



INTRODUCTION

In 2018, many of the issues inimical to women's human rights became even more entrenched. We observed considerable pushback on the recognition of and accountability for human rights in general, and women's human rights in particular. Harnessing the knowledge and experience gained in our 25 years of existence, our small but dedicated team engaged with a wide range of actors at the national, regional and global levels to share our expertise on issues pertaining to gender equality, to support NGOs in engaging with the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and to amplify the voices of those directly affected by discriminatory laws and policies.

Many countries are experiencing a growing curtailment of democratic freedoms – freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of movement – together with a growing racism, misogyny and structural violence that is directed towards women and minorities. This global backsliding on human rights obligations and shrinking of civil society spaces narrows the avenues for organising and advocacy for rights, and this is especially so for groups of marginalised women. International advocacy spaces, including the CEDAW review session, are for many groups the only safe spaces available. However, it remains necessary to defend the inclusivity of these spaces and be vigilant that they are not co-opted by conservative/right-wing forces. At each CEDAW session in Geneva, we ensure that women are directly able to share their experiences with the CEDAW Committee, and that the Committee can use these experiences to interrogate the states. This is empowering for the women, but also sometimes dangerous, and we need to be cognizant of safety considerations for activists who may face reprisals from a repressive regime.

Our work on harmonising the human rights framework and the sustainable development framework led in 2018 to our collaboration with Palestinian women's rights groups which enabled them to write a civil society report on the SDGs, based on the NGO shadow reports for the CEDAW review. This had several impacts: the CEDAW Committee used the report to interrogate the state of Palestine; using the SDG framework enabled the

INTRODUCTION

Palestinian women's rights organisations to improve on their shadow report to CEDAW, by adding the all-important issue of access to water resources and clean water as an acute problem. They showed how this impacted women's role as caregivers, and the human rights of women and girls including their sexual and reproductive rights.

Our efforts to challenge the dominance of the neoliberal economic paradigm – one which seeks to implement a market-led world economy to the detriment of women's human rights – saw us, in 2018, taking an 'insider/outsider' strategy. We worked in solidarity with activists resisting the policies of the World Bank and IMF, while at the same time challenging the institutions from within. Our executive director Priyanthi Fernando participated in the World Bank-IMF Annual Meetings, seizing the opportunity to question dominant assumptions about what does or does not constitute women's work. And our programme officer Sanyu Awori was called on to develop a gender strategy for the International Organization for Migration's CREST project – a multi-million-dollar initiative on engaging the private sector in eliminating modern slavery in its supply chains and business operations. This collaboration was an opportunity to influence how IOM as an organisation understands and analyses gender in its work. It also enabled us to initiate a conversation with private sector companies on what they need to do to safeguard the rights of women migrant workers and to reduce the risks of forced labour, trafficking and slavery.

Recognising that laws and institutions can be positive conduits for change or barriers to change, we are vigilant to the challenges presented by state capture and corporate capture that result in co-option or in many cases weaponisation of laws and institutions against human rights. A key focus of our strategy in this area is to engage with the 'positive deviants' – judges, lawyers and legal activists committed to progressive rulings – and in 2018 we provided online and regional training to build their capacity.

INTRODUCTION

Although our name references our Asia Pacific location, our focus and reach is much broader. Kuala Lumpur offers us a convenient base to convene international meetings and access other events in the region, as well as proximity to an increasingly open and vibrant civil society – all the more so since the historic election of 2018. While we celebrate the advances made towards the full realisation of women's human rights, we remain alert to the threats from opposing forces. After a full quarter century of organising, we remain as ready as ever to support activists around the world in their quest for gender equality.



