asia Pacific's two-pronged approach of building capacity and enhancing the realisation of women's human rights, the organisation continued to be involved into three main strategies in 2004: Strategy 1- Building Capacity for Change; Strategy 2 - Enhancing the Realisation of Rights; and Strategy 3 - the Information Dissemination and Application Strategy (IDAS).

STRATEGY 1 - Building Capacity for Change

One of IRAW Asia Pacific's first activities when the programme started in 1993 was to conduct trainings/orientations on the CEDAW Convention. To date we have conducted over 40 trainings on the CEDAW Convention for women's organisations, lawyers, governments, as well as two trainings of trainers in 1999 and 2000 working with a pool of eight trainers from across Asia Pacific. While building the capacity of the different sectors above to understand and apply the CEDAW Convention, these trainings have also contributed a great deal to the development and fine tuning of IRAW Asia Pacific's training methodology and materials. As a result, to date, IRAW Asia Pacific finds itself in the unique position of being the only organisation providing training on the concepts and application of the CEDAW Convention.

A growing awareness of the importance and significance of the CEDAW Convention has resulted in an increase in the demand for training/technical assistance on the implementation and application of the CEDAW Convention at the domestic level. The demand for such training has come from various sectors – women's groups, human rights organisations, lawyers, government and other national institutions such as the human rights commissions, etc. and range from introductions/orientations on the CEDAW Convention and its application to specific themes/issues to specialised training for the application of the CEDAW Convention in legal advocacy in court.

As the demand for these trainings increase, IRAW Asia Pacific sees the need for the creation of a larger pool of trainers/resource persons who are able to take on the

different levels of capacity building needed in the region and internationally. This includes not only conducting training but also to make available technical assistance services to governments, NGOs and other national-level institutions working on the implementation of the CEDAW Convention.

How do we add value? Our capacity building activities have contributed greatly to raising awareness on the significance of the CEDAW Conventions as an instrument to monitor and claim rights for women. As the demand for these trainings increase, IRAW Asia Pacific answers the need for the creation of a larger pool of trainers/resource persons who are able to take on the different levels of capacity building needed in the region and internationally, including trainings and technical assistance services to governments, NGOs and other national level institutions. Our capacity building activities will ensure availability to the resource persons and their constituencies of updated training materials that respond to the emerging concepts and challenges. IRAW Asia Pacific shifts its role from an organization that organizes the training to one that provides the expertise in terms of resource persons and materials.

Moving Forward. IRAW Asia Pacific seeks to focus on providing materials and tools, developing resource persons and providing technical assistance. It is also now looking at an expanded target group for its capacity building activities: women's NGOs, human rights advocates, lawyers, governments and international organizations. Moreover, now that many of our constituencies have adequate legal training in claiming their rights, one of our thrusts is to empower women to exhaust all domestic remedies available to eventually attain substantive equality.

For 2004, the following have been our significant achievements:

Training

IRAW Asia Pacific training activities are divided into two main categories: Training of Trainers and Training of Lawyers.

Training of Trainers

The Training of Trainers is targeted at NGOs and women's rights groups with minimal exposure to the Convention. For them, the training methodology is focused on the skills development in strengthening the domestic application of human rights norm in relation to women's rights focusing on CEDAW.

It is important to note that in 2004, IRAW Asia Pacific's pool of resource persons had played a significant part in conducting these trainings thus releasing the dependence on IRAW Asia Pacific's internal training resources to concentrate on other training and technical assistance areas. This marks a significant achievement

towards the investment made by IWRAP Asia Pacific on previous trainings of trainers and development of resource persons.

The training of trainers had mainly the following objectives:

- Create conceptual clarity on substantive equality, the principle of non-discrimination and state obligation;
- Promote a rights-based approach to women's advancement as well as the need for the development of a theoretical framework;
- Present the premise that rights guaranteed by international treaties have to be actively claimed by women, and that this requires the mobilisation of different constituencies and sustained advocacy with the State;
- Emphasise the importance of engaging with the law as an instrument for claiming rights and develop skills in the application of the CEDAW Convention in differing contexts; and
- Raise awareness of the need for synergy between local and international advocacy, and provides an introduction to the UN human rights system, the reporting procedures of the CEDAW Convention, women's roles in these procedures, and the significance of the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW Convention.

The training also incorporated sessions that emphasised skills required to craft comprehensive strategies aimed at addressing specific problems using the CEDAW framework. With this, participants are able to address conceptual issues at a more advanced level.

Four national-level training of trainers took place this year. Three were held in India and one in Sri Lanka, in collaboration with IWRAP Asia Pacific's core group partners in these countries: the National Alliance of Women (NAWO) and MASUM, and the Women and Media Collective respectively. The trainings were primarily for women NGO activists.

Whilst the training of trainers was conducted with the above-mentioned objectives, two of the trainings conducted also had other objectives.

The training with MASUM is a follow-up training, which brought back participants from the previous year's training. Its specific objective was to critically assess their application of the CEDAW framework in their organisation's work. They also exchanged experiences in sharpening the application of the framework particularly in holding their own state accountable to their treaty obligations.

The Sri Lanka training targeted Tamil speaking women activists. This is particularly significant since it is part of IWRAP Asia Pacific's vision to ensure that its capacity building efforts are given the widest and broadest possible reach.

Given below are the details of the Training of Trainers that we have conducted in 2004.

March 12-16 | Training of Trainers for Activists on CEDAW

Venue: Bangalore, India

Organiser: National Alliance of Women (NAWO, India) with support from IRAW Asia Pacific

The main objective of this southern regional training of trainers was to create a larger pool of resource persons able to take on different levels of capacity building needed in relation to CEDAW. This includes not only conducting trainings but also providing technical assistance services to governments, NGOs and other national-level institutions working on the implementation of the CEDAW Convention.

This training was divided into the following sessions:

- Session 1 Social construction of gender (Part 1: Sex and gender)
- Session 2 Social construction of gender (Part 2: Institutions and inequalities)
- Session 3 Understanding discrimination
- Session 4 Towards substantive equality
- Session 5 Human rights values and standards
- Session 6 International human rights law and promoting human rights of women
- Session 7 Understanding treaties and differences and links between treaties and world conferences and plans of action
- Session 8 The role of law and women's rights activism
- Session 9 The history of the CEDAW Convention and its key features
- Session 10 The link between development and rights
- Session 11 Principles of state obligation
- Session 12 Added value – exploring the uses of international human rights standards in domestic litigation
- Session 13 Reporting mechanism
- Session 14 Validity of the Indian reservations and declarations to CEDAW (Article 5a, 16 and 29)
- Session 15 Optional Protocol to CEDAW
- Session 16 Application of CEDAW to promote women's rights
- Session 17 Implementation of the CEDAW Convention in India
- Session 18 Practical legal activism (next steps)

Twenty-six activists from Chennai, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka attended this activity. Trainers were Indian participants from previous IRAW Asia Pacific training of trainers and included Shantha Mohan, S.K. Priya, Ruth Manorama and Geetha Devi.

July 1-2 | Training of Trainers on CEDAW

Venue: Pune, India

Organiser: MASUM with technical assistance and support from IRAW Asia Pacific

In December 2003, IRAW Asia Pacific collaborated with MASUM in running a training of trainers in order to add to the pool of national-level CEDAW trainers in

India. At the end of this meeting, participants unanimously requested for a follow-up activity to enable them to re-group and share their learning experiences on the practical application of the knowledge they had gained at this initial training (e.g. the principles, relevance and usage of CEDAW and the rights-based approach).

The specific objectives of this training were to:

- Review the mandate from the 2003 Training of Trainers and share work done in relation to CEDAW, lessons learnt, obstacles and strategies;
- Identify evaluation and monitoring tools/processes to assess usage of lessons from the 2003 training of trainers; and
- To plan future work, in light of the needs articulated during the training and to prepare a joint action plan.

The main initiatives related to the usage of knowledge gained in the 2003 training were in the following areas:

- **Perspective building.** The CEDAW framework and the rights-based approach assisted in sharpening perspectives. One participant stated that the knowledge gained through the initial training had been immensely useful in opening up new vistas of thinking and action.
- **Conducting trainings on CEDAW.** Another participant shared how the first activity had motivated her to do a training programme for a group of pre-primary school teachers at the village level.
- **Documentation and creation of resources** (e.g. because of the conceptual clarity it created, the initial training had helped in the preparation of case studies and a chapter for the India shadow report to CEDAW).
- **Creation of training materials** (e.g. powerpoint presentations on CEDAW).

Difficulties, strategies and lessons learnt were also discussed, for instance, how to tackle community-level issues which affect both men and women (e.g. poverty). Some participants shared on how their efforts to generate a discussion on CEDAW and gender rights within their organisations met with resistance from colleagues. It was also commonly observed, both in case of organisational interactions and family or personal level relations, that issues related to gender equity were generally accepted as 'privileges' but not as 'rights' for women. Last but not least, the participants agreed that there was a need for simplification of CEDAW and translating this into regional languages.

The facilitators and other participants provided recommendations and strategies on ways to address these difficulties. A session to revisit concepts was also undertaken to ensure conceptual clarity. A small group exercise took place so that participants could identify indicators to apply to their work in accordance with State obligation under the CEDAW Convention. In this regard, the themes on right to elementary education and the right to health were chosen.

During the planning session, participants undertook a joint action plan with specific timeframes as well as roles and responsibilities for each of them. These activities included:

- Improving the existing powerpoint presentation on CEDAW;

- Preparing a training module on specific themes (education, health and violence);
- A training programme for community-based leadership;
- Use of CEDAW principles and standards to analyse research findings on health care services in Jharkand;
- For internal capacity building purposes, preparing a training module for staff in one's own organisation;
- State-level workshops for NGOs in Karnataka; and
- Establishing an online e-group to facilitate better communication.

This follow-up training of trainers activity of one and a half days involved a total of 14 participants, nine of whom were from the eight organisations originally part of the 2003 training. Five participants were new but they were working on an assignment basis with MASUM and had already undergone some training on rights after their association with the organisation. Tulika Srivastava (AALI) and Manisha Gupte (MASUM) were the resource persons at this event.

August 11-15 | Training of Trainers on CEDAW

Venue: Kolkota, India

Organiser: National Alliance of Women (NAWO, India) with the support of IRAW
Asia Pacific

The general objective of this training was to provide social activists with knowledge on the CEDAW Convention to utilise in their advocacy for the advancement of women in India. Its specific objectives were as follows:

- Raise awareness of the advantages in basing the struggle for women's human rights on feminist principles and international human rights norms, in particular the CEDAW Convention;
- Create clarity on key concepts and principles – equality, non-discrimination and state obligation – pertaining to women's rights advocated by the CEDAW Convention;
- Create familiarity with the obligations that the state has undertaken through ratification of international human rights treaties and by being a party to the recommendations and plans of actions of the UN World Conferences;
- Develop skills in identifying discriminatory aspects of the law and the legal system in order to develop a comprehensive approach to activism;
- Provide knowledge and develop skills necessary for the practical application of the principles of the CEDAW Convention to enable women to claim their rights;
- Provide the opportunity for networking to undertake collaborative advocacy;
- Develop a pool of trainers to ensure that knowledge of the CEDAW Convention reaches more people and to ensure that its norms are the standard for women's rights activism; and
- Develop plans for effective use of the convention.

Participants for this training were from the states of Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Rajasthan, West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh, while the resource

persons were Ruth Manorama (NAWO, India), Geetha Devi (Advocate, Bangalore) and current CEDAW Committee member from Bangladesh, Salma Khan. IWRAP Asia Pacific contributed funds and technical assistance for this training.

November 18-22 | Training of Trainers on CEDAW

Venue: Negombo, Sri Lanka

Organiser: Women and Media Collective with technical support from IWRAP Asia Pacific

The training aimed at creating a pool of Tamil-speaking trainers in Sri Lanka who would have the capacity to raise awareness among government officials, NGOs and women on the significance and use of the CEDAW Convention in advancing the human rights of women; and be resource persons to promote and facilitate the implementation of the CEDAW Convention.

More specifically, it sought to develop the participants' capacity in the following areas:

- Skills in identifying the root causes and various sites of discrimination as well as the interrelatedness of discrimination and rights to develop a comprehensive framework for promoting women's rights;
- An understanding of the barriers to establishing women's rights as human rights;
- An appreciation of the concept and attributes of rights and the potentials of a rights-based approach to promote the advancement of women;
- An understanding of the role of law in promoting or hindering women's rights;
- Greater understanding of the UN system's significance in promoting women's rights;
- Awareness on the role, importance, scope and content of the CEDAW Convention;
- Clarity on concepts and principles pertaining to women's rights as advocated by the CEDAW Convention – equality, non-discrimination and state obligation;
- Knowledge on the procedures by which the convention is monitored by the CEDAW Committee; and
- Planning the next steps.

In their feedback on the training they received, participants expressed that it was beneficial having the sessions run in Tamil because this had opened up a wider scope for NGOs in Sri Lanka to take on CEDAW and implement this in their own organisational programmes or advocacy strategies. They also found that the case studies from India were very useful in providing insights into the problems involved in CEDAW implementation. When asked to identify one new concept/theory/theme that they each had learnt during the training, their responses included the following: discrimination; state obligation; different models of equality, substantive equality, history of the CEDAW Convention; procedures under the convention; women's rights; sex and gender; and content of the articles of the convention.

They also came up with action plans as to what they were going to do as a result of the training that they had received. Some of the action plans that were discussed included:

- Identifying gaps in relevant existing legislation, formulating amendments to make such legislation gender sensitive, and lobbying for legal reform;
- Continuing work to eliminate discrimination against women, with a better understanding of the concept, at the local level (with Muslim women in the Puttalam district);
- Sharing information on the legal framework and implementation of CEDAW as well as contribute organisationally to the writing of the shadow report (Rural Development Foundation, Palavi; and Mannar Women's Development Federation, Mannar);
- Utilising the knowledge gained to work against violence against women and children from minority communities in Kandy (Human Development Organisation, Kandy);
- Networking (Suriya Women's Development, Batticaloa);
- Awareness-raising among police on CEDAW (Co-existence Foundation, Trincomalee); and
- Awareness-raising on CEDAW among religious leaders.

This training, held in Negombo, Sri Lanka, was organised by Women and Media Collective with technical support from IRAW Asia Pacific. It was specifically targeted to the Tamil-speaking constituents in Sri Lanka, and was attended by 16 participants from Vavuniya, Mannar, Jaffna, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Kalpitiya, Colombo, Ratnapura, Palavi, Valachenai and Kandy. The training was conducted in Tamil with SK Priya (India) representing IRAW Asia Pacific and Sudarshana Gunawardena (Sri Lanka) as trainers and Sepali Kottegoda and Sutharshan Mahalingam as resource persons.

Training of Lawyers

The second category of training is the Training of Lawyers. This is in response to the need for developing skills on the use of the CEDAW Convention for legal initiatives, especially in litigation. The training of lawyers had the following broad objectives:

- To enable lawyers to pursue legal initiatives, especially litigation, for CEDAW implementation and enforcement of women's human rights;
- To develop a pool of lawyers committed to advance women's human rights through legal and litigation strategies using the framework and standards of the CEDAW Convention;
- To raise awareness on the Optional Protocol to CEDAW (OP-CEDAW) and on the need for its ratification.

These activities became testing grounds for IRAW Asia Pacific's draft manual on lawyers' training. These trainings further enhanced the development of the lawyers'

training manual since the lessons learned were incorporated in the fine-tuning of the manual.

There were three lawyers' trainings: one in Bangladesh (in collaboration with Ain-o-Salish Kendra- ASK) and two in India (together with Partners for Law and Development- PLD and the other, in collaboration with the National Alliance of Women - NAWO).

The training by ASK in Bangladesh has sparked a recognition towards the need for a workshop on public interest litigation and how women's rights can be realised through this mechanism.

The PLD training in India looked at available mechanisms within other human rights treaty bodies within specific contexts. This widened the scope for discussion on how to realise women's rights within international norms.

The implementation of the training of lawyers marked a shift towards ensuring that the conceptual framework of CEDAW is transformed into the realisation of women's rights by women accessing, exercising and enjoying their rights within international standards.

June 2-5| National Lawyers Training on CEDAW and Its Optional Protocol

Venue: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Organiser: Ain-o-Salish Kendra in collaboration with IRAW Asia Pacific

This national training for lawyers was organised by Ain-o-Salish Kendra (ASK) in collaboration with IRAW Asia Pacific. Its general objectives were (a) to enable lawyers to pursue legal initiatives, especially litigation, for CEDAW implementation and enforcement of women's human rights; and (b) to develop a pool of lawyers committed to advancing women's human rights through legal and litigation strategies using the framework and standards of the CEDAW Convention.

Specifically, this training aimed at:

- Developing understanding on the principles of the CEDAW Convention and international norms on gender equality;
- Enhancing skills on using the CEDAW Convention and other international human rights treaties in legal advocacy, especially litigation, on gender equality;
- Assisting participants in building arguments for gender equality cases;
- Enabling the identification of appropriate remedies in litigation on gender equality;
- Developing expertise on the domestic implementation of CEDAW, especially on incorporating its key principles of substantive equality, non-discrimination and State obligation in national jurisprudence, laws and policies;
- Raising awareness on the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW Convention; and

- Identifying areas of priority and strategies for action in relation to CEDAW and its Optional Protocol.

The training was divided into the following sessions:

- Session 1 Overview of the CEDAW Convention
- Session 2 The principles of CEDAW: Non-discrimination
- Session 3 The principles of CEDAW: Substantive equality
- Session 4 The principles of CEDAW: State obligation
- Session 5 Practical application of the principles of CEDAW
- Session 6 Comparative advantage of working with other human rights treaties: CEDAW, ICCPR and ICESCR
- Session 7 Strategies and benefits of using international standards in litigation (domestic application of international standards)
- Session 8 Comprehensive approaches to using CEDAW in Bangladesh
- Session 9 Remedies for violations of women's human rights: Exploring national case studies
- Session 10 Briefing on the Optional Protocol to CEDAW: What and why?
- Session 11 Using the Communications Procedure: Identifying strategies
- Session 12 Exploring future actions for using CEDAW and its Optional Protocol in legal initiatives and litigation strategies

Among the outputs of the training were:

- Increased knowledge and awareness on key principles of the CEDAW Convention and its practical application; the uses of other treaties in advancing women's human rights; strategies for using international standards in litigation; remedies for violations; and understanding and using the Optional Protocol to CEDAW;
- Identification of a pool of lawyers to pursue litigation to advance women's human rights in Bangladesh; and
- An initial follow-up plan of action from the participants on issues to pursue at the district and national level.

In addition, IRAW Asia Pacific was able to pilot-test its draft lawyers training manual. In fact, most of the sessions at this training were based on the proposed modules of the manual. The manual will be further improved by incorporating key learning points from the training.

Twenty-four practicing district and high court lawyers attended this training while the resource persons were Rea Chiongson and S.K. Priya of IRAW Asia Pacific; Faustina Pereira, Saidur Rahman and Sanaiyya Fahim Ansari of Ain-o-Salish Kendra; and Sara Hossain and Tanjibul Alam of Dr. Kamal Hossain and Associates.

As a follow-up activity, a consultation on assessing the use of public interest litigation in Bangladesh will be convened in July 2005. The consultation will attempt to identify the successes, failures and lessons of public interest litigation; as well as identify ways to move forward, especially in relation to women's human rights.