Left to right: IRAW Asia Pacific staff Sanyu Awori, Sachini Perera, Priyanthi Fernando, Shanti Uprety and Phang Lai Yoong together with Akiko and Akihiro from Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan, during their September 2018 visit to Kuala Lumpur

GLOSSARY

AICHR	ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GBVAW	Gender-Based Violence Against Women
GR	General Recommendation
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OP CEDAW	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNTB	United Nations Treaty Bodies
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WRO	Women's Rights Organisation

ABOUT IWRAW ASIA PACIFIC

International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific is a feminist organisation committed to the full realisation of women's human rights through the pursuit of equality. We act to disrupt structures, systems and institutions that violate women's human rights, and we engage in movement building that amplifies women's voices and activism to create alternative political narratives and spaces.

We have a core set of activities centred on the CEDAW review process, from supporting women's organisations in shadow report writing to monitoring the implementation of the Convention and mobilising the women's human rights constituency to set standards at the international level. In the last few years, we have also aimed at developing an understanding of several thematic areas identified as important by our partners, as well as by our analysis of new and emerging issues in the external environment.

Our way of working has always been to create a culture of compliance with CEDAW and other human rights treaties by strengthening the capacity of women's organisations and coalitions, government institutions, National Human Rights Institutions, legal practitioners, and others. We have also engaged in evidence-based advocacy with the CEDAW Committee and other treaty bodies, and other public institutions at the national, regional and international level, and the private sector. We have developed extensive networks, built strategic alliances and kept ourselves abreast of changes in the women's movement.

Below are our programme areas; in the coming pages, we elaborate on the programmes that were prioritised in 2018.



Access to Justice

Enhancing women's access to justice is critical to ensuring women's substantive equality in all other spheres. Further, IRAW Asia Pacific has historically identified the capacity building of justice sector actors – judges and lawyers – as a key component for advancing the discourse on gender equality in laws and policies at the national level and thereby driving the domestication of CEDAW.

Recent movements the world over have highlighted the consistent and often egregious failure of laws and institutions to adequately protect women's rights. This erosion of faith in public institutions – precipitated in many national contexts due to state capture and corporate capture – points to a graver concern regarding rollbacks on the rule of law and other principles of good governance. Our near-term strategy has been to focus on individual champions of gender equality who, through adjudication, litigation or advocacy for law and policy reform, are contributing to creating an enabling legal environment for the realisation of women's right of access to justice.

IRAW Asia Pacific aims to create an enabling legal environment for women's access to justice by ensuring enhanced implementation of CEDAW through laws, policies and institutions. In doing so, it follows a three-pronged, multi-stakeholder approach:

1. Enhancing the technical capacity of women's rights organisations (WROs) to engage with law and policy frameworks and justice sector institutions to increase their compliance with the CEDAW framework;
2. Engaging directly with justice sector and legal actors – judges, lawyers, legal organisations – in order to engender the justice sector systemically as well as building their technical capacity to engage with the CEDAW framework; and
3. Convening spaces for WROs and justice sector actors to leverage their specific experiences and capacities towards identifying scalable solutions to key challenges concerning women's human rights and access to justice.

OUR PROGRAMMES

Business and Women's Human Rights

Corporations have a significant influence on political, economic and social processes in both national and international spheres, sometimes even possessing more wealth than governments. With this growing power, there is a definite risk that women's human rights will be undermined in the quest for the consolidation of wealth. Due to entrenched discriminatory and patriarchal laws, practices and systems, business activities often exacerbate gender inequalities, with women bearing a disproportionate impact of corporate activities as workers, human rights defenders and as communities affected by the actions of corporations.

IWRAW Asia Pacific's work on business and women's human rights aims to amplify women's voices and lived experiences in the Global South, and influence regional and international processes to integrate women's human rights in strategies to address corporate responsibility and accountability. Our role is to ensure that global discussions are grounded in local experiences and women's lived realities. We use an intersectional human-rights-based framework to demonstrate the gender-specific impact of corporate abuses and work to strengthen understanding on gender-sensitive approaches to business and human rights so that women's experiences are not rendered invisible.