October 18-22 | Women and International Human Rights Law

Venue: New Delhi, India

Organiser: Partners for Law in Development and IRAW Asia Pacific

This training aimed at developing a pool of lawyers and social workers committed to collaborating to advance women's human rights through the application of international human rights law, either through the formal system of litigation or through a broad range of social justice initiatives. Towards this end, it sought to:

- Build perspectives and strengthen awareness about international human rights standards;
- Develop an appreciation for critical engagement with the law through conceptualising it in relation to social contexts and marginalised groups;
- Deepen an understanding about women's human rights;
- Develop an understanding about international law on women, in particular CEDAW, special mechanisms and the International Criminal Court;
- Develop and expand the ability of participants to include international standards on women's rights in their work with the law; and
- Develop familiarity with and skills on the application of human rights standards in domestic litigation, and thereby facilitate its implementation through the courts.

The training had four main components. The first involved a close examination of the human rights regime as it evolved with the UDHR, ICCPR and ICESCR as its principal treaties, the dominant construction of human rights based on the application of these treaties and its limitations in addressing women's issues. This then formed the basis for the second level of inquiry i.e. the contribution of laws and procedures at the international level focusing on special laws addressing women's needs. This section looked at the CEDAW Convention as the principal treaty along with its key concepts of equality and non-discrimination. The third section looked at the application of human rights law to address gender specific violence and its impact – under both so-called "normal" situations and in times of internal conflict. This section looked at gender-based violence as a form of sex discrimination in ordinary times and during internal/sectarian conflict between groups and communities based on religion or ethnicity, focusing on human rights concepts and mechanisms relevant to both. The fourth and final session focused on ways in which international standards could be applied in the domestic arena, particularly through litigation, as a step towards the realisation of these standards in practice.

The training sessions were as follows:

Part I: Human Rights

Session 1 Human rights (historical origins, philosophy and the law)

Session 2 Key concepts (universality, indivisibility, inalienability and interdependence)

Session 3 Unpacking human rights law

Part II: From gendered lives to gender justice

Session 4 The journey of women's human rights: CEDAW, Vienna and beyond
Session 5 CEDAW
Session 6 Principal features of CEDAW (Equality, non-discrimination, state obligation and affirmative action)

Part III: Gender-based violence

Session 7 Normative framework
Session 8 UN Mechanisms (Treaties and special procedures)
Session 9 Gender-based crimes in special contexts

Part IV: From Global to Local

Session 10 Domestic application of human rights law: Precedents and potential

At the end of this workshop, participants expressed that they would use the knowledge they had gained in the following ways: litigation, awareness-raising, using standards in legal research and in demanding accountability from the Indian state, and organising of workshops especially in relation to the Indian Penal Code.

The 22 participants comprised lawyers, academics and social workers with previous experience using the law to advance women's human rights. Preference was given to those who had demonstrated experience in social justice work; those who had not previously participated in a national-level training; and lawyers with endorsements by an NGO and with a commitment to work with NGOs. Resource persons were composed of Eleanor Conda (Philippines), Sara Hossain (Bangladesh), Usha Ramanathan (India), Madhu Mehra (India) and Saumya Uma (India).

As with the Bangladesh lawyers' training, IWRAP Asia Pacific intends to incorporate learning points from this training to further improve the draft IWRAP Asia Pacific lawyer's manual.

Technical Assistance

In the past, IWRAP Asia Pacific had received requests to provide technical assistance and 2004 was no exception. The kind of requests that were received in 2004 was not limited to NGOs but also to human rights institutions and national women's organisations. The categories of technical assistance provided varied trainings. Trainings ranged from CEDAW to enhancing the understanding of the Optional Protocol as well as CEDAW to developing skills in writing of alternative reports and providing conceptual clarity on the framework on how to implement CEDAW in the South East Asia region. The requests were met by, both members of staff and the pool of resource persons that the organisation maintains. There were other indications of interest in our expertise as well but for various reasons including budget constraints, no further action was taken on these.¹

¹ In addition to the above, IWRAP Asia Pacific participated as resource persons, speakers or facilitators in other activities as well but these are elaborated in this report under the section titled "Networking".

UNIFEM CEDAW Southeast Asia Programme

Organiser: UNIFEM East and Southeast Asia Regional Office

Since 2002, IRAW Asia Pacific has been working with the UNIFEM East and Southeast Asia office to prepare a programme for CEDAW implementation in this region. In 2004, the organisation continued to support this programme in the following ways:

- On February 17, Shanthi Dairiam (Executive Director, IRAW Asia Pacific) presented a paper "Framework for the Assessment of CEDAW" at a workshop "Towards the Realisation of Women's Human Rights" that UNIFEM organised to gain further conceptual clarity on its framework for this initiative. She again attended another meeting later in the year, which UNIFEM Southeast Asia called to introduce and explain this project to other UN agencies. In between, several other planning meetings also happened between IRAW Asia Pacific and the UNIFEM Southeast Asia office.
- As another preparatory step before implementing the CEDAW Southeast Asia programme, UNIFEM conducted inception missions to seven countries in the region, which it had identified as part of this project. The aim of these missions was to identify needs of CEDAW implementation and introduce the programme to key stakeholders. Shanthi Dairiam was contracted to develop the framework and questions for the missions as well as to be part of the team to the following countries: Timor Leste (14-18 May 2004), Thailand (14-18 June 2004) and Vietnam (21-25 June). Jaime Kelly and Liz Sepper, interns with IRAW Asia Pacific, participated by documenting the process in Thailand and Vietnam respectively.
- On October 19, Rea Chiongson (Programme Officer, IRAW Asia Pacific) ran an in-house capacity building training for approximately 30 members of the UNIFEM Southeast Asia project team, to enhance their awareness and understanding of the CEDAW Convention.

June 7-8 | CEDAW and CRC Training for the National Human Rights Commission of Maldives

Venue: Male, Maldives

Organiser: UNFPA and UNICEF Maldives

There were sessions on the history and key features of the CEDAW Convention; its principles of substantive equality, non-discrimination and state obligation; mechanisms of the conventions (ratification and reservations; the optional protocols; the reporting process and the UN's role in monitoring compliance) as well as the role of the National Human Rights Commission of Maldives in monitoring the implementation of the CRC and CEDAW and experiences of other Muslim countries in this regard.

Participants considered the forum informative and helpful. They were particularly pleased that questions relating to the “conflict” between religion and women’s human rights, and the notion of women’s human rights as a western agenda, were addressed. An important outcome was the announcement by the Minister of Gender Equality that the Ministry would pursue the Office of the President to withdraw Maldives’ reservations to CEDAW.

In addition to the National Human Rights Commission, members from government ministries, departments, the Attorney General’s Office and police services; as well as the Chamber of Commerce and civil society organisations attended this forum. Younas Khalid of Aurat Foundation, Pakistan represented IRAW Asia Pacific as the key resource person on CEDAW.

July 13-18 | Workshop on a Campaign Strategy for Ratifying the Optional Protocol to CEDAW

Venue: Jakarta, Indonesia

Organiser: Indonesia Women’s Association for Justice (LBH APIK)

The objectives of this workshop were two-fold: first, to build understanding on the Optional Protocol to CEDAW (OP-CEDAW) as a procedure to protect rights guaranteed by the CEDAW Convention; and second, to formulate a national campaign strategy to enable the government to ratify the OP-CEDAW.

Workshop sessions included:

- Introduction to the CEDAW Convention (why we need it and the convention’s principles of substantive equality, non-discrimination and state obligation);
- Introduction to the OP-CEDAW;
- Implementation of the CEDAW Convention;
- OP-CEDAW procedures (Communications and Inquiry);
- Using the OP-CEDAW (advantages and disadvantages);
- Mapping organisational strengths and weaknesses; and
- Drafting a national plan of action.

The resulting national plan of action prioritised advocacy around ratification of the OP-CEDAW. Activities were accordingly planned at the following levels:

- **Local:** Orientation for community leaders and the mass media; collating case studies; campaign drafting; and outreach to communities.
- **Regional:** Mass media campaign; case study documentation; public dialogues; and workshops to enable a better understanding of the CEDAW Convention and the OP-CEDAW.
- **National:** Campaigns using the mass media; holding public consultations; lobbying the government; and creating an information kit.

A total of 16 lawyers and paralegals associated with LBH APIK and its regional offices attended this training. IRAW Asia Pacific provided technical support through Tulika Srivastava of Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives, India, who apart from facilitating the actual training was also involved in conducting a two-day facilitators’

meeting held on 13-14 July. In addition to Tulika, other resource persons and facilitators were Nursyabhani Katjasungkana; Asnifriyanti Damanik; and Budi Wahyuni, all from Indonesia.

November 6-10 | Training for Developing Skills in Alternative Report Writing

Venue: Hanoi, Vietnam

Organiser: Vietnam Women's Union

The purpose of this training was to develop skills in writing alternative reports so that eventually a combined report for Beijing+10 and CEDAW could be produced. Based on the above, the training sought to:

- Promote understanding of the significance of the CEDAW Convention as a human rights treaty and as a critical tool for the advancement of women, and clarity on its principles of equality and non-discrimination;
- Enable understanding of the links and differences between the CEDAW Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action;
- Develop a framework for an alternative report that could be used that the Beijing+10 review in March 2004 at the meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women, and updated for the CEDAW review; and
- Develop a plan for writing the alternative report.

At the training, it was stressed that to satisfy the requirements of CEDAW, the report had to:

- Surface the disparity in rights between men and women in all spheres;
- Identify barriers to access of the enjoyment of rights, and view these barriers as discrimination;
- Assess and document the effectiveness of state actions to remove such barriers; and
- Formulate specific recommendations to the state. In relation to this, it was also emphasised that these had to be measured against the CEDAW Convention, its General Recommendations, Concluding Comments of the CEDAW Committee, and the Beijing Platform for Action.

There were also discussions on the role of civil society and the uses of this report, as well as possible problems that might surface in writing it and how these could be resolved.

Shanthi Dairiam designed and conducted this training. An outline of the report was developed during the training. For the outline of the Report, please see Annex 1.

February 20 | Participation in a meeting for a Thai Training of Trainers

Venue: Bangkok, Thailand

Organiser: Women's Studies Centre, Thammasat University, Thailand and Gender and Development Working Group

In addition to meeting the above-mentioned requests for technical assistance, IWRAP Asia Pacific was asked to discuss future possibilities of running a CEDAW Training of Trainers in Thailand. Representing the organisation, Rea Chiongson met up with members of Thai NGOs, academics and the government to discuss this proposal further. Among the participants at the meeting were Malee Prueksapongsavalee (Women's Studies Centre, Thammasat University), Pornpimon Rojjanapo (Gender and Development Working Group), Rasami (advocate), Sirikul Intarapanich (Office of Women's Affairs and Development, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security), and Noi Pornpen (Forum Asia).

Rea provided background information on the contents and methodology of the Training of Trainers run by IWRAP Asia Pacific. In turn the Thais updated her of national developments, as well as pointed out their key requirements for national advocacy, especially in relation to the fact that the government of Thailand was expected to report to the CEDAW Committee in 2005. The value of drafting a shadow report was discussed as well. The meeting concluded that a series of Training of Trainers was desirable and that the Thais would source necessary resources for this to happen. IWRAP Asia Pacific would provide technical assistance for these trainings.

Updating of Skills

September 18-21 | Updating of Skills on the Application of CEDAW

Venue: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Organiser: IWRAP Asia Pacific

Since 2002, the demand for training/orientation on the CEDAW Convention and its application has been increasing and now comes from a wider range of sectors – women's groups, human rights organisations, lawyers, government and other national institutions such as the human rights commissions, funding agencies, UN agencies etc. In order to respond to the need for skilling on CEDAW while being able to undertake advocacy around emerging issues, IWRAP Asia Pacific envisions its role from shifting from an organisation that coordinates and conducts capacity building in the form of training to one that develops the expertise required to respond to requests for specialised input.

The Consultation on Updating of Skills on the Application of CEDAW is the second of its kind organised by IWRAP Asia Pacific. The Consultation was useful in sharing and discussing how the implementation of the CEDAW Convention is taking place within the different local contexts. As IWRAP Asia Pacific does not work within a particular local context, the Consultation was an important opportunity to hear about different concerns, strategies and experiences that activists are facing in their countries.

While the earlier phases of IWRAP Asia Pacific's work were focused on creating a theoretical understanding of CEDAW, the focus has now shifted to its application at the domestic level. It was in this consultation that activists and academics alike were able to identify useful, practical steps around implementation of CEDAW, identify core elements and essential aspects of advocacy that need to be taken up.

The framework of the Consultation was based on several aspects – the changing global environment and its impact at the national level, the different kinds of work that everyone is engaged with and the different, emerging issues that everyone is grappling with. A new addition to the Consultation was a refresher for trainers that have been introduced on the last day of the Consultation. This was aimed at giving experienced trainers a chance to re-look at the principles of CEDAW and the overarching framework of the dynamics of treaty law so as to discuss new learning experiences and methodologies along with the different kinds of resistance faced in the process and how to respond to them.

The 20 participants discussed the following issues:

- Trends, obstacles and opportunities for promoting applications of the CEDAW Convention at the national, regional and international levels;
- Skills and knowledge needed to respond to more complex requests for technical assistance; and
- Practical applications of CEDAW in specific contexts to further the rights-based approach and provide tools to women's groups and institutions requesting assistance.

These discussions took place over several sessions – in response to papers or case studies that were presented, in small groups or plenary format – as outlined below:

Session 1 Exploring external factors that affect the domestic implementation of international human rights standards. These included economic globalisation, re-establishment of the national security state / war against terrorism, rising tide of nationalism, religious and cultural extremism and democracy in crisis.

Session 2 Approaching internal factors that affect the use and application of the CEDAW Convention at the national level. The factors identified include resistance by individuals within institutions, lack of conceptual clarity, lack of coherence and hierarchies within government, changes in international cooperation and funding priorities and decentralisation and privatisation of essential services.

Session 3 Applying CEDAW in various contexts (e.g. violence against women in Bangladesh; rural women and economic opportunities in Laos; women and political participation in India).

Session 4 Benefits and risks of working with governments on the implementation of CEDAW.

Session 5 Assessing policies that affect the realisation of women's reproductive rights.

Session 6 How to provide assistance in the preparation of reports on the domestic implementation of CEDAW.

One of the main outputs of the consultation was the identification of elements of a framework for engaging with governments in the furtherance of women's advocacy. There was also greater clarity on issues related to positioning NGO advocacy or activism, and better understanding of the skills and strategies that are needed by the pool of resource persons. A full report of this consultation is also available as one of the outputs.

On the afternoon of the 21st, a smaller group of participants took part in a "refresher" workshop for trainers. This session provided an opportunity for them to share their experiences using IRAW Asia Pacific's training manual at the national and regional level, and also sought to allow a discussion on how the agenda and content of existing CEDAW training could be further developed. Specifically, participants revisited and identified key messages of the most substantive sessions of IRAW Asia Pacific's training manual; discussed difficulties faced when explaining concepts; provided arguments and methodologies to overcome these problems; and considered ways of linking responses of participants to the main messages conveyed by each session.

STRATEGY 2 - Enhancing the Realisation of Rights

Facilitating the Fulfilment of State Obligation towards Women's Equality

IRAW Asia Pacific started the Facilitating Project in South East Asia in 1997 and South Asia in 1998. Carried out by local groups in 12 countries of this region, this project's objective is the development of a model for data gathering and monitoring the status of women within the standards set by the CEDAW Convention to facilitate the implementation of this treaty. The Facilitating Project involves the setting-up of core groups in each country to act as monitors and focal points at the national level, which take responsibility for the drafting of a research or baseline report that identifies the status of women in relation to a particular priority theme/issue². It leads to the eventual formation of issue networks as a strong base from which to launch large-scale advocacy and further monitoring. The project led to relevant and related advocacy campaigns with some success at the national level. Presently, based on the baseline reports, the core groups with IRAW Asia Pacific are moving

² The following researches have already been carried out by the core groups and advocacy has been undertaken on the issues that they have chosen. South East Asia: Indonesia (Violence against women sponsored by the State); Laos (Rural women and their livelihood); Malaysia (Women's rights in marriage and divorce); Mongolia (Implementation of women's employment rights); Philippines (Violence against women); Thailand (Trafficking in women); and Vietnam (Employment of Vietnamese women in market economy). South Asia: Bangladesh (Violence against women); India [(i) Women in armed conflict situations; (ii) Political participation of women; and (iii) Rights of women in marriage]; Nepal (Inheritance rights of women); Pakistan (Political participation of women); and Sri Lanka (Domestic violence).

towards developing regional strategies for advocacy on common priority issues as well as creating a forum for dialogue with governments on their implementation of CEDAW, especially of the CEDAW Committee's Concluding Comments.

The main components and follow-up activities to the facilitating project have been undertaken by the following organisations in partnership with IRAW Asia Pacific. Partners in the 12 countries covered in the facilitating project include:

South East Asia: **Indonesia:** Indonesia Women's Association for Justice (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan: LBH-APIK); **Laos:** Lao Women's Union; **Malaysia:** Women's Aid Organisation, Women's Centre for Change, Law Faculty, University of Malaya and Faculty of Law; University Kebangsaan Malaysia; **Mongolia:** National Network CEDAW Watch Network Center, Mongolian Women Lawyers Association and Women's Information and Research Center; **Philippines:** Women's Legal Bureau; **Thailand:** Gender and Development Working Group; **Vietnam:** Centre for Family and Women's Studies.

South Asia: **Bangladesh:** Naripokkho, ASK and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad; **India:** North East Network, Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives (AALI); Partners for Law and Development; National Institute for Advanced Studies, Gender Unit, and National Alliance of Women's Organisations-India (NAWO India); **Nepal:** Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD); **Pakistan:** AURAT Foundation; **Sri Lanka:** Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR) and Women and Media Collective.

How do we add value? Our assistance through the Facilitating Project has strengthened national level advocacy as we have provided a sharper understanding on how to develop strategies for the promotion of women's rights and the implementation of the CEDAW Convention. In the earlier stages of the project, IRAW Asia Pacific and its partners developed a monitoring methodology and framework for assessing CEDAW implementation can be used by women's groups for monitoring any context of discrimination. Partners in the region have acquired the capability to disseminate an understanding of these principles and framework to other groups. Our project has led to a network of groups within Asia working with a consistent understanding of CEDAW principles. Our project has also led to an increased capability for local groups to conduct research and an enhanced analysis of a problem. The strengthening of national advocacy, the increased appreciation for CEDAW and international human rights norms, and the enhanced capacity for analysis made the core group's confident to move on to regional and international advocacy.

Moving Forward. In view of the gains made by the project, IRAW Asia Pacific is concerned with moving towards consolidating the gains of the project and taking the existing work to a different level. We seek to strengthen advocacy through regional dissemination of the processes and findings of the baseline researches; and through concerted regional advocacy work on common priority themes or issues. We believe that it is crucial to expand the usefulness of the monitoring framework to a wider range of actors, especially other women NGOs and governments.

Towards this end, IWRAW Asia Pacific held a second regional thematic meeting from 9-12 December 2004, on "Women's Right to Participate in Political and Public Life", in Jakarta, Indonesia, hosted by Indonesia's Women Association for Justice (LBH APIK). The consultation set out to:

- Assess the status of women's situation in participation in political and public life;
- Identify obstacles to women's rights to participate in political and public life;
- Analyse how states have interpreted their obligation under CEDAW (Articles 7, 8 and other related articles), including the Concluding Comments and General Recommendations (23 and 25);
- Identify and share best practices, successful experiences and lessons learned in addressing women's rights in political and public life;
- Acquire knowledge on ways the CEDAW Convention and other human rights treaties and mechanisms may be used to ensure women's equality in participating in political and public life;
- Analyse and evaluate current strategies used to address women's participation and to craft comprehensive strategies for advocacy;
- Develop more responsive ways of monitoring state obligation in this area; and
- Link activists interested in exploring new strategies to promote women's participation.

The following sessions were planned and carried out:

- Session 1 Women's right to participate in political and public life (scope, elements and state obligation);
- Session 2 Political participation and representation (country presentations – India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Mongolia)
- Session 3 Participation in political and public life (women as political candidates; women in public administration; and women in mixed civil society organisations)
- Session 4 Factors that assist or impede women's right to participate in political and public life
- Session 5 Temporary special measures
- Session 6 Proposing ways to monitor state obligation
- Session 7 Crafting strategies (key principles/elements of an overall strategy on women's political and public life; developing recommendations and strategies; selecting strategies to adopt)

In small working groups, participants discussed several topics as elaborated below:

- **Best practices in monitoring state obligation on women's participation in political and public life:** The participants cited access to data as an important prerequisite that would enable them to monitor the state's implementation of their obligations under CEDAW. It was further cited that the state's CEDAW report, as well as the CEDAW Committee's Concluding Comments are equally important as a starting point to review state action. Finally, concerns were raised on the capability of women's groups to have consistent monitoring.

- **Key principles in negotiating for women’s participation in political and public life:** These included the need to expand opportunities for democratisation; ensuring that women do not merely seek to get into existing power structures but rather at transforming politics; that women candidates attached to NGOs also do not compromise their organisational values and ideals; and to practice politics that is clean and free from corruption. When asked to further identify areas that needed more analysing and critiquing, the participants talked about how across cultural and political systems impeded or facilitated women’s participation; the women’s movement and their vision for alternative societies; as well as the impact of globalisation, peace movements and anti-militarisation actions had on women’s participation in political and public life.
- **Recommendations and strategies for regional and international levels:** Participants expressed a need for training on how to advocate on the issue of women’s political participation, e.g. to lobby specific regional coalitions like APEC. They also requested technical support from IRAW Asia Pacific on issues relating to CEDAW and women’s participation in political and public life. Further, they identified strategies such as running a public campaign to raise public awareness at the same time lobby relevant international and regional fora and platforms.
- **Recommendations and strategies for the national level:** There is a need to groom women as potential candidates for local government. For this, relevant training or capacity building is essential, but strategies would have to be customised according to each context. Participants in this group also identified mainstreaming strategies that include gender, human rights, women’s rights and CEDAW as part of a government’s administrative curriculum and in-service training, as well as implementing a 30 per cent quota for women in the legislature, executive and judiciary. Other strategies discussed included facilitating the development of women’s caucuses within political parties or across parties to give clarity to women’s concerns and demands; reforms to the constitution and election laws as well as reforming electoral systems. Moreover, it was proposed to have a consultation on the different electoral systems and their impact on women as voters and candidates. Furthermore, it was suggested to survey political parties on their knowledge of the CEDAW Convention and their efforts towards fulfilling their obligations in relation to women’s participation in political and public life.
- In the light of all these discussions, participants made a selection and agreed to follow-up and implement strategies that they deemed relevant to their work and environment. On its part, IRAW Asia Pacific would continue to provide support, links and updates in terms of newly developing issues and success stories, to this network of groups.
- Thirty participants from Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Republic of Korea and Mongolia attended this meeting while the resource persons were Heisoo Shin, CEDAW Committee Member; Nursyahbani Katjasungkana (Indonesia), and Shantha Mohan (India). Rea Chiongson and

Rozana Isa were IWRAP Asia Pacific's representatives, and Rea also presented a paper on Temporary Special Measures. A report of the consultation is forthcoming in 2005.

International Advocacy Project

IWRAP Asia Pacific's work in facilitating a process by which women actively claim their rights is not limited to creating spaces for action and dialogue at the national level. As it is in the international level that the most significant advances to the development of human rights theory have been made, IWRAP Asia Pacific ensures their presence and participation. In this connection, IWRAP Asia Pacific is now fully engaging with the various international treaties and mechanisms in its advocacy through various approaches such as:

- From Global to Local. The project brings women from countries whose governments are scheduled to report into the CEDAW sessions in January and June in New York³. IWRAP Asia Pacific intends to expand Global to Local to facilitating women's participation in the sessions of the Committee of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) and the Human Rights Committee (HRC). Since 1997 more than 100 organisations from around 80 countries have already participated in the project.
- Seeking Involvement in Standard Setting: IWRAP Asia Pacific facilitates the presence of women's activists and coordinates a common agenda in preparatory processes relating to the drafting of General recommendations/comments⁴ to CEDAW and the ICESCR⁵. IWRAP Asia Pacific is also leading the campaign for an Optional Protocol to ICESCR.⁶
- Campaigns: Global Campaign on the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. IWRAP Asia Pacific launched a global campaign for its ratification and use called "Our Rights are not Optional!" to respond to the need to develop capacity of women's groups to effectively use and access the mechanism and/or to craft strategies for countries to ratify the OP-CEDAW⁷.

³ Activities include assisting participants in preparation for the sessions, e.g. guidance on alternative information gathering and analysis on the situation of women in their country; facilitating the process of preparing shadow report; an orientation/training in New York CEDAW and the CEDAW Committee; de-briefing sessions, and planning follow up activities.

⁴ General comments/recommendations are authoritative interpretations of a human rights treaty. It allows the treaty to address emerging issues, to elaborate on existing provisions and/or to provide guidelines on obligations of the State. For 2004-2005, we intend to influence the drafting of general comments/ recommendations, specifically on Art. 5 (culture); General Comment on Art. 3 (women's enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights); General Comment on Art 15(right to participate in cultural life).

⁵ An Optional Protocol to ICESCR will allow individuals and groups to bring complaints to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It will also provide an inquiry procedure in cases of grave or systematic violations.

⁶ IWRAP Asia Pacific's lobbying team members are Caroline Lambert- Womens Rights Project (Australia); Barbara Limanowska (Poland); Tulika Srivastava-AALI (India), Sabin Shresta- FWLD (Nepal) and Marlene Libardoni -Agende (Brazil). IWRAP Asia Pacific's partners in the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR Coalition include the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), FIAN, World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT); Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE); the Inter-American Platform on Human Rights and Development; and the Social Rights Advocacy Centre (Canada).

⁷ The campaign has already produced a tool kit on the OP-CEDAW and a website as well as convened international, regional and national consultations. For 2004-2005, it scheduled the following activities: an OP-CEDAW training manual;

How do we add value? This project is contributing to the dynamism at the international level by linking local-level advocacy with the international official process for monitoring fulfilment of women's human rights through the implementation of the CEDAW Convention and other international human rights treaties. The input by women's groups in providing information that would otherwise remain inaccessible at the UN and international level enhances the effectiveness of their review of government reports. Simultaneously, women NGOs participation in at the UN level makes the treaties, procedures and mechanisms more "real" at the local level.

The International Advocacy Project also provides IRAW Asia Pacific with opportunities to develop new knowledge on the evolving nature of international human rights standards as well as new skills and ways for advocacy. This in turn is integrated into our technical assistance and capacity building work and thus benefits local activism and capacity-building.

Moving forward. IRAW Asia Pacific is now expanding its areas of influence at the international sphere. This is due to the fact that to advance women's human rights, an approach that recognizes the interdependence of rights and the inter-relatedness of human rights mechanism is required. Furthermore, international recognition of IRAW Asia Pacific's expertise as well as an enabler/facilitator and coordinator has opened many venues for influence and interventions.

Building on efforts of previous years to shape the evolution of international human rights standards, IRAW Asia Pacific conducted various advocacy initiatives as elaborated below. These took place mainly in relation to standard-setting activities related to CEDAW, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Commission on Human Rights, selected UN Special Rapporteurs, and other treaty bodies. The succeeding activities below will indicate on what IRAW has achieved in 2004.

From Global to Local

"From Global to Local". 30th CEDAW Session

Venue: New York, USA

Organiser: IRAW Asia Pacific with the support of UNIFEM New York

Participants: Twenty-two (22) individuals from women's NGOs in Belarus, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal and Nigeria

"From Global to Local". 31st CEDAW Session

technical assistance in national-level activities; development of a regional framework to link national campaign coordinators; regional consultations; capacity building on using CEDAW in legal initiatives; among others. In addition, IRAW Asia Pacific has organised activities in collaboration with Masimayane (South Africa); CIMA (Latin-America); Bangladesh Women Lawyers' Association (Bangladesh); FWLD (Nepal) and is currently exploring joint activities with ASTRA (Eastern Europe). The Steering Committee members are: Alda Facio (Costa Rica), Tulika Srivastava (India), Barbara Limanowska (Poland); Donna Sullivan (USA); Eleanor Conda (Philippines) and Leslie Ann Foster (South Africa).

Venue: New York, USA

Organiser: IRAW Asia Pacific with the support of UNIFEM New York and UNFPA

Participants: Twelve (12) individuals from women's NGOs in Angola, Argentina, Bangladesh, Latvia and Ukraine

For the eighth consecutive year, IRAW Asia Pacific ran its popular and successful From Global to Local programme, bringing women activists from countries reporting to the CEDAW Committee into the review process. As with previous practice, participants received assistance in various ways, ranging from guidance on writing of shadow or alternative reports, and distributing these to members of the Committee, to facilitating their presence at the actual CEDAW sessions and providing training and mentoring support during this time. In facilitating their advocacy at the international level, this programme enabled participants to contribute to the setting of human rights norms and standards. At the same time, they were able to monitor and challenge their governments to live-up to their obligations under this treaty, which in turn enhances the application of international human rights norms in their home countries.

The specific objectives of the programme were as follows:

- To promote the compilation, analysis and dissemination of alternative information on the status of women in countries reporting to the CEDAW Committee. This will build the capacity of participating groups to approach women's issues according to international human rights standards that should be fulfilled and claimed at the national level;
- To familiarise women activists with the mechanisms set-up by the UN for monitoring the implementation of the CEDAW Convention, in particular, the dynamics of the reporting and review process, and the role NGOs can play from within;
- To enable women activists to observe and monitor the performance of their State party during the review of its country report by the CEDAW Committee, and to interact with the Committee members to share pertinent issues related to the position of women in their respective countries. Through this NGOs will be able to contribute added perspectives to the Concluding Comments that are produced by the Committee; and
- To assist women activists with plans to monitor their government's follow-up to the session, in particular, their compliance with the Committee's Concluding Comments.

Covering the 30th CEDAW Session (12-30th January) and the 31st Session (30th June to 19th July), the programme in 2004 had a total of 17 women's rights activists in attendance – seven for the 30th Session and ten for the 31st Session. Those at the 30th Session came from Belarus, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, and Nepal, while participants of the 31st Session came from Argentina, Angola, Bangladesh, Dominican Republic and Latvia.

The January (30th Session) programme involved facilitating the presence and involvement of participants from the above-mentioned countries. Most of them had already been trained in the previous year's programme – together with countries

reporting at the 29th Session – and thus were equipped to take on lobbying activities at the session on their own.

A fresh training and mentoring programme, however, was required for those attending the 31st Session. Through this the participants became more familiar with the normative content of CEDAW, the political aspects of working with the CEDAW Committee, and effective advocacy approaches at the UN level. They received assistance in crafting five-minute presentations, which they subsequently read out at the Informal Meeting with the CEDAW Committee that had been scheduled for them to highlight their most important issues. They also benefited from the mentoring programme that took place in the first week of the session, as this enabled them to have first-hand experience observing the CEDAW process and learning the dos and don'ts about advocacy and lobbying strategies. The learning process was reinforced through debriefing sessions at the end of each day where participants were able to share their experiences observing the reporting process and collectively analyse problems as well as strategise for follow-up action.

The programme came to a close with a one-day evaluation and planning exercise. In their feedback, participants stated that on the whole the programme was very useful and supported it continuing to take place on an annual basis. They felt that they had benefited in several ways including:

- A clearer understanding of the principles and concepts of the CEDAW Convention;
- A more sophisticated and useful understanding of how the CEDAW Committee and review process worked;
- New knowledge on the different ways in which the CEDAW Convention could be applied to advance the human rights of women at the local level;
- Better insight into the CEDAW Committee members, including their interests, expertise and politics;
- New ways of and limits to working with governments;
- Identifying critical issues for inclusion in shadow/alternative reports so that priorities are clear and information accessible to the Committee members;
- Learning about issues, strategies and best practices in other countries; and
- Having suggestions and insights as well as an initial list for follow-up activities at the national level on CEDAW implementation.

It is also worth noting the results of the June 2004 assessment of UNIFEM of the whole Global to Local Programme since its inception in 1997.⁸ The assessment, which rates the program very highly, speaks for itself. But just to highlight some key findings, UNIFEM's assessment said that the project showed great impact that exceeded expectations in many aspects. The formalization of interaction between the Committee and NGOs over the years has created a more legitimate space for NGOs to play a role in the monitoring of State obligations. CEDAW Committee members have been able to ask precise questions to governments and provide sharper Concluding Comments as a result of having greater access to alternative country information and presence of NGOs at the Committee. The project in some cases has

⁸UNIFEM, An Assessment of From Global to Local: A Convention Monitoring and Implementation Project, June 2004.

contributed to increased Government transparency and Government-NGO interaction. Consequently, some good practices are emerging in terms of systematic follow-up to the Concluding Comments at the local level involving Global to Local project participants. CEDAW Committee Members and NGO participants in the Global to Local program alike have acknowledged the value of the program.

As the Secretariat of this programme, IWRAP Asia Pacific provided logistical support to all participants, on top of technical assistance already mentioned. These included helping them with their visas, travel arrangements, application for UN passes, hotel arrangements and organising for translation services. It also facilitated the presence of others at the CEDAW Session, by giving information on how to participate or by obtaining UN passes for them, as well as by forwarding shadow and alternative reports to the CEDAW Committee members on their behalf.

In running the programme, the organisation was supported by a core team of resource persons: Alda Facio (Concertacion Interamericana de Mujeres Activistas, Costa Rica); Ali Miller (Gender, Health and Human Rights, School of Public Health, Columbia University); and Lee Waldorf (UNIFEM New York). Debra Liebowitz (Drew University) also contributed in the planning and running of the training and orientation programme, and organised a team of documenters for this activity. Additional logistical assistance including the identification of translators was provided by UNIFEM New York.

Advocacy around activities of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

In 2004, IWRAP Asia Pacific's advocacy around activities of the OHCHR continued to revolve around the following meetings (the last three of which are interrelated and took place around the same time):

- The 60th Session of the Commission on Human Rights, participation in the Annual Treaty Bodies Chairs;
- The Third Inter-Committee Meeting of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies;
- The Sixteenth Annual Meeting of Treaty Bodies Chairpersons; and
- The Eleventh Annual Meeting of Special Rapporteurs, Representatives, Independent Experts and Chairperson of Working Groups of the Commission on Human Rights

Participation in these meetings was critical, especially in light of the call of the Secretary-General for reform of the UN human rights mechanisms, including the treaty and the special procedures systems. The organisation's presence and interventions were mainly to ensure that in the process of reform and strengthening of these systems, the UN human rights treaty bodies would take into utmost consideration the experiences of promoting and implementing women's human rights, especially the challenges faced at the national and domestic level.

March 29 to April 9 | 60th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights

Venue: Geneva, Switzerland

Organiser: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

At the 60th Session of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), IWRAP Asia Pacific participated and provided input in processes that relate to various economic, social and cultural rights issues – housing, health and the renewal of the mandate of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (OP-ICESCR) – as well as in relation to the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women. Shanthi Dairiam and Rea Chiongson who represented the organisation, attended the discussions on Item 10 (economic, social and cultural rights)⁹ and Item 12 (integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective)¹⁰, and made two interventions.

The first was titled “Statement by IWRAP on the Question of an Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on the Special Rapporteurs on Health and Housing.” It listed the advances made during the first Open-Ended Working Group on the OP-ICESCR. It also reiterated the value of an OP-ICESCR and urged the CHR to renew the mandate of the Open-Ended Working Group, and to consider a mandate that would enable the Working Group to consider the elements of an OP-ICESCR, explore its modalities and elaborate a text. Furthermore, the statement welcomed the direction that the Special Rapporteur on Health and Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing have made in ensuring that women’s human rights are central to their work. In this regard, it urged the CHR to support both their mandates.

The second intervention entitled, “Statement by IWRAP on CEDAW and Violence against Women,” urged that greater attention be paid to the work of the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (the CEDAW Committee). This, together with the findings of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, can produce the required analysis, monitoring and accountability on issues related to violence against women.

Shanthi and Rea were also resource persons in a number of side events that took place. At the OP-ICESCR side event, Shanthi discussed national-level advocacy that is necessary for the adoption of such a treaty, drawing from lessons around advocacy for the adoption of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. In a panel on the “Interlinkages between Violence Against Women and Women’s Right to Adequate Housing”, organised by IWRAP Asia Pacific, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, Women’s Aid Organisation, Women’s League of Burma and the OHCHR, Rea discussed the findings and recommendations of an Asian-level consultation on the interlinkages between women’s right to adequate housing and violence against women that took place the previous year in India. Both the Special

⁹See Annex 2 for the full text of IWRAP Asia Pacific Statement on Item 10.

¹⁰See Annex 3 for the full text of IWRAP Asia Pacific Statement on Item 12.

Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Adequate Housing participated in the panel as well. In another side event on strengthening the resolution on women's rights to housing, land, property and inheritance, Rea again discussed the findings and recommendations of the consultation mentioned above, to provide some ideas for future advocacy on the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing.

In addition to the abovementioned, Shanthy and Rea had discussions with the Special Rapporteurs on Health, Violence Against Women and Adequate Housing to discuss possibilities for further collaboration. They also worked with other members of the NGO Coalition for an OP-ICESCR to monitor discussions on the resolution to extend the mandate of the Open-Ended Working Group on the OP-ICESCR, and engaged in extensive lobbying of States parties.

IWRAW Asia Pacific's intervention in these sessions helps in the democratisation of the UN process since NGO input is being considered in the UN processes. Moreover, IWRAW Asia Pacific being an international NGO based in the South brings forth women's voices from the South and makes this voices heard in this forum.

June 21-22 | 3rd Inter-Committee Meeting of the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies (ICM)

Venue: Geneva, Switzerland
Organiser: OHCHR

The Inter-Committee Meetings of the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies seek to provide an opportunity for representatives of the seven UN human rights treaty bodies to come together and jointly discuss and strategise on common crosscutting issues. One of the main reasons why IWRAW Asia Pacific participates in and monitors this process is because the issues that are addressed here have important implications for NGOs working with treaty bodies.

For 2004, the agenda of the meeting included the following issues:

- Actions implemented to ensure better harmonisation and consistency in treaty body procedures;
- New developments in relation to monitoring of respective treaties; and
- Streamlining reporting requirements. This included talking about the proposed Draft Guidelines for an Expanded Core Document and Treaty-Specific Targeted Reports that was presented for consideration of the treaty bodies as an option to harmonise and expedite reporting processes.