Rights of Marginalised Women

IWRAW Asia Pacific remains committed to the realisation of rights of all women and seeks to find more inclusive ways to make the human rights claims of marginalised groups of women visible and effective. It is essential to challenge and dismantle the systems of oppression that perpetuate structural inequality for groups of women that face exclusion, invisibility and a denial of rights in their day to day lives. We are guided by the principles of [inclusion](#), [intersectionality](#), [accessibility](#), [accountability](#) and [solidarity](#) to ensure that the rights of marginalised groups of women are addressed systematically across all of our areas of work.

OUR PROGRAMMES

Sustainable Development

IWRAW Asia Pacific believes that it is a legal, political and moral imperative to ground development priorities in human rights and that universal standards for development outcomes must be ensured, with states centering policies and programmes in such a way to ensure that the results reach those who need them the most.

Our work aims to create and strengthen alternative spaces for women's voices, especially from the Global South, to bring country-level issues and priorities to influence global and regional agendas. To this end, we coordinate and convene the Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development. We also focus on connecting the human rights framework to the sustainable development framework as we believe that development priorities based on human rights would enhance accountability and shift the focus from aspirational rhetoric to actual implementation. CEDAW, as one of the most widely ratified international conventions, would provide a robust and evolving framework for State accountability and obligation under international law and link women's human rights and development.



OUR PROGRAMMES

Violence against Women

IWRAW Asia Pacific's strategy to address gender-based violence against women (GBVAW) is aimed at dismantling unequal power relations, as well as addressing the structural and systemic discrimination in which GBVAW manifests. Our work focuses on using the CEDAW framework as a conceptual tool and an advocacy space to address positive and negative norms that influence ideas, behaviours and laws around GBVAW. We also use CEDAW to strategically support the national activism of women's rights organisations to hold states accountable for cases of GBVAW.

We work towards the progressive interpretation and development of GBVAW standards in international and regional advocacy spaces, including CEDAW, by providing strategic and technical support to facilitate the engagement of national women's rights organisations with these spaces and processes. We also engage directly with global advocacy spaces and other treaty bodies to integrate the CEDAW framework on GBVAW.

Our engagement with legal actors through our Access to Justice programme, including judges, lawyers and other state institutions, employs a multi-pronged strategy to enhance their capacity in applying the CEDAW framework to domestic cases and to facilitate cross-learning exchanges with the aim of identifying strategies and solutions to address GBVAW.



Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Women's economic, social and cultural rights are consistently challenged by patriarchal practices, structural inequalities and multiple forms of discrimination in laws and in practice. This is further influenced by private sector behaviours, and, for the Global South, impacted by the existence of infrastructural and technology-driven national development. Our aim at IWRAW Asia Pacific is to strengthen the feminist response to current economic development by focusing on strategies that support women's rights organisations to claim women's economic rights, as well as contribute to a more gender-responsive policy environment.

We have been using substantive equality and non-discrimination framework as the basis of our analysis and advocacy for the progressive interpretations of women's economic, social and cultural rights - and actively advocating to move away from instrumental approaches to women's inclusion in the economic sector. The key priority areas and emerging issues that we have been working on include rights of women migrant workers, issues of women workers in global value chain, women's rights in land and natural resources, and business and human rights corporate accountability.



From Global to Local

From Global to Local is IWRAW Asia Pacific's flagship training and mentoring programme, which is held in conjunction with each CEDAW session in Geneva.

This programme aims to help women's groups and NGOs who wish to participate in the CEDAW reporting process. The objectives of this training programme are to provide process information for how groups can engage with the Committee, share information on the body of work of the Committee and support NGOs in preparing for their oral statements and lunch briefing. This is also a space for women's groups to share solidarity and knowledge for our common goals and priorities of women's human rights. The training and mentoring provides participants with updated information and hints and tips about engaging with the CEDAW review process.

2018 TIMELINE

January

OP CEDAW Online Training

A2J

Developed through a process of consultation with women's rights activists, the OP CEDAW online training platform for lawyers was launched in collaboration with the University of New Mexico. 15 participants from Asia and Africa were selected to take part in the training, which ran until May 2018.

The Optional Protocol to CEDAW enables women to seek redress for violations of the Convention. Its communication procedure enables women to submit complaints alleging that a State Party has violated their rights in CEDAW, while its inquiry procedure empowers the Committee to conduct inquiries into reliable information that a State Party has committed grave or systematic violations of rights in CEDAW.

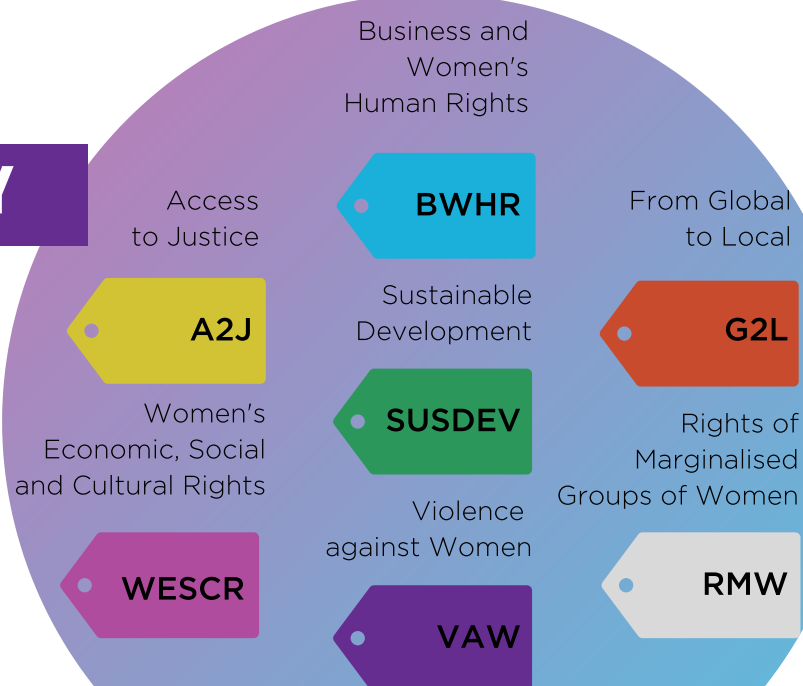
February

69th CEDAW Session

G2L

25 women's rights activists from Chile, Fiji, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Suriname engaged with the CEDAW session, with the assistance of IWRAW Asia Pacific. Seven activists were directly supported to participate. IWRAW Asia Pacific had provided technical support for six shadow reports, from Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Suriname.

KEY



Sex work was a controversial topic for Korean NGOs at CEDAW, the majority taking a prohibitionist stance. A participant from Minbyun Korea shared that our publications on sex work, produced in collaboration with the Global Network of Sex Work Projects, were "a very useful resource to start the dialogue in Korea".

RMW

2018 TIMELINE

Global South Women's Forum

29 women's rights activists from across the Middle East and North Africa attended the MENA Regional Consultation of the Global South Women's Forum on Sustainable Development. This event was organised by IWRAW AP in collaboration with MENA WROs, with financial support from OXFAM Egypt. Participants discussed the particular challenges of sustainable development and women's human rights priorities in their region, including restrictions on civil society, lack of transparency and structural barriers to implementation. They discussed issues such as the rights of refugees, the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the gendered division of unpaid work and family-oriented government policies which address women as unequal citizens; and mobilised around collective strategies for advocacy and in influencing their states.