Rea Chiongson monitored the proceedings of the meeting as well as made a verbal intervention on behalf of the organisation during the dialogue between representatives of the treaty bodies and NGOs.¹¹ The statement critiqued the proposed draft guidelines and provided recommendations to strengthen the

¹¹ The statement was read during the ICM but was addressed to participants of the ICM as well as participants of the Annual Meeting of the Treaty Bodies Chairpersons, who were already present.

implementation of state obligation under human rights conventions. Some of the key points raised were as follows:¹²

- Although the Expanded Core Document has the potential to be useful by reaffirming that human rights are interdependent and indivisible, and that measures to promote and protect human rights in one treaty enhances the promotion and protection of human rights in another, a number of concerns should still be noted.
- In efforts towards coordination, harmonisation and collaboration, there must be a conscious effort to ensure that the most advanced jurisprudence and recommendations are adopted, rather than the least common denominator.
- Clarity concerning 'congruent rights' is required in ways that ensure non-marginalisation of women's rights, and the best standard of equality being applied.
- Monitoring of the Expanded Core Document is a critical part of the process and thus procedures for this must be clearly identified bearing in mind the need for these to be inclusive and participatory.
- Technical assistance and capacity building are important to ensure better reporting. It is critical to ensure that technical assistance services are comprehensive and include not only providing expertise on how to write a report but also explaining the value of reporting and the political aspects of non-reporting.
- The roles that NGOs play in supporting the implementation of treaties and their recommendations must be recognised and sustained.
- The establishment of stronger mechanisms are required to enhance the treaty bodies system. The creation of an OP-ICESCR should therefore be supported by all.

The presence of IWRAP Asia Pacific in this meeting brings the NGO voices from the South into the UN process. Our interventions in these meetings bring forth the Southern agenda into the UN process.

June 23-25 | Sixteenth Annual Meeting of Chairpersons of the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies

Venue: Geneva, Switzerland

Organiser: OHCHR

At this year's meeting, several dialogues took place between the chairpersons of the treaty bodies and the following: specialised agencies of the UN; the Commission on Human Rights; special rapporteurs and representatives; States parties; and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights. No dialogue was scheduled with NGOs as this had already taken place earlier, with the chairpersons present, during the Inter-Committee Meeting.

¹² The full statement is available at <<http://www.iwraw-ap.org/news/icm.htm>>.

A common theme throughout the dialogues was ways to enhance working together to achieve the promotion and protection of human rights. During the dialogue with States parties, the main issue was the draft guidelines for States Parties to human rights treaties to have a single reporting system. Several States welcomed this and urged for its continuous development. Others however expressed doubts about its feasibility to ease the burden of reporting.

It is also important to note that during this meeting, the chairpersons requested the OHCHR to prepare a background report on the practices of treaty bodies in relation to NGO participation in their work. The background paper will be ready for the 2005 meeting of the treaty body chairpersons.

June 21-25 | Eleventh Meeting of Special Rapporteurs, Representatives, Independent Experts and Chairpersons of Working Groups

Venue: Geneva, Switzerland

Organiser: OHCHR

IWRAW Asia Pacific also made an intervention at the Eleventh Meeting of Special Rapporteurs, Representatives, Independent Experts and Chairperson of Working Groups.¹³ This focused on the organisation's work with the Special Rapporteurs on housing, health and human rights defenders. It also urged the meeting to: (a) look into its collective role in furthering standard-setting; (b) engage in more systematic collaboration with treaty bodies; and (c) participate actively as experts in the Working Group on the OP-ICESCR. Rea Chiongson represented IWRAW Asia Pacific at this meeting.

Advocacy Around Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Since 2003, IWRAW Asia Pacific has been actively seeking to influence processes that relate to the progressive interpretation of economic, social and cultural rights. Such efforts continued in 2004, primarily around advocacy initiatives for an optional protocol to the ICESCR. To consolidate efforts in lobbying for this optional protocol, IWRAW Asia Pacific together with a group of NGOs formed the NGO Coalition for an OP-ICESCR. It is the only women's human rights organisation in the Steering Committee of the coalition as well as the only organisation based in the South. This is very significant since it forms part of IWRAW Asia Pacific's mission to include women in standard-setting processes at international levels thus becoming a voice of women from the South.

¹³ A copy of this statement is available at: <http://www.iwraw-ap.org/news/sp_raps.htm>.

February 23-March 5 | Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (OP-ICESCR)

Venue: Geneva, Switzerland
Organiser: OHCHR

IWRAW Asia Pacific adopted a two-pronged strategy for this meeting. At one level, it put together a team of experts from the Asia Pacific region to carry out sustained lobbying aimed at ensuring that discussions of the Open-Ended Working Group took into account the accomplishments of the OP-CEDAW process. At another, this team was also part of the NGO Coalition for an OP-ICESCR, and aside from participating in the coalition's activities it provided leadership together with other members of the Steering Committee.¹⁴

In the first week of the Open-Ended Working Group, key issues such as the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights, the benefits of an OP-ICESCR, and the levels of state obligation under the ICESCR were discussed. Independent experts, government delegations and NGOs were able to address these issues and provide recommendations. In the second week, more focus was given to the adoption of the report of the Open-Ended Working Group and consensus building around the recommendations and conclusions made by the Chairperson. Accordingly, NGO action during this week focused on lobbying delegations and national level advocacy. In this regard, the IWRAW Asia Pacific team and the Coordinator of the NGO Coalition had regular meetings with the Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group as well as with friendly governments.

Other activities undertaken by the NGO Coalition during the meeting, and in preparation for it, included:

- The development of a comprehensive package entitled, "Take Action NOW! Advocacy Kit",¹⁵ which provided background information on the ICESCR; the OP-ICESCR; key issues relating to the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights; arguments for an OP-ICESCR, and points refuting arguments for an OP-ICESCR. It also included advocacy and media activities to increase the capacity of national-level NGOs in their work with governments prior to the meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group.
- Regular teleconferences of the Steering Committee in the lead up to the meeting to develop lobbying strategies, identify partners in key countries and work to ensure regional representation among NGOs present at the Geneva meeting.
- An orientation session on the Sunday prior to the start of the Open-Ended Working Group, where NGOs came together to fine-tune strategies for the meeting;

¹⁴ At that time, the Steering Committee was composed of: IWRAW Asia Pacific, COHRE, ICJ, OMCT, FIAN and the Social Rights Centre-Canada. Presently, the Steering Committee is composed of IWRAW Asia Pacific, COHRE, ICJ, FIAN and Social Rights Centre-Canada with the Inter-American Platform joining in early 2005.

¹⁵ A copy of this kit is available at: < http://www.iwraw-ap.org/documents/OP_to_ICESCR_Advocacy_Kit.pdf>.

- Daily NGO debriefings during the sessions of the Open-Ended Working Group (two weeks); and
 - Production of a daily update for partner organisations.
- The NGO Coalition made important contributions at this meeting and it was the first time governments explicitly acknowledged that there are many NGOs, both in the North and in the South interested in promoting an OP-ICESCR.

IWRAW Asia Pacific's lobbying team for the OP-ICESCR comprised Tulika Srivastava (India), Caroline Lambert (Australia), Sabin Shresta (Nepal), Marlene Libardoni (Brazil) and Maria Herminia Graterol (IWRAW Asia Pacific).

The Global Campaign on the Optional Protocol to CEDAW

Part of IWRAW Asia Pacific's thrust of incorporating the application of human rights treaties in the national legal framework and the strengthening of domestic implementation of the CEDAW Convention through the use of its Optional Protocol, we have embarked on the following activities in 2004:

December 18-19 | Third Advisory Group Meeting of the Global Campaign for the Ratification and Use of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW

Venue: Kathmandu, Nepal

Organiser: IWRAW Asia Pacific with logistical support by Forum for Women, Law and Development

IWRAW Asia Pacific convened the third Advisory Group¹⁶ meeting of its Global Campaign for the Ratification and Use of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW primarily to assess the successes and gaps of the campaign, and to identify future directions. Members of the group reviewed both the activities that they and IWRAW Asia Pacific had undertaken in relation to the OP-CEDAW. Updating of developments in relation to the OP-CEDAW was also done.

The Advisory Group decided to hold a global consultation on the OP-CEDAW from 27-30 August 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with participants coming from five regions: Latin America, Asia, Europe, Africa and the Middle East. In planning the framework and agenda for this consultation, it came up with the following objectives:

- Provide information and knowledge on CEDAW and the OP-CEDAW, and their uses;
- Identify strategies for ratification;
- Identify strategies for access to justice, especially a discussion of:
 - Comparable complaints procedures, international and regional;
 - Similar inquiry procedures;
 - Forum shopping, i.e. understanding of the strategic advantages of the

¹⁶ This was previously known as the Steering Committee.

- various forums where one can file one's case; and
- Create opportunities for regional processes to ratify and use of the OP-CEDAW.

It was also envisaged that the OP-CEDAW toolkit, a publication to enhance understanding and utilisation of this optional protocol, would be launched at this meeting.

The Advisory Group also agreed on its responsibilities in relation to the campaign, its relationship with and expectations of IWRAW Asia Pacific, and the communication links that will be in place. This body will next meet on 31 August 2005.

The third Advisory Group meeting was attended by Alda Facio (Costa Rica), Amal Abd El Hadi Abou Halika (Egypt), Barbara Limanoska (Poland), Donna Sullivan (USA), Lesley Ann Foster (South Africa), Marlene Libardoni (Brazil), Tulika Srivastava (India) and Shanthy Dairiam (IWRAW Asia Pacific).¹⁷ Kafui Adjamagbo Johnson (Togo), Sapana Pradhan Malla (Nepal) and Sabin Shrestha (Nepal) also attended as observers.

December 17 | Nepal National Consultation on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (OP-CEDAW)

Venue: Kathmandu, Nepal

Organiser: Network for the Ratification of the OP-CEDAW, Nepal.

The main objective of the consultation was to urge the government of Nepal to ratify the OP-CEDAW. Specifically, it sought to:

- Provide a forum for both the duty bearers and claim holders to share, reflect and have a deeper understanding on the OP-CEDAW;
- Reiterate the urgency of ratifying the OP-CEDAW without any declarations, especially in the times of on-going conflict and its impact on women;
- Advocate for gender justice and peace, and in this regard, to sensitise decision makers to the concerns and opportunities related to the OP-CEDAW for establishing gender-sensitive jurisprudence;
- Hear testimonies from the perspective of affected women to highlight the urgent need of transforming discriminatory social and legal policies and evolving a notion of rights rooted in their realities; and
- Strengthen national and local networking among individuals and groups to work for more effective action and advocacy at various levels.

The need for immediate ratification of the OP-CEDAW to better protect women's rights especially in light of the on-going insurgency was well reflected through the presentations and questions raised during the open forum discussions. Government representatives reiterated their commitment to protect, promote and fulfill women's

¹⁷ Previous members, Caroline Lambert (Australia) and Ana Elena (Costa Rica), stepped down and were replaced by Amal Abd El Hadi Abou Halika (Egypt) and Marlene Libardoni (Brazil).

rights. They attributed the delay in the Nepal government ratifying the OP-CEDAW to the absence of a Parliament that was required to approve this.

Approximately 120 people came to this meeting, including Members of Parliament, and representatives of government agencies, the National Human Rights Commission, the judiciary, UN agencies, NGOs, INGOS, women's police cells, the Royal Nepal Army, political parties, and the media. Shanthi Dairiam and Alda Facio, members of the Advisory Group of the Global Campaign for the Ratification and Use of the OP-CEDAW, served as resource persons and IRAW Asia Pacific also provided additional technical assistance. Other members of the Advisory Group attended this meeting as well. Their perspectives and input, in particular on the experiences they shared on the ratification of the OP-CEDAW by other States parties, were welcomed.

Initiatives Around Development of General Recommendations

IRAW Asia Pacific continued to contribute towards initiatives around the development of General Recommendations in 2004. This year, however, its energies concentrated primarily on the CEDAW Committee's efforts, namely in producing the new General Recommendation 26 on state obligation. It is important also to note that the year saw the adoption of the CEDAW Committee's General Recommendation 25 on Temporary Special Measures, which IRAW Asia Pacific has been lobbying for as well as made substantive interventions towards its formulation in previous years.

July 21 | Day of General Discussion on CEDAW General Recommendation on Article 2

Venue: New York, USA

Organiser: Division for the Advancement of Women

An IRAW Asia Pacific team comprising Rita Raj (Director, IRAW Asia Pacific), Madhu Mehra (Partners for Law in Development, India) and Deepika Udagama (Sri Lanka) made three presentations to the CEDAW Committee at this event as its contribution towards the CEDAW Committee's proposed General Recommendation 26. IRAW Asia Pacific's paper discussed the various components of state obligation, while Deepika's and Madhu's respectively highlighted state obligation in special circumstances namely, in times of armed conflict, and during internal conflict and sectarian violence.

Specifically, IRAW Asia Pacific's first paper emphasised that the obligations under the CEDAW Convention are legally binding and that States parties are obligated to implement its provisions according to its spirit. It further stated that the obligations under the convention do not recognise internal law as an excuse for non-compliance. It also highlighted that all components of the state are responsible for implementation and that this applies even in cases of decentralisation and federalism. The paper pointed out as well, the need for conceptual clarity in framing the elements of State obligation, especially in relation to the concepts of substantive equality and non-discrimination. In addition, specific components of State obligation such as the obligation of means and results; positive and negative obligations; the

need for temporary special measures; the importance of an intersectional approach; the immediacy of the obligations under the convention; the obligations to respect, protect and fulfill; and the obligation to eliminate negative customs and practices, were focused upon.¹⁸

The presentation by Madhu Mehra entitled, "A Case for Inclusion and Elaboration of State Obligations in the Contexts of Internal Conflict and Sectarian Violence" urged the CEDAW Committee to specifically address and elaborate state obligation to protect women from gender-based violence, its consequences and impact in the context of mass or large-scale violence perpetrated between communities or groups of people on the grounds of religion, ethnicity, race, gender and any other status. The first part of the paper discussed why gender-based violence and gender-based impact of internal conflict is a subject matter for CEDAW. It proceeded to enumerate grounds for state obligation and accountability. The second part of the paper outlined areas of state obligation by elaborating on the scope applicable to the topic and by using the massacre in Gujarat as a case study.¹⁹

The paper by Deepika Udagama on "State Obligations during Periods of Armed Conflict" began by stating that the protection of human rights and humanitarian law are always brought into sharper focus during situations of armed conflict as states are challenged to the extreme to demonstrate their commitment to their obligations. It presented the need to integrate state obligation during armed conflict into the proposed general recommendation. It listed forms of gender or sex based discrimination during and after periods of armed conflict and highlighted the role of impunity as a major obstacle to the promotion and protection of human rights and humanitarian law.²⁰

Networking

Networking is an indispensable part of IWRAP Asia Pacific's work on advocacy. It is not only limited to being part of conferences and roundtable discussions on CEDAW but it has extended to engagements with various human rights groups and institutions and dealt with issues related to the human rights of women like development.

This year, IWRAP Asia Pacific made significant connections with women's rights and human rights activists not only from the Asia-Pacific region but also from other parts of the globe. It has also continually touch-based not only with NGOs, but also with governments, national human rights institutions and intergovernmental organisations.

January 14-15 | "Feminist Dialogues: Building Solidarity"

Venue: Mumbai, India

¹⁸ A copy of this presentation is found at: <http://www.iwraw-ap.org/news_gr26.htm>.

¹⁹ A copy of this paper is found at: <http://www.iwraw-ap.org/news_conflict.htm>.

²⁰ This paper can be accessed at: <<http://www.iwraw-ap.org/conflict.htm>>.

Organiser: AFM, DAWN-Southeast Asia, Inform, WICEJ, NNAWG-India, Isis International Manila, and WEDO

This meeting, held just prior to the World Social Forum, provided an opportunity for leaders in the women's movement to reflect upon and discuss some key issues challenging women's movements globally. Its broad objectives were to:

- Have a political discussion about feminist organising (e.g. agendas, venues of action, constituencies, partners and alliances, strategies, theories of social change, desired outcomes, and obstacles to effective collective action);
- Build analysis and strategies that strengthen bridges between diverse issues and movements within transnational feminist organising to deepen understanding of the relationships among neo-liberalism, militarism, neo-conservatism, religious fundamentalisms and inequities based on gender, race, ethnicity, class, caste, sexual orientation and different abilities; and
- Build on and consolidate working relationships among feminist networks in the context of WSF organising and explore how these relate to other social movements and the broader global justice movements.

The themes discussed included global and local resistances in current geopolitics; international women's human rights and cultural transformations as responses to fundamentalisms; sexualities (borders, transgressions and frontiers); and reproductive rights.

One of the important outcomes of the dialogue was the learning and listening that took place during the two days. There was much diversity among participants in terms of knowledge about each other's realities, as well as opinions and understanding about basic concepts of human rights.

Shanthi Dairiam and Marina Meskhi (Georgian Young Lawyers Association) represented IRAW Asia Pacific at this meeting.

January 15 | SUHAKAM Consultation on the Right to Adequate Housing

Venue: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Organiser: Malaysian Human Rights Commission (SUHAKAM)

The objective of this consultation was to identify the components of adequate housing in the Malaysian context; to identify pressing issues in this regard including the plight of vulnerable groups; and to derive solutions to the problems identified. Rea Chiongson participated on behalf of IRAW Asia Pacific to integrate a women's rights perspective on the issue of adequate housing.

January 16-21 | The World Social Forum (WSF)

Venue: Mumbai, India

Organiser: AFM, DAWN-Southeast Asia, Inform, WICEJ, NNAWG-India, Isis International Manila, and WEDO

The WSF was initiated in Brazil in January 2001 as a challenge to the World Economic Forum and in order to put another view of the world and its possibilities. In its charter of principles the WSF declared itself to be an open space for the free exchange of ideas among those who are opposed to neo-liberal globalisation and its impact. This includes those who are not opposed to but yet are still critical of or are concerned with its impact.

It was estimated that around 130,000 persons attended the Mumbai WSF, rallying under the banner "Another World is Possible". Most of the presentations and events were about imperialist globalisation; patriarchy; feminist ideology, militarism and peace; communal-religious sectarianism and fundamentalism; casteism and racism; and oppression, exclusion and discrimination based on descent and work. The scale of the WSF, the brevity of each event and the diversity of peoples attending meant that one could not expect agreements or more concrete action plans to be developed in these events. However, the WSF was successful in serving as a forum for protest, reflection and deliberation of alternatives bringing in divergent views.

It was also a forum for making visible and giving space to the most marginalised and disadvantaged groups. The large presence of dalits, tribals, sex workers and transgendered persons was a testament to this. Many of these groups who would not have found voice within the framework of formal presentations were marching and celebrating outside speakers' venues. The Mumbai WSF was also marked by the very large presence of women as well as by the fact that a large number of feminist events were organised. Still, women played a role as speakers or presenters mainly at feminist events and not so much at the mainstream events.

The question one could ask of the WSF is what comes next. Could there be a consolidation of ideas and a programme developed as follow-up? Given the large scale of the forum and the diversity of peoples attending, this would be very difficult. At its most promising, it is about creating a mechanism for all those who themselves might wish to do those things to interact with one another, exchange information, and learn from one another and create ties, and then do what needs to be done within the ambit of their own organisations and programme.

Shanthi Dairiam and Marina Meskhi (Georgian Young Lawyers Association) again represented IWRAP Asia Pacific at this meeting, and attended several events on human rights, sexuality, racism/casteism, state accountability for crimes related to genocide and torture, Palestinian women under the Israeli occupation, fundamentalism, domestic violence, trafficking in women, violence against women in the media, and the International Criminal Court.

February 16-20 | Women's Rights Watch Project: Third Exchange Week

Venue: Savar, Bangladesh

Organiser: Humanist Committee on Human Rights (HOM), Netherlands

This was the third and final phase of a programme seeking to develop an impact assessment tool known as "HerWAI: Health rights of women assessment instrument". This tool would enable NGOs to explore linkages between women's right to health, international human rights treaties, trade and international cooperation. The meeting was organised by HOM, to enable those involved in this project – IWRAP Asia Pacific as well as NGOs from Kenya (FIDA), Nicaragua (Si Mujer), Bangladesh (Narippokho) and the Netherlands (WEMOS) – to contribute to the further elaboration of this instrument. Both the CEDAW Convention and the ICESCR were used extensively to develop its framework. HOM will continue to work on this instrument and gather feedback from partner organisations before finalising it for the People's Health Assembly in 2005.

Being in Bangladesh, IWRAP Asia Pacific took the opportunity to gather more case studies on the impact of economic and social policies on women's health. Also, the organisation had a chance to meet government officials and other NGOs, and invited them to comment on the framework of the instrument.

February 17-19 | Gender and Human Rights Expert Group Meeting

Venue: London, UK

Organiser: Commonwealth Secretariat

This meeting set out to discuss a number of key gender and human rights issues with a view to developing proposals for a new Commonwealth 10 year Plan of Action (2005-2014). Shanthi Dairiam attended the meeting and presented a paper on "CEDAW Achievements and Challenges: Discussion on Implementation of Policies and Legislation -progress, gains, constraints and key priorities."

February 26-28 | "When Frameworks Collide". Expert Group Meeting between economists and human rights advocates.

Venue: Geneva, Switzerland

Organiser: Ford Foundation, New York and hosted by the International Human Rights Council

This meeting brought together progressive experts in human rights and international economics to look at the intersections between human rights and economic development, and in particular, the barriers to and opportunities for the two groups to work more closely together.

Shared opposition to policies of contemporary economic globalisation that cause human suffering and economic and social insecurity provided a strong reason for adherents of both frameworks to appreciate each other's perspectives. It was felt that an informed understanding of the ways in which critical macroeconomic policies

conducive to human development could collaborate with rights-based protections guaranteeing human economic and social security across developed and developing countries, was useful and urgently required. The meeting pointed out too, however, that despite these affinities, activists working under one framework often were inadequately aware of the possible conceptual and practical resources that the other might offer. For instance, human rights activism attempts to monitor and remedy deprivations suffered by different groups of individuals without necessarily having a full picture of the macroeconomic issues and development policies that help generate the human rights violations that they are struggling against.

At the end of a rich discussion and debate, the participants came up with recommendations for follow-up action that included:

- Developing an understanding of the role of the state;
- Conceptualising the issues;
- Systematising ways of sharing ideas;
- Developing tools including fact sheets and briefing papers to debunk arguments;
- Working collaboratively on national budgets (e.g. CEDAW and budgets), justiciability of rights, economic implication of rights;
- Developing and distributing a joint philosophical statement from the meeting;
- Theoretically exploring human rights implications of trade and economic policies, including the entitlement theory;
- Taking on specific rights and identify state obligations (e.g. break down the right to work – state obligation to create work, and indicators for state action);
- Jointly synthesising literature on human rights implications of globalisation. In this, to bring out North-South differences;
- Exploring tactical issues and developing practical strategies (e.g. mobilising other groups such as trade unions);
- Ensuring that radical economists are present at human rights meetings/conferences.

Shanthi Dairiam attended this meeting for IRAW Asia Pacific.

March 1-12 | Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). 48th Session

Venue: New York, USA

Organiser: Division for the Advancement for Women

IRAW Asia Pacific took part in the first week of this CSW session. Shanthi Dairiam who represented the organisation, participated in various panels, including one on the Optional Protocol to CEDAW, hosted by the International Service for Human Rights and the UN Division for the Advancement of Women. The panel featured experts addressing the history, ratification, implementation and future of the OP-CEDAW. Shanthi also took part in a preparatory meeting of the Commonwealth Secretariat held to draft the Commonwealth 10-year Plan of Action (2005-2014).

March 11 | “Stop Violence Against Women”

Venue: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Organiser: Amnesty International

In conjunction with Amnesty International’s worldwide campaign against violence against women, Amnesty International Malaysia organised a press conference to launch the publication “It’s In Our Hands: Stop Violence Against Women”. There were three speakers at this event including Rea Chiongson from IRAW Asia Pacific who spoke on international protection against violence against women.

March 15 | Planning Meeting for the Regional Consultation with the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women

Venue: Petaling Jaya, Malaysia
Organiser: Asia Pacific Forum for Women, Law and Development (APWLD)

IRAW Asia Pacific was invited to brainstorm on the framework of the proposed Regional Consultation with the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women to be held later in 2004 by APWLD. The meeting specifically wanted to obtain input and ideas on how sexuality rights concerns could be incorporated into the Consultation’s programme. beng hui represented the organisation and made various recommendations in this regard.

March 30 – April 1 | SUHAKAM Workshop on the CEDAW Convention

Venue: Kuching, Sarawak and Kota Kinabalu, Sabah
Organiser: National Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)

SUHAKAM brought together government agencies, NGOs and interested individuals in Sarawak and Sabah to discuss the CEDAW Convention and explore strategies to contribute to the full enjoyment of women’s human rights. Maria Herminia Graterol represented IRAW Asia Pacific as the main speaker at these back-to-back workshops. She presented the key features of this treaty before the participants discussed national plans for the promotion of women’s rights from a government and NGO perspective. They also came up with a set of recommendations.

April 22 | Annual Expert Consultation on the Empowerment of Indian Women in Malaysia

Venue: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Organiser: ERA Consumer

Shanthi Dairiam represented IRAW Asia Pacific at this meeting and presented a paper on “Violence Against Women: An international perspective”.

April 28 | Workshop on Mainstreaming Gender Analysis

Venue: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Organiser: UNDP Malaysia

Around 25 participants from Malaysian-based NGOs, including IWRAP Asia Pacific, attended this half-day workshop, which sought to introduce the concept gender budgeting as a means to mainstream gender analysis. It also highlighted initial results of the UNDP/Government of Malaysia pilot-project “National Budgeting: Mainstreaming gender analysis” which involved four ministries – health, human resources, rural development and education.

May 24-28 | Regional Workshop on the Domestic Application of International Human Rights Law

Venue: Jakarta, Indonesia
Organiser: Indonesia Legal Aid and Human Rights Association (PBHI) and Forum-Asia

The purpose of this workshop was to examine how human rights lawyers and advocates can use principles and standards developed by treaty bodies to ensure the domestic application of human rights treaties. Rea Chionson attended on behalf of the organisation to share its experience on the domestic implementation of international law, especially through the Facilitating Project and From Global to Local. She presented two papers: “Jurisprudence Emerging from the Main Treaty Bodies and Implications for Human Rights Protection at the Local Level: CEDAW” and “Experiences of IWRAP Asia Pacific in Using International Human Rights Law”.

May 28 – June 2 | Seventh Commonwealth Women’s Affairs Ministers Meeting

Venue: Nadi, Fiji
Organiser: Commonwealth Secretariat

This event brought together Women’s Affairs Ministers and their representatives to develop the next Commonwealth 10-year Plan of Action (2005-2014). A civil society preparatory meeting first took place, however, to influence the proceedings of this ministerial meeting. Here participants identified issues of concern to their regions within the Commonwealth, and developed an advocacy document. Shanthy Dairiam, who was part of the Steering Committee to plan the civil society meeting, was elected as its representative to input into the text of the plan that was being discussed and negotiated by senior officials from all the Commonwealth countries, before endorsement by their respective Ministers. The finalised plan adopted the following chapters: gender, democracy, peace and conflict; gender, human rights and the law; gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment; and gender and HIV/AIDS. Two of IWRAP Asia Pacific’s Advisory Committee members, Ruth

Manorama and Shireen Huq also participated in the civil society meeting and in the various plenary sessions of the ministerial meeting.

June 14-17 | ICPD Ten Years On: Strategic Planning Meeting

Venue: Langkawi Island, Malaysia

Organiser: Asian Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW)

This meeting shared and strengthened key findings and recommendations of eight country studies, conducted as part of ARROW's International Conference on Population and Development monitoring project. Based on this, participants came up with a broad advocacy plan for the region in relation to women's reproductive health and rights. They identified as important the following areas for advocacy: health sector reforms; laws and policies; the role of donors and the politics of aid; and religious fundamentalism. Participants comprised national partners from Pakistan, India, Philippines, Cambodia, Indonesia and Malaysia who had participated in the project, as well as regional and international organisations including IRAW Asia Pacific. beng hui represented the organisation and was a discussant on one of the panels.

June 30 – July 3 | Asia Pacific NGO Forum on Beijing+10

Venue: Bangkok, Thailand

Organiser: Thai Women Watch

This was a preparatory meeting for Asian and Pacific women's NGOs towards the High-Level Ministerial Meeting to review regional implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) to be held in September 2004.²¹ It was meant to provide a space for participants to reflect on the achievements and challenges resulting from the implementation of the BPFA; and to develop a document and common strategy for all NGOs to take to the ministerial meeting as well as to take to the BPFA ten-year review in New York in 2005.

IRAW Asia Pacific's team focused on attending activities related to women's human rights and followed how this issue was addressed in the outcome documents of the NGO Forum. Further, it coordinated and facilitated a workshop on "How to Use the CEDAW Reporting Process? Linking Efforts for the Implementation of CEDAW and the BPFA". Heisoo Shin, CEDAW Committee member and other partners such as Ruth Manorama (India), Tashia Peterson (Malaysia), Amaarsanaa Darisuren (Mongolia) and Zaana Jurmed (Mongolia) assisted in making the workshop a success. More than 60 women participated in it. The IRAW Asia Pacific team comprised Maria Herminia Graterol and Yew Bee Yee (Deputy Executive Director), together with a

²¹ IRAW Asia Pacific also participated in this meeting. For a write-up on this, look under the sub-section "Other Advocacy Initiatives".

representative of Aurat Foundation (Pakistan) and Women and Media Collective (Sri Lanka).

August 19-20 | Meeting on “Making Human Progress: Poverty, Development and Rights”

Venue: Geneva, Switzerland

Organiser: International Council on Human Rights Policy

As a member of the Advisory Committee of this research project, Shanthi Dairiam attending the first meeting of this project which would assess the strengths and weaknesses of international anti-poverty strategies from a human rights point of view, and see where the use of human rights methods would make such programmes more effective in practice. Further, the project will focus on the assumptions behind poverty-reduction programmes that development officials and economists have been implementing, as well as the way they and development and human rights advocates apply some of their key ideas (e.g. participation, accountability, ownership, non-discrimination, etc.). It would also focus on the real experience gathered by development officials and local communities about how these programmes work on the ground. The project considered that it would be successful if it clarified, in practical terms, where human rights principles and methods can strengthen poverty programmes; and if it makes human rights methods and techniques more accessible to officials who implement such programmes. The research will take place in Thailand, Bangladesh, Zambia, Senegal, Bolivia and Moldova.

August 21-22 | National Conference on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

Venue: Petaling Jaya, Selangor

Organiser: Women’s Aid Organisation in collaboration with the National Council of Women’s Organisations

IWRAW Asia Pacific was invited to run two sessions at this meeting, which was part of the process by Malaysian women’s groups to produce the country’s first CEDAW Shadow Report. Rea Chiongson and beng hui represented the organisation and respectively spoke on the CEDAW Convention’s framework and principles as well as the role of NGOs in the reporting process. Heisoo Shin was also invited as a resource person and shared on the role of the CEDAW Committee, as well as other insights as an expert member of this body.

September 8-10 | Human Rights (Treaty) Reporting Workshop in Timor Leste

Venue: Dili, Timor Leste

Organiser: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Timor Leste, and UNIFEM, UNDP, OHCHR and UNICEF

Shanthi Dairiam was invited to this meeting to discuss, among other things, the pilot-testing experience of Timor Leste with the guidelines of the Expanded Core Document as proposed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Following this, she attended a separate NGO meeting to talk about treaty body reporting processes, focusing on IRAW Asia Pacific's experience with the CEDAW Convention.

September 22-23 | Litigation Using International Human Rights Treaties to Enforce Reproductive Rights. Expert Consultation

Venue: New York, USA
Organiser: Center for Reproductive Rights

This Consultation was looked into litigation strategies for enforcing reproductive rights in various human rights systems: international, regional and national. It sought to identify which reproductive rights should be strategically prioritised in the various human rights litigation fora and what tools and resources would be required to enable enforcement of these rights. Participants comprised various international experts on reproductive rights, human rights, women's rights, international law and litigation at the national, regional and international levels. Rea Chiongson represented IRAW Asia Pacific and made a presentation titled "Actual and/or Potential Effectiveness of Human Rights Fora for Winning Progressive Interpretations in Different Areas of Human Rights: Asia".

September 23-24 | National Consultation on Women's Legal Empowerment in Nepal

Venue: Kathmandu, Nepal
Organiser: Forum for Women, Law and Development and Asia Foundation

In conjunction with Asia Foundation's 50th anniversary, this consultation was held and saw issues of domestic violence, nationality and political participation being discussed. Shanthi Dairiam was invited as one of the resource persons and presented a paper on nationality and citizenship as issues of equality.

September 24-26 | Sexuality and Human Rights in Muslim Societies of South and Southeast Asia

Venue: Jakarta, Indonesia

Organiser: Women for Women's Human Rights-New Ways and Women's Health Foundation

Activists, NGOs and academics came together at this meeting to dialogue within a "safe" space on pivotal human rights issues related to sexual and bodily rights, sexual politics, power and gender in the region. Apart from those based in South Asia and Southeast Asia, members of Women for Women's Human Rights-New Ways' Middle East and North Africa network were invited as well. Since the meeting, a listserv has been set-up, not only to keep participants (and those invited but unable to attend) in contact but also to facilitate the exchange of information and advocacy strategies on sexual and bodily rights. IRAW Asia Pacific was represented at this meeting by beng hui who presented a paper titled "Exploring the Potential of the UN Treaty Body System in Addressing Sexual Rights in South and Southeast Asia: Some preliminary thoughts and recommendations".

October 2 | Workshop for Women Leaders on Gender Sensitisation and HIV/AIDS

Venue: Subang Jaya, Malaysia

Organiser: Federation of Family Planning Associations Malaysia (FFPAM) with the support of the Malaysian AIDS Council

To raise general awareness and consciousness about gender and HIV/AIDS issues, FFPAM organised this meeting with the support of the Malaysian AIDS Council. The workshop also sought to facilitate the participation of grassroots women leaders to improve their understanding of the implications of HIV/AIDS on women's lives, and to build a pool of community catalysts to empower women to protect their reproductive health, in particular, from HIV/AIDS. Hasnizuraini Hassan (Programme Officer) was IRAW Asia Pacific's representative at this meeting.

October 11 | Public Consultation on Violence Against Women

Venue: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Organiser: ERA Consumer

The objective of this public meeting was to enable members of civil society to discuss the implications of violence against women in Malaysia, with the goal of making policy recommendations to improve laws specifically in relation to sexual and domestic violence. Hasnizuraini Hassan represented IRAW Asia Pacific.

October 11-13 | Asia Pacific Family Dialogue 2004

Venue: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Organiser: Ministry for Women, Family and Community Development, Malaysia

This dialogue was part of a series of meetings towards the Doha International Conference for the Family that was scheduled to happen in November 2004. (The Conference was being held in conjunction with the 10th year anniversary of the UN International Year of the Family, and organised by the government of Qatar.) Rozana Isa, Rea Chiongson and beng hui, Programme Officers of IRAW Asia Pacific attended this event to raise perspectives of the family grounded in notions of equality and non-discrimination.

October 12-15 | Pacific Regional Consultation on Women's Right to Land and Adequate Housing

Venue: Nadi, Fiji

Organiser: Regional Rights Resource Team, Habitat International Coalition, Asia Pacific Forum for Women, Law and Development, and IRAW Asia Pacific

The first two days of this consultation involved a training workshop for participants on how to develop their testimonies and cases in a human rights framework. This involved introducing them to a monitoring toolkit developed by Habitat International Coalition, and to the concepts of gender discrimination, substantive equality and intersectional discrimination presented by IRAW Asia Pacific. The second two days were devoted to the presentation of testimonies by participants to the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Miloon Kothari, telling of their own experiences or the experiences of others, of inequality and discrimination in the context of housing and land rights. In conclusion, the evidence presented through the testimonies was further discussed and several core themes then identified. These will be picked up in the Special Rapporteur's reports to the Commission on Human Rights.

This consultation was a good opportunity for IRAW Asia Pacific to further its engagement in the Pacific, and to develop strong links with the work of the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing. Dianne Otto (University of Melbourne, Australia) acted as a resource person on behalf of IRAW Asia Pacific.

October 13 | CEDAW 25th Anniversary Roundtable

Venue: New York, USA

Organiser: Division for the Advancement of Women

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of the CEDAW Convention, the Division for the Advancement of Women, the CEDAW Committee's Secretariat, organised a roundtable discussion titled "CEDAW at 25: Are we moving forward?". Shanthi Dairiam was invited to present a paper "Impact of the Convention at the Domestic Level" based on IRAW Asia Pacific's experience with CEDAW. Other speakers included past CEDAW Committee chairpersons; Louise Frechette (Deputy Secretary-

General of the UN); Angela King (former Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of the UN on Gender Issues); Carolyn Hannan (Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women); and Dame Sylvia Cartwright (Governor-General of New Zealand and former CEDAW Committee member).

October 15-17 | Workshop on Gender, Rights and Democracy

Venue: Petaling Jaya, Malaysia

Organiser: All Women's Action Society (AWAM) and Women's Development Collective (WDC)

IWRAW Asia Pacific was invited to run a session on the rights-based approach at this in-house training for two local women's organisations in Malaysia. Maria Herminia Graterol was the resource person for this. Both organisations involved in organising this meeting felt it was important to have a follow-up training focussing solely on the rights-based approach and have requested IWRAW Asia Pacific to conduct this in 2005.

October 27-28 | Workshop on Gender and Health

Venue: Tokyo, Japan

Organiser: United Nations University

This workshop brought together a small group of expert academics and practitioners in the field of gendered health analysis, international development and public policy, with the aim of contributing to the international debate and developing strong networks to increase the effectiveness of gender analysis in this field. With the aim to identify methodologies for best practice, delegates from academia, international organisations, governments and NGOs focused their discussions on the quality of recent research, the effectiveness of policy interventions, and the relationship between the two areas. Shanthi Dairiam participated in this workshop and presented a paper titled "A Rights-Based Approach to Women's Health: Relationship between research and policy".

October 28-29 | An Exploration of Gender in the Context of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Venue: Goa, India

Organiser: Ford Foundation, New York

This meeting brought together representatives from NGOs and other bodies that work on women's economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) to explore:

- Existing trends and tensions related to integrating a gender analysis in ESCR;
- The nature and scope of interventions needed to strengthen a gender-analysis in ESCR; and
- Recommendations for the Ford Foundation on how to strengthen the ESCR movement while making gender integral to its substance and process.

In addition to this, it also provided participants with the opportunity to network. Maria Herminia Graterol participated on behalf of IRAW Asia Pacific.

November 21-24 | Second Asian Civil Society Forum 2004

Venue: Bangkok, Thailand

Organiser: Conference of Non-Governmental Organisations (CONGO) and Forum Asia

Titled "Building UN/NGO Partnerships for Democratic Governance through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)" this meeting was held as the main follow-up to the first Asian Civil Society Forum held in December 2002. Participants discussed and identified key common challenges for NGOs engaged in advocacy at intergovernmental processes at the regional and global levels; took part in cross-sectoral dialogues; shared information and networked; assessed the implementation of the MDGs in Asia; and discussed the implications and impact of the UN Secretary-General's resolution on the report of the High-Level Panel on UN-Civil Society Relations (The Cardoso Report). The output of these sessions would be taken into account in the preparations for the "NGO Forum for Millennium+5" in 2005. IRAW Asia Pacific was represented by beng hui and Hasnizuraini Hassan. beng hui also presented a paper on sexuality and women human rights defenders at a thematic briefing and strategic planning workshop on this subject.