SUSDEV

not without us

Women's Rights Activists from the Middle East and North Africa Call for Sustainable Development Centered on Human Rights

If women's rights organizations are to be an equal partner in implementing the SDGs, states must **lift restrictions on civil society.**

#GlobalSouthWomenSpeak

www.iwraw-ap.org

2018 TIMELINE

UN Guiding Principles Consultation

BWHR

IWRAW Asia Pacific programme officer Sanyu Awori was invited to take part in the Asia Consultation on applying a gender lens to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, organised by the Genpact Centre for Women's Leadership and the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights together with UNDP in Sonipat, India. The consultation discussed challenges faced by women human rights defenders; examined women's experiences in accessing remedies; and elaborated on abuses faced by women workers, such as suppression of their collective bargaining rights, low wages, violence and harassment, as well as low levels of women's representation in corporate decision making. This event afforded IWRAW Asia Pacific the opportunity to amplify women's human rights voices and the CEDAW framework in a non-traditional forum and increase recognition of the organisation as a stakeholder in business and human rights. Sanyu additionally contributed a blog post to the Genpact Centre's website.



March

62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women

IWRAW Asia Pacific co-sponsored two events on corporate accountability at CSW62: 'Rural Women and Corporate Human Rights Abuse: Feminist perspectives on accountability', organised by Feminists for A Binding Treaty, of which IWRAW AP is a member; and 'Human Rights and Political Participation: gender perspectives on corporate accountability', which had as its core sponsor the permanent mission of Ecuador.

Our board member Maria Graterol took part in an expert workshop on violence and harassment against women in the world of work, hosted by CARE International and UN Women, and was invited by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation to participate in a side event on harnessing the SDGs to secure women's rights to land, organised in collaboration with FAO.

BWHR

WESCR

SUSDEV

2018 TIMELINE

IHRB Podcast

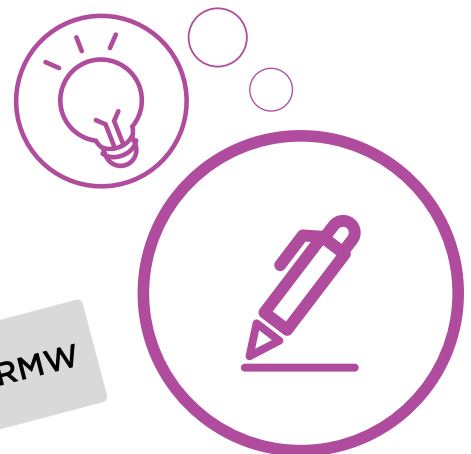


Salil Tripathi of the Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB) recorded an interview with Sanyu Awori about what companies need to do to overcome issues facing women and people of colour in the workplace – from CEOs to the bottom of the supply chain.

BWHR

Shadow Report Guidelines for Women who Use Drugs

Inspired by the efforts of sex worker organisations in recent years to engage with CEDAW reviews, the community of women who use drugs began to look towards the same approach. IWRAW AP held a writeshop in Kuala Lumpur to develop CEDAW shadow report guidelines in partnership with women who use drugs. The 12 participants included three members of the community as well as representatives of regional and national organisations advocating for their rights. The countries represented were Georgia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Russia and Ukraine.



RMW

"The writeshop provided many learnings, not just on maximising international instruments like CEDAW but also from the varied experiences of those who have been working on this issue. My takeaway from the writeshop is that CEDAW must be studied and utilised together with the whole gamut of human rights instruments, and the rights of women who use drugs must be seen as an integral part of the movement towards the recognition of women's rights as human rights."

Mary Catherine Alvarez

"THE FIRST STEP, AS EVER, IS
MAKING OURSELVES HEARD."

Judy Chang

International Network of People who Use Drugs



NGO Reporting Guidelines on CEDAW &
Rights of Women who Use Drugs

2018 TIMELINE

April

IMF Spring Meetings

WESCR

Programme officer Shanti Uprety participated in the IMF's Spring Meetings in Washington DC, where she was a panelist in the Gender Coffee Chat 'Advocating for Women's Empowerment: Voices from the Field' alongside Loren Legarda, a senator from the Philippines.