November 15-19 | Samoa CEDAW Mock Session

Venue: Samoa

Organiser: Ministry of Women, Samoa and UNIFEM Pacific

In light of the Government of Samoa being scheduled to present its initial report to the CEDAW Committee in January 2005, UNIFEM South Pacific held a mock session to prepare the government for this review. Shanthi Dairiam was invited as one of the resource persons for this activity, along with a member of the Fiji government and representative of a Fijian NGO – both with experience of the CEDAW reporting process – and a staff member of UNIFEM Pacific. There were two parts to the mock session: one for the government of Samoa and another for Samoan NGOs.

November 26-27 | National Consultation on India's Second Alternative Report to CEDAW

Venue: Delhi, India
Organiser: National Alliance of Women (NAWO)

In anticipation of the Indian state being scheduled to present its second periodic report to CEDAW, preparations are underway by the local women's groups to produce an alternative report. This consultation was organised as part of this preparatory process and Shanthi Dairiam provided technical assistance for this purpose.

December 9 | Global Challenges to Women's Human Rights: 25 years of CEDAW

Venue: London, UK
Organiser: WOMANKIND Worldwide, Department for International Development (DFID) and the British Council

This event was organised to raise awareness of the significance of the CEDAW Convention and mark the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the treaty. It was also held as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Violence Against Women campaign.

December 9-13 | International Dialogue on Gender, Sexuality and Human Rights

Venue: Geneva, Switzerland
Organiser: ARC International and the Liu Institute

The objectives of this conference included identifying international entry-points and priorities for advancing sexual orientation and gender identity issues, as well as strategising in preparation for the 2005 Commission on Human Rights (CHR) session. It provided a good opportunity to establish contacts and network with groups working in these areas. It also allowed us to be better informed about developments around the Brazilian resolution on sexual orientation that had been tabled unsuccessfully in 2003 and 2004. beng hui represented IRAW Asia Pacific and spoke on the potentials of the CEDAW Convention in promoting sexuality rights.

Other Advocacy Initiatives

September 7-10 | High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Review and Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA)

Venue: Bangkok, Thailand
Organiser: UN ESCAP.

The objective of the meeting was to review advances and identify obstacles to the implementation of the BPFA in the Asia Pacific region. The outcome document, the Bangkok communiqué, was to be Asia Pacific's contribution to the global review process taking place at the Commission on the Status of Women's 49th session in 2005. Maria Herminia Graterol (IWRAP Asia Pacific) and Manisha Gupte (MASUM, India) represented the organisation at this meeting, and worked closely with the NGO Caucus to input into this process, participate in roundtable discussions, and advocate in favour of continuing support for the BPFA and the International Conference on Population and Development's Plan of Action.

IWRAP Asia Pacific also facilitated a strategy session at the NGO advocacy meeting organised by Asia Pacific Women's Watch on behalf of the Women's Caucus for the BPFA, held a day before the high-level meeting. Several members of IWRAP Asia Pacific's Advisory Committee – Ruth Manorama (India), Sapana Pradhan-Malla (Nepal), and Savitri Goonesekere (Sri Lanka) – were present at this meeting.

STRATEGY 3 - Information Dissemination and Application Strategy (IDAS)

The Information Dissemination and Application Strategy (IDAS) was introduced as a new programme of IWRAP Asia Pacific in 2003 with the objectives of facilitating processes for developing new knowledge and clarity in relation to evolving concepts and principles that strengthen women's ability to claim, access and realise their rights; and to provide access to appropriate information and expertise that can increase awareness of international human rights norms as well as initiate and expand local activism. To do this, it required a methodology which would allow the organisation to systematically collect and disseminate all relevant data and documents pertaining to human rights practices at different levels, and in the long run generate the right kinds of understanding that would complement and add value to advocacy.

Acquisition of Materials

As part of ongoing efforts to keep up with latest debates and developments in the human rights arena, IWRAP Asia Pacific actively sought to improve its library collection in 2004. The acquisition of materials took place at two levels:

Core Collection (comprising key CEDAW and other UN human rights documents)

Building on a pre-existing collection that been compiled since the 1990s, efforts here focused on obtaining latest materials in relation to the CEDAW sessions (e.g. States parties reports, concluding comments, daily press releases, sessional reports, and NGO shadow/alternative reports). At the same time, IRAW Asia Pacific has also been collecting materials of other treaty bodies, in particular the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as the UN Special Rapporteurs (violence against women, health and adequate housing) and the Commission on Human Rights. All these have been sourced either from the relevant meetings of these bodies or from the internet. To keep informed of the most recent developments of the treaty bodies, the organisation also subscribed to an updating service of the Treaty Body Recommendations Unit of the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights. The core collection is an important resource, not only for IRAW Asia Pacific but others as well since it allows the organisation to respond effectively to various requests for information pertaining to CEDAW.

Other reference materials (books, reports, periodicals, etc.)

Over 500 publications were acquired over the course of the year including books on the UN treaty body system, international human rights law; discrimination; economic, social and cultural rights; civil and political rights; disability; sexuality; globalisation and citizenship. The organisation also subscribed to a number of journals in the same areas. A complete accessions list is available upon request.

The IRAW Asia Pacific library is maintained by a part-time librarian who in addition to sorting and cataloguing these materials, works with the Information and Communications Officer to ensure their relevance to the organisation and easy access for users.

Website – www.iwraw-ap.org

The IRAW Asia Pacific website was revamped in June 2003. To keep its contents current in 2004, updates were compiled and regularly uploaded, on average, once a fortnight. These consisted of information pertaining to CEDAW-related developments and other women's human rights matters, as well as the work of IRAW Asia Pacific. Indeed, the website was an important tool for the organisation to share information in a timely manner about on-going campaigns of interest to women's rights activists, for instance, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (OP-ICESCR) and the CEDAW Committee elections.

Further improvements to the website were also undertaken in 2004. For example, with regards to the OP-CEDAW section, two new subsections – Relevant Case Law and the OP-CEDAW NGO Campaign – were finalised and uploaded. Similarly, the first batch of information – i.e. pertaining to the Committee on Economic, Social and

Cultural Rights – under the section Other UN Human Rights Mechanisms was uploaded. This section will provide basic information on treaty bodies and other human rights instruments that offer useful standards and approaches for the promotion of women’s human rights.

Last but not least, as a result of on-going measures to improve the accessibility of the website (e.g. by fine-tuning two key pages, keeping track of internal broken links and fixing this where necessary, migrating over to a new web host, etc.) its ranking in Google using the keyword “CEDAW” rose from being in the mid-20s to number 6 in 2004. Another indication of its improved popularity, and hence reach, was the increase in the number of websites that are linked to it, rising from 26 in November 2003 to 72 just over a year later.

The IWRAP Asia Pacific website is maintained and updated by the Information and Communications Officer, with the help of an external web designer/weaver. There has been positive feedback to the new design and architecture of the website, both which help users to locate information they seek with greater ease.

cedaw4change

In September 2002, IWRAP Asia Pacific started a listserv “cedaw4change” primarily to facilitate discussions and information exchange on the CEDAW Convention, its optional protocol and other human rights mechanisms. This, it was hoped, would help build women’s capacity to understand these better, and in turn, be better equipped to access and claim their rights. Discussions are run thematically and in 2004, three main subjects were explored: violence against women, health and culture.

In each of this, a brief background on the application of the CEDAW Convention to the chosen topic was first provided, before questions were posed to generate discussion. Members were invited to contribute with examples based on their own knowledge and experience, sharing success stories and problems encountered, or resources that they found useful in relation to the chosen theme. This not only provided a learning experience for all involved, but also the opportunity to assist and inform.

To end each thematic discussion, a substantive summary was provided, setting-out lessons learnt and good practices, as well as identifying areas where the CEDAW Convention could be applied to women’s rights in relation to the said topic. These summaries have been uploaded in the “filesharing” section of the cedaw4change website and can be accessed by all present and future members. Also found in the “filesharing” section are external resources, again thematically organised, including reports written by listserv members on the situation in their particular region/country/area of work; judgements referring to CEDAW; or relevant reports by UN agencies or human rights mechanisms such as the Special Rapporteur on Health and the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women.

In addition to the above, cedaw4change was useful as a means to send out announcements to members across the globe. These comprised urgent calls for action, developments from the CEDAW Committee (e.g. new General Recommendations including the day of general discussion on GR 26, Concluding Comments, reporting schedules, latest CEDAW Committee members, etc.), and upcoming seminars and workshops.

At the end of 2004, this listserv had around 700 members, which was an increase from the previous year's tally of 600. Most of these had subscribed themselves to this service. An external moderator was responsible for the listserv's day-to-day operations, including preparing the introductory pieces, fielding questions to prompt discussions, providing summaries of discussions and administering other requests for information. At the same time, members of the IWRAP Asia Pacific programme staff regularly gave feedback and suggestions for further action. The Information and Communications Officer was responsible for the overall coordination of this programme.

Materials produced

IWRAP Asia Pacific Occasional Paper Series

In 2004, IWRAP Asia Pacific produced its first three publications under a new occasional papers series, the main purpose of which is to make available on a regular basis, emerging discussions and debates related to women's human rights and the organisation's areas of work. The three titles are:

- The Status of CEDAW Implementation in ASEAN and Selected Muslim Countries
- Equality in International Human Rights Treaties: An optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Lack of Access, Lack of Care: A reference guide to women's right to health in the international trading system

Work on several other papers commenced during this period too. It is expected that these will be completed and published in 2005.

Lawyers' Training Package

Based on the organisation's experience running trainings with lawyers since 1997, it became clear that there was a need for more specialised training for those in the legal profession, to enable them to concretise claims for rights and to call for adequate and effective remedies to ensure state compliance with its obligations under the CEDAW Convention. The development of a training package for lawyers on women's human rights was viewed as an important resource in this regard, and with this in mind, the idea for a "CEDAW in Legal Initiatives" package was conceived in at the end of 2003. This will cover six main areas: CEDAW and the role of lawyers in advancing women's human rights; substantive equality; non-discrimination; state obligation; CEDAW as a framework for remedies; and the uses of CEDAW in legal initiatives. It will also contain facilitator/trainer's notes, handouts, case studies and

points for transparencies. A consultant, S.K. Priya, and advocate from India, drafted the contents of each session. To ensure their applicability to lawyers, these have been pilot-tested in a lawyers training in Bangladesh. An external reader has also gone through the draft to provide further inputs from the perspective of a practising lawyer at the national courts as well as of an international human rights law expert. The publication is expected to be ready in 2005.

This is the first of its kind on the uses of CEDAW and its Optional Protocol for law practitioners. This Lawyers' Training Package will equip lawyers from the ground the skills to use CEDAW in litigation. When they decide to use the CEDAW framework in domestic litigation and after exhausting all possible domestic remedies or when their governments become unwilling or unable to respect, promote, and fulfil women's rights, then they can resort to the complaints mechanism provided for in the Optional Protocol to CEDAW provided their governments have ratified this instrument.

Unpublished Papers

As with previous years, several papers were also written by IWRAW Asia Pacific staff and presented at different fora in the course of 2004:

- "CEDAW Achievements and Challenges: Discussion on Implementation of CEDAW in Commonwealth Countries Policies and Legislation – Progress, gains, constraints and key priorities (with special reference to selected Commonwealth countries)" by Shanthi Dairiam. Presented at the Gender and Human Rights Expert Group Meeting organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat, 17-19 February 2004, London, United Kingdom.
- "Exploring the Potential of the UN Treaty Body System in Addressing Sexual Rights in South and Southeast Asia: Some preliminary thoughts and recommendations" by Tan beng hui. Presented at the meeting "Sexuality and Human Rights in Muslim Societies in South/Southeast Asia organised by Women for Women's Human Rights – New Ways and Yayasan Kesehatan Perempuan (Women's Health Foundation), 23-26 September 2004, Jakarta, Indonesia.
- "Impact of the CEDAW Convention at the Domestic Level" by Shanthi Dairiam. Presented at a roundtable session "CEDAW at 25: Are we moving forward" organised by Division for the Advancement of Women, 13 October 2004, New York, USA.
- "Temporary Special Measures" by Rea Chiongson. Presented at the Regional Consultation on Women's Right to Participate in Political and Public Life, organised by IWRAW Asia Pacific and hosted by LBH APIK, 9-12 December 2004, Jakarta, Indonesia.

These papers are available upon request from IWRAW Asia Pacific.

All activities related to the production of materials are coordinated by the Information and Communications Officer, with support by the Research and Publications Officer.

Requests for information

As in previous years, IWRAP Asia Pacific continued to receive and respond to various ad-hoc requests for information and assistance throughout 2004. In general, these can be grouped into two main categories: (1) requests for CEDAW-related information (e.g. concluding comments, writing of shadow/alternative reports, schedule of CEDAW sessions, the OP-CEDAW, etc.) and (2) general queries (e.g. clarification and/or referrals, request for materials, funding/financial assistance, about IWRAP Asia Pacific's work, etc.). Almost 100 requests were processed during this period in an effort to enhance understanding on CEDAW and related human rights mechanisms, as well as the work that the organisation is engaged in.

National Resource Centres

In 2001, participants at the South Asia Writing/Planning Workshop, a component of the IWRAP Asia Pacific project "Facilitating the Fulfilment of State Obligation to Women's Equality (the Facilitating Project)"²² discussed the idea of setting-up national-level resource centres as one of the next steps of this project. Having carried out a certain level of capacity building and advocacy activities related to CEDAW, the time appeared right to move the project on to the next phase. In particular, it was envisaged that these resource centres would serve a range of functions at the national level including being central depositories of information on CEDAW and women's human rights; where appropriate, translate and adapt materials for local use; work with governments to monitor implementation of the convention; maintain a pool of CEDAW resource persons; and coordinate local work on the OP-CEDAW. In turn, each could be linked and supported by the IWRAP Asia Pacific resource centre.

With this idea in mind, IWRAP Asia Pacific proposed a consultation for its South Asian partners in India (Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives, Partners for Law in Development, North East Network, National Alliance of Women, MASUM), Pakistan (Aurat Foundation), Nepal (Forum for Women, Law and Development) and Sri Lanka (Women and Media Collective, Law and Society Trust). Taking place from 14-16 February 2004, in Kathmandu, Nepal, this meeting was held to first determine the relevance of the idea of national resource centres for IWRAP Asia Pacific's partners in South Asia.

Discussions were organised around the following areas:

- Needs identification for CEDAW-related work in each of the countries;
- The scope of national resource centres to meet the above needs;
- The parameters and mode of operation of these centres including functions, responsibilities, and specialisation themes;
- The function of IWRAP Asia Pacific in relation to the centres; and

²² The Facilitating Project commenced in 1997. It involves women's groups in 12 Asian countries monitoring the fulfilment of their governments' obligations to women's equality under the CEDAW Convention. See page xx for further details.

- A national action plan and resource mobilisation for this.

The meeting agreed that to promote better exchange and dissemination of information relating to women's human rights, the follow-up to the Facilitating Project could take different forms, one of which was the physical resource centre that focused on CEDAW. Otherwise, strategies that could contribute to advancing women's human rights in other ways could also be contemplated. The choice would depend on the context and development stage of each partner. Thus, while partners in Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan felt that they could take on the idea of the national resource centres, those in India planned for further discussions to clarify their respective roles before making such a decision. Due to resource constraints, each partner would workout a plan of action with a timeframe that suited them. All, however, agreed to continue to build a network that could take on a rights-based approach in their work in the long run.

It was also agreed that with the development of this initiative, certain responsibilities previously taken on by IRAW Asia Pacific would be decentralised and shared among its partner countries in future. Nevertheless, the organisation would continue to support its partners by helping with proposal writing (rather than directly fundraise for the centres and be accountable for the implementation of activities), and providing technical assistance.

IRAW Asia Pacific was represented at this consultation by its Executive Director Shanthi Dairiam and Programme Officers Rea Chiongson and tan beng hui. Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD) provided logistical support.

INSTITUTION BUILDING

IWRAP Asia Pacific's institutional building exercise for 2004 included meetings between the organisation's staff and members of the Advisory Committee and Board of Directors, an annual strategic planning exercise, and staff development activities.

April 14 | Board of Directors Meeting

Venue: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

This was the first formal meeting of IWRAP Asia Pacific's Board of Directors. In the past, such meetings were held on an ad-hoc basis. However, given the evolution of the organisation and the scope of its current and future activities, the organisation felt it timely to have a more cohesive and formalised process for management policy decision-making.

The following items were addressed at this meeting:

- Overview of financial situation and staff costs (current financial situation of organisation; overview of staff background; salary structure, and terms and conditions of work; instituting a staff complaints procedure);
- Finalisation of organisational structure;
- Role of Board of Directors and possible expansion of membership; and
- Recruitment of a new Executive Director and the role of the incumbent Executive Director during the transition process.

Present were Ivy Josiah (Director), Maznah Mohammad (Director), Shanthi Dairiam (founding Director and current Executive Director), Yew Bee Yee (Deputy Executive Director) and Azlini Abdul Ghani (Administration and Finance Officer). Following this, Maznah Mohamad, on behalf of the Board, shared the results of the meeting's deliberations with the IWRAP Asia Pacific staff.

September 16-17 | Fifth IWRAP Asia Pacific Advisory Committee Meeting

Venue: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Members of the Advisory Committee deliberated on various issues at this meeting, the fifth since the inception of the organisation. Apart from discussing matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting, reviewing the 2003 programme and

learning about activities planned for 2004, they also spent time positioning IWRAP Asia Pacific's current and future work – thinking strategically about the organisation's future direction in light of current challenges (e.g. disappearance of the rights agenda, global economic trends and policies, terrorism and counter-terrorism, funding threats, etc.). They also had a chance to update the meeting on recent work in relation to CEDAW, and discuss other institutional matters including replacing the outgoing Executive Director and two senior programme staff. The Committee noted the resignation of Eleanor Conda (Philippines) and extended its sincere appreciation for her contributions to the organisation. It also welcomed on board, Andonia Piau-Lynch (Vanuatu) and Miho Omi (Japan).

December 3-5 | Staff Strategic Planning Meeting

Venue: Phuket, Thailand

To concretise IWRAP Asia Pacific's future role and next three-year work plan (2006-2008), the organisation's staff participated in a strategic planning exercise facilitated by Andrew Byrnes, Advisory Committee member, and joined by Maznah Mohamad, representing the Board of Directors.

In identifying the thrusts and direction for the next phase of the organisation's programme, the meeting elaborated on specific developments and themes previously identified by the Advisory Committee. This produced a clear articulation of the focus of the next three-year plan (2006-2008). The meeting then looked at the evolution of the organisation's major programmes – capacity building, advocacy, and the information dissemination and application strategy – and identified activities that it would implement in line with the new plan. There was then a session to finalise the plan of activities for 2005.

Some time was also spent discussing arrangements that needed to be instituted to appoint a new Executive Director, as well as identify future fund-raising strategies.

Staff development activities

July 19-23 | Seminar on the UN Commission on Human Rights

Venue: Geneva, Switzerland

Organiser: Geneva Office of the World Federation of UN Associations in association with Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Yew Bee Yee attended this one-week seminar to familiarise herself with the subject of the promotion and protection of human rights as considered by the UN. In particular, she learnt about the substance and procedures governing the Commission on Human Rights, and the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

November 29-December 4 | Advanced Course on the Justiciability of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Venue: Turku, Finland

Organiser: Turku University, Institute of Human Rights and Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions

Maria Herminia Graterol attended this course to sharpen her analysis of legal theories and jurisprudence that have contributed to the notion of the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights, as well as to learn how to develop arguments that can be used in litigation and in other initiatives. Sessions were presented in a lecture format, and small group discussions enabled a lively exchange of opinions among participants. There was also a moot court competition to end the weeklong course. More than twenty-five lawyers, academics and human rights advocates from all over the world took part. IWRAP Asia-Pacific was the only women's NGO represented. As such, we were able to provide a unique contribution in relation to women's enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, including the concrete obstacles that they face as well as the existing advocacy and strategies being used by women activists to address these.

Alternative Report Outline for Vietnam

<p>DECISION MAKING: ASPECTS / ELEMENTS</p>	
<p><u>Leadership of women is low as compared to men:</u></p> <p>1. Membership in legislative bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Assembly - People’s Council (provincial to district level) <p>2.- Executive position in government office at provincial, district and commune level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Executive position in scientific agencies -Management position in public and private enterprises <p><i>(You must have statistics for this on the present situation as compared to men: Data disaggregated by sex)</i></p> <p>Effects and consequences of women’s low leadership levels onlaw, policy etc..</p>	<p><u>Obstacles/ Reasons: (You have to identify sources of information for this section)</u></p> <p><u>a. Reasons why women do not get into leadership positions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender bias among the electorate, or among the top management leadership for appointed posts. No confidence in women and preference for male leadership <i>(common to all leadership and decision making situation of women)</i> - Gender roles of women prevent women from focusing on leadership or management issues; they focus on the household and have less time. <i>(common to all leadership and decision making situation of women)</i> - Influential kinship networks at the community level influence voting patterns. <i>There is no data on this situation.</i> - In policy there is supposed to be party and institutional support but in practice women have less support. - “Men have their own networks outside their families. They have social contacts, previous relationship with leadership, know the process of elections , they are mobile, have better access to transport, more funds for spending on people, and have better opportunity for campaigning. - There are more men in leadership position so it is difficult for women to lobby. <p><i>(This could be a phenomenon and needs to be studied)</i></p>

b. Obstacles they face as elected representatives

- They do not have a voice, very male dominated environment.
- Some women have less time to focus on the leadership work because of family responsibility
- Conflict in the family at local level, because women are focusing on leadership work (*Please check this*)
- Capacity of women's leadership is varied.
- Government policy of earlier retirement for women is an obstacle

Opportunity and potential

Government policies and programmes:

Assess achievements, appropriateness and accuracy of what the government says is doing or has done. Refer to NCFAW Beijing plus 10 report to the UN and comment on it.

What is the sustainability of the achievements?

(Methodology: Compare with situation before Beijing. Also compare with CEDAW Concluding Comments and its implementation.

Identify how much of the achievements can be attributed to the government and how much can be attributed to the community. In other words, what is the capacity of the government?)

Is there statistics or evidence of the scale or the effectiveness of government action. Does the government monitor its own actions? What are the results in reality. Is there data to show results or who is benefiting and how. (strengths as well as gaps)

Is there evidence in the report that the government is taking steps to implement what it says should be done?

eg

- Have the relevant implementers been identified?
- Is there an allocation of adequate resources?
- Are there laws or policies to mandate the action? And are these enforced?
- Are there institutional arrangements to facilitate

	<p>the action?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Are relevant personnel being trained? ➤ Is there a community awareness programme? ➤ Is there a plan for support services if needed or affirmative action <p>NGO contribution: including research</p> <p>Conclusion and Recommendations for Government</p> <p>What should the government be doing; refer to obstacles. Compare with NCFAW report.</p> <p>Please include research needs.</p> <p><u>Please note:</u> Time, capacity and resources is not enough. So be realistic in what you are recommending government to do. In the recommendations please identify what is urgent and immediate or short term and what is long term. Also refer to CEDAW Concluding Comments.</p>
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EDUCATION TRAINING: ASPECTS/ELEMENTS	
<p>1. Higher rate of drop out among girls as compared to boys in secondary level. <i>(Check rural/ urban and ethnic minorities)</i></p> <p>2. Fewer women in higher level of education</p> <p>3. Disparity in enrolment of girls between urban and rural and ethnic minorities.</p>	<p><u>Obstacles/ reasons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lesser opportunity for education for girls and women because of gender roles and bias. (Time constraint) - Women do not give priority to their education. - Because of cost factor priority is given to education of boys. - Stereotypical images of men and women in school text books. - Special funds for education of girls is limited. - Overloaded curriculum, too much home work, prevents learning and leads to loss of interest in education. Carrying heavy school books every day causes back problem. - Long school hours and not enough holidays makes life dull. Children have less time to wear any other clothes except uniforms. Uniform is not of good quality

<p>4. Higher rates of illiteracy among women and there is disparity among different regions.</p> <p>5. Limited opportunity for retraining for women as compared to men. And training on use of technology eg computers is limited as compared to men</p> <p>6. Disparity in the quality of education in different regions.</p> <p>7. Disparity in girls obtaining technical education and training.</p> <p>8. Vocational education??</p> <p><i>(You must have data for all of the above disaggregated by sex)</i></p> <p><i>(Check whether there is accurate and comprehensive data on education disaggregated by sex.)</i></p> <p>Effects and consequences of women's lower education levels. (Implication for employment, leadership etc)</p>	<p>Opportunity and potential</p> <p>Government Policy and programmes Agree with NCFAW on educational achievements of girls in recruitment at primary and status at secondary level as well as university.</p> <p>But will also assess whether government policy for education of girls is adequate and is implemented effectively.</p> <p>Assess achievements, appropriateness and accuracy of what the government says is doing or has done. Refer to NCFAW Beijing plus 10 report to the UN and comment on it.</p> <p>What is the sustainability of the achievements?</p> <p><u>(Methodology: Compare with situation before Beijing. Also compare with CEDAW Concluding Comments and the Concluding Comments of the CRC Committee. and its implementation.</u></p> <p>Identify how much of the achievements can be attributed to the government and how much can be attributed to the community. In other words, what is the capacity of the government?)</p> <p>Is there statistics or evidence of the scale or the effectiveness of government action. Does the government monitor its own actions? What are the results in reality. Is there data to show results or who is benefiting and how. (strengths as well as gaps)</p> <p>Is there evidence in the report that the government is taking steps to implement what it says should be done? eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have the relevant implementers been identified? ➤ Is there an allocation of adequate resources?
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Are there laws or policies to mandate the action? And are these enforced? ➤ Are there institutional arrangements to facilitate the action? ➤ Are relevant personnel being trained? ➤ Is there a community awareness programme? ➤ Is there a plan for support services if needed or affirmative action <p>NGO contribution: including research</p> <p>Conclusion and Recommendations for Government</p> <p>What should the government be doing; refer to obstacles. Compare with NCFAW report.</p> <p>Please include research needs.</p> <p><u>Please note:</u> Time, capacity and resources is not enough. So be realistic in what you are recommending government to do. In the recommendations please identify what is urgent and immediate or short term and what is long term. Also refer to CEDAW Concluding Comments and the Concluding Comments of the CRC Committee.</p>
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ENVIRONMENT: ASPECTS/ ELEMENTS	
<p>1. Environment pollution in the city affects health of the people. Children specially suffer from respiratory and eye problems. Women have greater work burden in the home because they have to look after the sick and get rid of waste. Pollution affects reproductive health</p>	<p>Obstacles/ Reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited knowledge about environment conservation. - No comprehensive policy on environment, dealing with waste disposal, air and noise pollution and use of firewood and coal. - Limited capacity dealing with waste - Limited IEC on environment conservation. - Lower levels of women's education gives them

<p>2. Urban waste is collected largely by women as the job is unskilled and women are the ones doing it.</p> <p>3. Increasing waste discharge from industries including food processing and handicrafts</p> <p>4. In rural areas use of chemicals for agriculture, pollutes the land, rain and water supply, affects the health of farmers especially pregnant women. Most farmers are women</p> <p>5. Use of firewood and coal for cooking contributes to pollution and environmental degradation.. Cooking with firewood and coal affects women's health.</p> <p>6. Poor sanitation and safe water supply in rural areas. Women are responsible for sourcing water for the family.</p> <p>7. Increasing noise pollution and air pollution due to increasing traffic in urban areas.</p> <p><i>(What is the source of information for this)</i></p>	<p>few job opportunities so they take on hazardous jobs.</p> <p>- Insufficient regulation of waste discharge</p> <p>- Limited training and education on use of chemicals for agriculture and insufficient regulation of such use.</p> <p><u>Opportunity and potential</u></p> <p>Government policies and programmes:</p> <p>Assess achievements, appropriateness and accuracy of what the government says is doing or has done. Refer to NCFAW Beijing plus 10 report to the UN and comment on it.</p> <p>What is the sustainability of the achievements?</p> <p><u>(Methodology: Compare with situation before Beijing. Also compare with CEDAW Concluding Comments and its implementation.</u></p> <p>Identify how much of the achievements can be attributed to the government and how much can be attributed to the community. In other words, what is the capacity of the government?)</p> <p>Is there statistics or evidence of the scale or the effectiveness of government action. Does the government monitor its own actions? What are the results in reality. Is there data to show results or who is benefiting and how. (strengths as well as gaps)</p> <p>Is there evidence in the report that the government is taking steps to implement what it says should be done? eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have the relevant implementers been identified? ➤ Is there an allocation of adequate resources?
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Effects and consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Are there laws or policies to mandate the action? And are these enforced? ➤ Are there institutional arrangements to facilitate the action? ➤ Are relevant personnel being trained? ➤ Is there a community awareness programme? ➤ Is there a plan for support services if needed or affirmative action <p><u>NGO contribution: including research</u></p> <p>Conclusion and Recommendations for Government</p> <p>What should the government be doing; refer to obstacles. Compare with NCFW report.</p> <p>Please include research needs</p> <p><u>Please note:</u> Time, capacity and resources is not enough. So be realistic in what you are recommending government to do. In the recommendations please identify what is urgent and immediate or short term and what is long term. Also refer to CEDAW Concluding Comments.</p>
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GIRL CHILD: ASPECTS AND ELEMENTS OF RIGHTS	
<p>1. Disparity in education of ethnic minority and rural girl children</p> <p>2. Child labour of girls</p> <p>3 Disadvantaged children and welfare services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orphans - Street children - Disabled 	<p><u>Obstacles/ reasons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender bias - Poverty, not enough money for schooling , poverty cause of child labour - Not enough subsidization of education to make it affordable for all people. - Laws are good but not enough mechanism for effective implementation in a sensitive manner - Not enough awareness on the rights of children - Influence of pornography and violent movies on violent behaviour

<p>4. Child marriage</p> <p>5. Participation of children in the family, decisions affecting them</p> <p>6. Accidents leading to disability and death: RIGHT TO SAFETY</p> <p>7. Health and nutrition of girls</p> <p>8. Juvenile crime and drug abuse, drug pushing</p> <p>8. Birth registration and nationality issues in rural and mountainous areas.</p> <p><i>(You must identify the gender aspects or discrimination aspects and you must try to get relevant data)</i></p> <p>Effects and consequences of neglect, abuse and under development of girl children</p>	<p>Opportunity and potential</p> <p><u>Government Policy and Programmes</u></p> <p>Assess achievements, appropriateness and accuracy of what the government says is doing or has done. Refer to NCFAW Beijing plus 10 report to the UN and comment on it.</p> <p>What is the sustainability of the achievements?</p> <p><u>(Methodology: Compare with situation before Beijing. Also compare with CEDAW Concluding Comments and the Concluding Comments of the CRC Committee and its implementation.</u></p> <p>Identify how much of the achievements can be attributed to the government and how much can be attributed to the community. In other words, what is the capacity of the government?)</p> <p>Is there statistics or evidence of the scale or the effectiveness of government action. Does the government monitor its own actions? What are the results in reality. Is there data to show results or who is benefiting and how. (strengths as well as gaps)</p> <p>Is there evidence in the report that the government is taking steps to implement what it says should be done? eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have the relevant implementers been identified? ➤ Is there an allocation of adequate resources? ➤ Are there laws or policies to mandate the action? And are these enforced? ➤ Are there institutional arrangements to facilitate the action? ➤ Are relevant personnel being trained? ➤ Is there a community awareness programme? ➤ Is there a plan for support services if needed or affirmative action <p>NGO contribution: including research</p>
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	<p><u>Conclusion and Recommendations for Government</u></p> <p>What should the government be doing; refer to obstacles. Compare with NCFAW report.</p> <p>Please include research needs</p> <p><u>Please note:</u> Time, capacity and resources is not enough. So be realistic in what you are recommending government to do. In the recommendations please identify what is urgent and immediate or short term and what is long term. Also refer to CEDAW Concluding Comments and the Concluding Comments of the CRC Committee.</p>
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<p>HEALTH: ASPECTS/ ELEMENTS</p>	
<p>1. Health status of women</p> <p><u>Indicators of women's health:</u> prevalence of diseases among women including STD and HIV/AIDS; nutritional status, incidence of anaemia, maternal mortality rates, contraceptive use and birth spacing, pregnancies among very young women or older women, fertility rate.</p> <p>Pregnancy among single women high and so abortion rate is high. Strong bias regarding such pregnancies.</p>	<p><u>Obstacles/ Reasons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -User fees not <u>affordable</u>, women have no economic resources to pay for services. -In remote areas it takes too much time to travel to the clinic. Services are not <u>accessible</u>. -Gender roles of taking care of the family means women <u>lack</u> time to take care of their health. - Reproductive health services focus on married women and single women have limited access to reproductive health information and services. - Scale, scope and quality of sex education for adolescents and girls is limited. This is one of the reasons for high abortion rate and STD. - Women have greater responsibility for fertility control/ family planning.? <i>What is the recommendation for this? More condom promotion?</i> Men must take more responsibility for safe sex. - IEC on safe sex is limited (<i>Is mass media used for this</i>). IEC on ethnic minority language is limited. - Percentage of users of contraceptives is largely female, but decision makers on Committee for Population, family and child care are largely male. <p>So services may not be gender sensitive. (<i>Check if this is correct</i>)</p>

<p>Generally abortion rate is high among all women</p> <p>2. Access to services (rural/ urban) single, married, young women, elderly, disabled, ethnic minorities</p> <p>3. Lack of access to information on general health care and reproductive health</p> <p>4. Service system not gender sensitive</p> <p>5. Occupational health matters eg protection of nurses in hospitals</p>	<p>- <u>Control of STD and prostitution is not effective</u></p> <p>- Negative attitude of society towards women infected with HIV/AIDS</p> <p>- In effectiveness of existing strategies and regulations like health insurance schemes, reproductive health strategy etc .</p> <p><i><u>Opportunity and potential</u></i></p> <p><u>Government policies and programmes:</u></p> <p>Assess achievements, appropriateness and accuracy of what the government says is doing or has done. Refer to NCFAW Beijing plus 10 report to the UN and comment on it.</p> <p>What is the sustainability of the achievements?</p> <p><u>(Methodology: Compare with situation before Beijing. Also compare with CEDAW Concluding Comments and its implementation.</u></p>
<p><i>(What is the source of data for this)</i></p>	<p>Identify how much of the achievements can be attributed to the government and how much can be attributed to the community. In other words, what is the capacity of the government?)</p>
<p>Effects and consequences of women's poor health status. Implications for productive employment etc.</p>	<p>Is there statistics or evidence of the scale or the effectiveness of government action. Does the government monitor its own actions? What are the results in reality. Is there data to show results or who is benefiting and how. (strengths as well as gaps)</p> <p>Is there evidence in the report that the government is taking steps to implement what it says should be done? eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have the relevant implementers been identified? ➤ Is there an allocation of adequate resources? ➤ Are there laws or policies to mandate the action? And are these enforced? ➤ Are there institutional arrangements to facilitate the action? ➤ Are relevant personnel being trained?

- Is there a community awareness programme?
- Is there a plan for support services if needed or affirmative action

NGO contribution: including research

Conclusion and Recommendations for Government

What should the government be doing; refer to obstacles. Compare with NCFAW report.

Please include research needs

Please note: Time, capacity and resources is not enough. So be realistic in what you are recommending government to do. In the recommendations please identify what is urgent and immediate or short term and what is long term. Also refer to CEDAW Concluding Comments.

<p>HUMAN RIGHTS: ASPECTS / ELEMENTS</p>	
<p><u>1. Situation of human rights for women in Vietnam</u></p> <p>Gap between law and reality: The law and constitution provide for women's equal rights, in economy, employment equal salary, recruitment, to vote and be elected and in marriage. But law is not enforced and in reality women do not enjoy all equal rights</p> <p>Give examples of discrimination against women and violations of women's human rights</p> <p>2. Effects and consequences of the violations of women's human rights</p>	<p><u>Obstacles/ Reasons:</u> -Ideology of Confucianism (superiority of male)persists and is reflected through customs, practice resulting in violations. Give examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of mechanism for law implementation and so violations are not addressed. - Even if the court decision is good, it may not be implemented because no monitoring of implementation of decision. eg division of matrimonial property - Legal system or legal or administrative mechanisms are not gender sensitive. -Women do not know their rights. They do not have support, financial and moral, to claim their rights. - Women also lack economic resources needed to exercise their rights for example, if they are given custody of their children. <p><u>Opportunity/ Potential</u></p> <p>Good laws on equality, CEDAW is disseminated to the public so women and men are aware of intl standards. Better awareness of officials so better participation of local officials and media in creating awareness and dealing with violations.</p> <p>Good economic dev. in VN and international cooperation for promoting women's rights increasing so better environment and capacity for achieving women's right to equality is improving.</p> <p><u>Government policies and programmes:</u> Give an overview of law and policy for women's equal rights including compatibility between CEDAW and Vietnamese law.</p> <p><u>Comment on Govt's implementation of gender mainstreaming policy.</u></p> <p>Assess achievements, appropriateness and accuracy of what the government says is doing or has done. Refer to NCFAW Beijing plus 10 report to the UN and</p>

	<p>comment on it.</p> <p>What is the sustainability of the achievements?</p> <p><u>(Methodology: Compare with situation before Beijing. Also compare with CEDAW Concluding Comments and its implementation.</u></p> <p>Identify how much of the achievements can be attributed to the government and how much can be attributed to the community. In other words, what is the capacity of the government?)</p> <p>Is there statistics or evidence of the scale or the effectiveness of government action. Does the government monitor its own actions? What are the results in reality. Is there data to show results or who is benefiting and how. (strengths as well as gaps)</p> <p>Is there evidence in the report that the government is taking steps to implement what it says should be done? eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have the relevant implementers been identified? ➤ Is there an allocation of adequate resources? ➤ Are there laws or policies to mandate the action? And are these enforced? ➤ Are there institutional arrangements to facilitate the action? ➤ Are relevant personnel being trained? ➤ Is there a community awareness programme? ➤ Is there a plan for support services if needed or affirmative action <p>NGO contribution: including research</p> <p>Conclusion and Recommendations for Government</p> <p>What should the government be doing; refer to obstacles. Compare with NCFW report.</p> <p>Please include research needs.</p> <p><u>Please note:</u> Time, capacity and resources is not enough. So be realistic in what you are recommending government to do. In the recommendations please identify what is urgent and</p>
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<p>VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS: ASPECTS/ ELEMENTS</p> <p>Types of violence:</p> <p>1. Domestic Violence: - Def. Physical, psychological and sexual abuse against women and girls in the family</p> <p>2. Violence in the community against women and girls: eg - Sexual assault, harassment in public places, kidnap, cheating, coercion and threats for forced labour, prostitution or marriage, trafficking for forced labour, prostitution or marriage: Situation is worse post Doi Moi.</p> <p><i>(Is there data or studies on types and prevalence of violence against women)</i></p> <p>Effects and consequences of violence against women</p>	<p>immediate or short term and what is long term. Also refer to CEDAW Concluding Comments.</p> <p><u>Obstacles/Reasons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culture of male domination and female subordination and hence violence against women is accepted by everyone. - Lack of community support services for victims. - Law enforcement is weak. - Department of MOLISA is the responsible agency. Give comments on this department. <p><u>Opportunity, potentials,</u></p> <p><u>Government policies and programmes:</u></p> <p>Assess achievements, appropriateness and accuracy of what the government says is doing or has done. Refer to NCFAW Beijing plus 10 report to the UN and comment on it.</p> <p>What is the sustainability of the achievements?</p> <p><u>(Methodology: Compare with situation before Beijing. Also compare with CEDAW Concluding Comments and its implementation.</u></p> <p>Identify how much of the achievements can be attributed to the government and how much can be attributed to the community. In other words, what is the capacity of the government?)</p> <p>Is there statistics or evidence of the scale or the effectiveness of government action. Does the government monitor its own actions? What are the results in reality. Is there data to show results or who is benefiting and how. (strengths as well as gaps)</p> <p>Is there evidence in the report that the government is taking steps to implement what it says should be done? eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have the relevant implementers been
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	<p>identified?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Is there an allocation of adequate resources? ➤ Are there laws or policies to mandate the action? And are these enforced? ➤ Are there institutional arrangements to facilitate the action? ➤ Are relevant personnel being trained? ➤ Is there a community awareness programme? ➤ Is there a plan for support services if needed or affirmative action <p>NGO contribution: including research</p> <p>Conclusion and Recommendations for Government</p> <p>What should the government be doing; refer to obstacles. Compare with NCFAW report.</p> <p>Please include research needs</p> <p><u>Please note:</u> Time, capacity and resources is not enough. So be realistic in what you are recommending government to do. In the recommendations please identify what is urgent and immediate or short term and what is long term. Also refer to CEDAW Concluding Comments.</p>
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MEDIA: ASPECTS OR PROBLEMS

<p>1-There is negative portrayal of women in the media.</p> <p>2. Is the media used to create positive images of women? Is the media used to create positive images of women and to promote women's rights and change negative cultural attitudes towards women</p> <p>There is an increasing no. of</p>	<p><u>Obstacles/ Reasons :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender blind or gender insensitive media professionals - Lack of monitoring of media by government or comprehensive plan to use the media to promote women's rights. - Lack of access to media : women have low literacy or live in remote areas, and there is no access to the media, women have no time to read. most women listen to radio or watch movies on TV. <u>(Is this an opportunity for remote areas)</u>
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<p>papers writing about women but media also promotes role of women in household eg. washing machine advertisements are aimed at women; but one show game programme is good as it has good information.</p> <p><i>(What are the source of information for this. Are there studies?)</i></p> <p>3-Access of women to information technology for access to information and to use of technology is inadequate :</p> <p>4- Position of women in media organizations : women media practitioners</p> <p>Numbers of women in different positions, is this increasing, what difficulties they face in becoming media practitioners and within the organizations, their achievements and contributions</p> <p>Effects and consequences of the above on women.</p>	<p>In other areas, info dissemination for women must take place through other media.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender bias in media organizations against women media professionals. - No policy on media professionals <p><u>Opportunity/ Potential</u></p> <p><u>Government policies and programmes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women's museum has been expanded <p>Assess achievements, appropriateness and accuracy of what the government says is doing or has done. Refer to NCAFW Beijing plus 10 report to the UN and comment on it.</p> <p>What is the sustainability of the achievements?</p> <p><u>(Methodology: Compare with situation before Beijing. Also compare with CEDAW Concluding Comments and its implementation.</u></p> <p>Identify how much of the achievements can be attributed to the government and how much can be attributed to the community. In other words, what is the capacity of the government?)</p> <p>Is there statistics or evidence of the scale or the effectiveness of government action. Does the government monitor its own actions? What are the results in reality. Is there data to show results or who is benefiting and how. (strengths as well as gaps)</p> <p>Is there evidence in the report that the government is taking steps to implement what it says should be done? eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have the relevant implementers been identified? ➤ Is there an allocation of adequate resources? ➤ Are there laws or policies to mandate the action? And are these enforced? ➤ Are there institutional arrangements to facilitate the action? ➤ Are relevant personnel being trained? ➤ Is there a community awareness programme?
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	<p>➤ Is there a plan for support services if needed or affirmative action</p> <p>NGO contribution: including research</p> <p><u>Conclusions and Recommendations for government:</u> What should the government be doing to promote the use of media to create positive images of women and to promote women’s rights and change negative cultural attitudes towards women; Refer to obstacles. Compare with NCFAW report.</p> <p>Please include research needs</p> <p><u>Please note:</u> Time, capacity and resources is not enough. So be realistic in what you are recommending government to do.</p> <p>In the recommendations please identify what is urgent and immediate or short term and what is long term. Also refer to CEDAW Concluding Comments.</p>
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NATIONAL MACHINERY: ASPECTS /ELEMENTS	
<p>1. NCFAW is the national machinery for women. Gender mainstreaming for the realization of gender equality is not carried out effectively.</p>	<p><u>Obstacles/ Reasons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited gender awareness - It is not clear how to operationalise gender mainstreaming policy into all sectors. There is a lack of expertise in this field within NCFAW and all government sectors. - The national machinery which is NCFAW has overlapping of functions with VWU so there is confusion at the lower level about the responsibility of the government for the advancement of women as it is understood that VWU will take responsibility. - NCFAW has no real power for policy formulation and overseeing policy implementation. NCFAW is not represented in the cabinet. They only seem to

<p>2. Ineffective activities of the sub committee for the advancement of women at the provincial level.</p> <p>3. Networking for the advancement of women between NGOs, Government and the community is not as yet established.</p>	<p>transmit information about the international commitments under treaties etc. and to report on it. VWU seems to have more power for policy.</p> <p><i>(Please check if this is true)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No clear and firm mandate to implement gender equality policy. So it is important to consider the enactment of a gender equality law using the framework of CEDAW. <p>Because of limited gender awareness by the policy makers, there is a lack of data disaggregated by sex for planning and monitoring. Existing studies by research institutions is not utilised enough.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insufficient investment of time and resources for the work of the committee. - Members of the committee are working part time for the committee at the provincial level. <p><u>Opportunity and potential</u></p> <p><u>Government policies and programmes:</u></p> <p>Assess achievements, appropriateness and accuracy of what the government says is doing or has done. Refer to NCFAW Beijing plus 10 report to the UN and comment on it.</p> <p>What is the sustainability of the achievements?</p> <p><u>(Methodology: Compare with situation before Beijing. Also compare with CEDAW Concluding Comments and its implementation.</u></p>
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Identify how much of the achievements can be attributed to the government and how much can be attributed to the community. In other words, what is the capacity of the government?)

Is there statistics or evidence of the scale or the effectiveness of government action. Does the government monitor its own actions? What are the results in reality. Is there data to show results or who is benefiting and how. (strengths as well as gaps)

Is there evidence in the report that the government is taking steps to implement what it says should be done? eg

- Have the relevant implementers been identified?
- Is there an allocation of adequate resources?
- Are there laws or policies to mandate the action? And are these enforced?
- Are there institutional arrangements to facilitate the action?
- Are relevant personnel being trained?
- Is there a community awareness programme?
- Is there a plan for support services if needed or affirmative action

NGO contribution: including research

Conclusion and Recommendations for Government

What should the government be doing; refer to obstacles. Compare with NCFW report.

Please include research needs

Please note: Time, capacity and resources is not enough. So be realistic in what you are recommending government to do. In the recommendations please identify what is urgent and immediate or short term and what is long term. Also refer to CEDAW Concluding Comments.

POVERTY, ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT: ASPECTS/ ELEMENTS	
<p>POVERTY</p> <p>1. Women experience poverty differently from men, in access, right to and security relating to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - food and clothing - shelter - health care - education - leisure - social security - others <p>2. Poverty is also different for different groups of women urban, rural, the elderly, ethnic minorities, disabled, female headed house holds etc</p> <p><i>(What data is available disaggregated by sex for this)</i></p> <p>Effects and consequences of women's poverty for women's enjoyment of equality, freedom from violence, and effects on the national economy.</p>	<p><u>Obstacles/ Reasons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data on poverty is not reliable because there is difference in international and Vietnamese criteria to measure poverty - Poverty among women is invisible because of lack of data disaggregated by sex. MOLISA is responsible for poverty alleviation programmes, but they lack data for planning and monitoring. - Policy is often made from a top down approach. - Poverty as a phenomenon and gender aspects of poverty and reasons for poverty among women is not clearly understood, hence poverty reduction strategy is not comprehensive, multi faceted and gender sensitive. <i>(Are there any studies)</i> - Women do not have enough awareness about their rights and knowledge about government programmes. - Mostly men benefit from agricultural extension training and capacity building even though most of these farmers are women . - Poverty is intensified in disaster prone areas. - Social security policy and scheme for the poor is still new. Only some elements like social insurance of this scheme is implemented. <p><u>Opportunity and potential</u></p> <p><u>Government policies and programmes:</u></p> <p>Assess achievements, appropriateness and accuracy of what the government says is doing or has done. Refer to NCFAW Beijing plus 10 report to the UN and comment on it.</p>

	<p>What is the sustainability of the achievements?</p> <p><u>(Methodology: Compare with situation before Beijing. Also compare with CEDAW Concluding Comments and its implementation.</u></p> <p>Identify how much of the achievements can be attributed to the government and how much can be attributed to the community. In other words, what is the capacity of the government?)</p> <p>Is there statistics or evidence of the scale or the effectiveness of government action. Does the government monitor its own actions? What are the results in reality. Is there data to show results or who is benefiting and how. (strengths as well as gaps)</p> <p>Is there evidence in the report that the government is taking steps to implement what it says should be done? eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have the relevant implementers been identified? ➤ Is there an allocation of adequate resources? ➤ Are there laws or policies to mandate the action? And are these enforced? ➤ Are there institutional arrangements to facilitate the action? ➤ Are relevant personnel being trained? ➤ Is there a community awareness programme? ➤ Is there a plan for support services if needed or affirmative action <p><u>NGO contribution: including research</u></p> <p>Conclusion and Recommendations for Government</p> <p>What should the government be doing; refer to obstacles. Compare with NCFAW report.</p> <p>Please include research needs</p> <p><u>Please note:</u> Time, capacity and resources is not enough. So be realistic in what you are recommending government to do. In the recommendations please identify what is urgent and immediate or short term and what is long term. Also refer to CEDAW Concluding Comments.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">ECONOMY /EMPLOYMENT: ASPECTS/ ELEMENTS</p> <p>1. Lower employment opportunities for women, labour force participation; job loss because of privatization</p> <p>2. Job segregation with lower wages and benefits and lower social status like nursing, waitressing, kindergarten / primary school teaching, etc. (service industry)</p> <p>3. Disparity in - types of occupations available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - wages -promotion -training -position (women bunched up in the lower categories of work) <p>4. Poor conditions of work</p> <p>5. Women forced into informal sector- lack of income security</p> <p>6. Employment issues pertaining to urban and rural women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to land, productive resources, credit, technology etc - Lack of maternity benefits -Sexual harrassment at 	<p>Obstacles/ Reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doi Moi: please elaborate -Privatization: Please elaborate - Gender bias of policy makers. Women seen as secondary wage earners - Lower retirement age for women leading to loss of income. - Women are less competitive in the labour market, they have less time because of gender roles, less education and skills. So under privatization women lose jobs. - Labour laws are good but poorly enforced. In particular labour law is not enforced on private sector. - Government does not negotiate with importing country for labour protection of the workers or for protection against trafficking or other forms of abuse. - No monitoring of problems faced by the exported labour. <p><u>Opportunity and potential</u></p> <p><u>Government policies and programmes:</u></p> <p>Assess achievements, appropriateness and accuracy of what the government says is doing or has done. Refer to NCFAW Beijing plus 10 report to the UN and comment on it.</p> <p>What is the sustainability of the achievements?</p> <p><u>(Methodology: Compare with situation before Beijing. Also compare with CEDAW Concluding Comments and its implementation.</u></p> <p>Identify how much of the achievements can be attributed to the government and how much can be attributed to the community. In other words, what is</p>
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<p>work place</p> <p>7. Ownership of industrial and agricultural enterprises by women is low or on a small scale</p> <p>8. Issues pertaining to export of women's labour reinforcing gender roles . Working conditions are poor and there is often abuse and violation of rights including trafficking.</p> <p><i>(What data is available disaggregated by sex)</i></p> <p>Effects and consequences of women's low employment levels for women's enjoyment of equality, freedom from violence, and effects on the national economy</p>	<p>the capacity of the government?)</p> <p>Is there statistics or evidence of the scale or the effectiveness of government action. Does the government monitor its own actions? What are the results in reality. Is there data to show results or who is benefiting and how. (strengths as well as gaps)</p> <p>Is there evidence in the report that the government is taking steps to implement what it says should be done? eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have the relevant implementers been identified? ➤ Is there an allocation of adequate resources? ➤ Are there laws or policies to mandate the action? And are these enforced? ➤ Are there institutional arrangements to facilitate the action? ➤ Are relevant personnel being trained? ➤ Is there a community awareness programme? ➤ Is there a plan for support services if needed or affirmative action <p><u>NGO contribution: including research</u></p> <p>Conclusion and Recommendations for Government</p> <p>What should the government be doing; refer to obstacles. Compare with NCFAW report.</p> <p>Please include research needs</p> <p><u>Please note:</u> Time, capacity and resources is not enough. So be realistic in what you are recommending government to do. In the recommendations please identify what is urgent and immediate or short term and what is long term. Also refer to CEDAW Concluding Comments.</p>
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ANNEX 2

IWRAW ASIA PACIFIC'S INTERVENTION ON ITEM 10 IN THE 60th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights

Agenda Item 10

Statement by IWRAW Asia Pacific on the question of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and on the Special Rapporteurs on Health and Housing

30 March 2004

Geneva, Switzerland

Speaker: Shanthi Dairiam

Thank you Chairperson.

I speak on behalf of **International Women's Rights Action Watch** an international organisation based in Malaysia, committed to the domestic implementation of international human rights norms.

We take this opportunity to share our view on the advances that were made during the first session of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on the OP-ICESCR in which we participated as a member of the NGO coalition that came together for this purpose. (i) It provided delegations with an opportunity to raise concerns and discuss elements that could potentially be included in the OP-ICESCR. (ii) States participating in the OEWG discussed the benefits and challenges of implementing the ICESCR and began to explore linkages between the principle of State obligation and various procedures that could be established under an OP. (iii) It should be noted that the participation of NGOs made it possible to keep discussions linked to the realities on the ground,

The discussions that took place during the first session of the OEWG led to the identification of a series of concerns and issues that should continue to be addressed. Hence this process should be supported by a stronger mandate for the OEWG. This is in order to address the various levels of complexity of concerns raised by some States parties to the Covenant. The future mandate of the OEWG should provide room for continuing the discussions so that a way forward can evolve and lead to the drafting of this instrument. We hope the Commission will remain open to consider a mandate that will enable the working group to analyse elements of an OP-ICESCR, explore its modalities and elaborate a text.

In our view, the value of an OP to the ICESCR is that it will help strengthen standards at the national level. Since the OP can only be used after the exhaustion of effective domestic remedies, it will provide the impetus for the judiciary to focus on economic, social and cultural rights and develop standards on these at the national level. It is only where national remedies are ineffective, recourse to the OP will set standards according to established international human rights law set by the ICESCR such as non regression,

non discrimination etc. that are universally applicable, taking into consideration existing national contexts.

We also take this opportunity to congratulate states that participated in the OEWG for their respect of the views of NGOs. We hope the working group will continue to welcome the involvement of NGOs in their future sessions.

We wish also to state that the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights are also strengthened by the Special Procedures. As an organization working on the human rights of women, we take this opportunity to welcome the direction that the Special Rapporteur on Health and the Special Rapporteur on Housing have made in ensuring that women's rights are central to their work. We urge members of this Commission to continuously support their mandates as well as the recommendations they have made in their reports.

Thank you Chairperson.

**IWRAW ASIA PACIFIC'S INTERVENTION ON ITEM 12 IN THE
60th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights**

Agenda Item 12

Statement by IWRAW Asia Pacific on CEDAW and Violence Against Women

5 April 2004

Geneva, Switzerland

Speaker: Rea A. Chiongson

We would first like to express our appreciation to the Commission for the renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women. The persistence and intransigence of this crime against women requires of the continued concerted efforts of governments and civil society at the national and international levels.

We emphasise that such efforts must be based on a clear analysis of both the causes and consequences of violence against women as the mandate requires. In this regard, we urge that greater attention be paid to the work of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Committee). These together with the findings of the Special Rapporteur on VAW can produce the required analysis, monitoring and accountability on violence against women.

As the CEDAW Committee has clarified, through its General Recommendation 19, violence against women is an extreme form of discrimination against women. The violence places women at risk to other forms of discrimination and denial of rights, and the existence of all forms of discrimination against women in turn places women at risk to violence. It is imperative therefore that eliminating all forms of discrimination against women is an agenda that is carried out as a long-term measure if violence against women is to end. Hence, the critical importance of the work of the CEDAW Committee.

We also urge that purposeful collaboration is established between governments and NGOs for this to take place. NGOs have pioneered work in this field and relentlessly worked on ending violence against women. They have produced much valuable knowledge and information, which should essentially inform the work of governments to end violence against women. Some important insights produced through the work of NGOs are as follows:

- There is inadequate information and statistics on the extent and effects of violence against women. Governments have to gather adequate and segregated data.
- The home is an unsafe place for many women as it is a place where violence against women takes place. However, society with the backing of institutions invisibilise these crimes in the interest of preserving what is seen as the sanctity of family life. In the area of sexual crimes or kidnapping there are also instances where the family colludes with the perpetrator to seek solutions such as forgiveness or marriage. This in turn places

guilt and shame on the women while absolving the perpetrator. Women, under these circumstances not only not seek remedies but also took on the responsibility for the crime. This is the syndrome of the victim having provoked the perpetrator. Violence against women has to be condemned categorically and openly by all. There has to be a strong state policy towards this end. There is no excuse for abuse. The use of euphemisms and trying to address violence against women under the broad rubric of violence against all, does grave injustice to abused women.

- It is crucial to address the impact of extreme forms of interpretation of culture and tradition and its manifestations as violence against women and to recognise that culture or religion can never justify violence. This has been agreed upon in Vienna 1993.
- There is a lack of adequate legal remedies that provides appropriate criminal and civil options and where there are legal remedies the lack of adequate implementation and monitoring negates the existence of the remedy. This leads to impunity.
- The critical importance of multi-sectoral approaches is not adequately recognised.
- There is a lack of victim support services. This is essential especially where the family will not face up to the crime that has been committed against the women concerned.
- Finally particular attention has to be paid to women in extremely disadvantaged circumstances such as migrant women, refugee women, asylum seeker, trafficked women, indigenous women and women from minority groups. They are at risk of multiple forms of discrimination and hence the risk of violence and the potential of impunity is intensified in their cases. In this end, we strongly support the Special Rapporteur on VAW in using an intersectional approach to address multiple forms of discrimination. We urge in particular that governments treat refugee women, asylum seeking women and trafficked women from a human rights perspective. Too often such women are treated from the perspective of immigration laws and are deported, placing them at further risk of violence and abuse.

In conclusion, we urge that all States parties to the CEDAW Convention to be mindful of their obligations, including under General Recommendation 19, and not only report in a timely manner to the Committee but also take measures to implement its Concluding Comments. We also call upon governments to ratify the OP-CEDAW to CEDAW as it is also critical for women to fully claim their rights at all levels. In all these, we urge governments to collaborate and work with NGOs.

Thank you Mr Chairperson.