May

Labour Dialogue

50 women trade unionists, labour rights activists and women's rights activists, as well as state institutions and multilateral agencies such as the ILO and treaty body members (CESCR and CEDAW), gathered in Kathmandu for a multistakeholder dialogue convened by IWRAW Asia Pacific. Together they represented 14 countries, with around half of the Nepali participants coming from indigenous communities.

WESCR

OP CEDAW Training

WESCR

Workers Information Center Cambodia received technical assistance from IWRAW Asia Pacific to support their strategic thinking around utilising the OP CEDAW inquiry mechanism to address the violations of economic and social rights of women workers. OP CEDAW training provided the participants with a clear idea of the treaty and its mechanisms and procedures, with particular focus on the inquiry system.

UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

IWRAW Asia Pacific engaged with the CCPCJ on the recommendation of Dubravka Simonovic, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, who had participated in the drafting of the Bellagio Declaration, which she specifically endorsed in her press statement.

Lawyers' Case Clinic

Seven lawyers and legal activists from Southeast Asia took part in a case clinic. Each of them identified a case for application of what they had learned in the online training platform.

A2J

A2J

2018 TIMELINE

June

AICHR Interregional Dialogue

Sanyu Awori represented IWRAW Asia Pacific at the AICHR Interregional Dialogue: Sharing Good Practices on Business and Human Rights, taking part in a panel on grievance mechanisms and an effective remedy framework. She discussed the barriers women face in accessing justice and effective remedy for human rights violations in the context of business activity, and made recommendations on how states and companies could address these barriers. The dialogue was attended by the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, national and regional human rights mechanisms, state representatives, private sector and civil society representatives in order to understand good practice and ways in which different stakeholders could cooperate to enhance the effectiveness of the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in the ASEAN region.

BWHR

Partnership with the Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers

IWRAW Asia Pacific embarked on a partnership with APNSW to implement a three-year programme aimed at enhancing the technical capacity of sex workers' rights advocates in South and Southeast Asia to engage with the international women's rights framework.

July

High-Level Political Forum

At the HLPF IWRAW Asia Pacific is engaging in advocacy around the reform of HLPF modalities, which is a key UN reform process. Programme officer Sachini Perera spoke on behalf of IWRAW Asia Pacific and RESURJ in an event on stakeholder engagement in the HLPF and its review in 2019, recommending better integration of the human rights framework and sustainable development framework.

SUSDEV

RMW



2018 TIMELINE

70th CEDAW Session

G2L

IWRAW Asia Pacific facilitated the engagement of 22 women's rights activists from Australia, Cook Islands, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Mexico, New Zealand, Palestine and Turkmenistan, of whom eight activists were directly supported to participate. Four additional activists from Monaco and South Sudan participated in the From Global to Local programme in order to learn more about processes under CEDAW and how it could be linked to national strategies to address women's human rights in their countries.

The report *Leaving No One Behind: The Imperative of Inclusive Development in Palestine*, which was produced using the IWRAW Asia Pacific SDG-CEDAW tool, was submitted by Palestinian activists for both Palestine's CEDAW and HLPF reviews. The CEDAW Committee used the report in its constructive dialogue with the State of Palestine, showing particular interest in measures taken to align policy making with SDG commitments.



SUSDEV

BWHR

Australian NGOs worked with Papuan NGOs to campaign at CEDAW on the harmful impact on gender equality of Australian extractive industries in Papua New Guinea, including increased income inequality, reduced access to land and productive resources, and increased risk of violence.



"You have restored my faith in the CEDAW process ... I thought it was all well prepared and presented. Your guidance and hand-holding and solidarity with us through the process was excellent ... you were all very friendly, supportive and most helpful. We really benefitted much from your support ... IWRAW Asia Pacific was there to guide us all the way through. Thank you!"

From Global to Local participant representing Papuan women's concerns at CEDAW, July 2018

2018 TIMELINE

August

CREST Focus Group Discussions

IWRAW Asia Pacific held two focus group discussions, one with NGOs and one with private sector representatives, on challenges faced by migrant workers in Malaysia. These activities took place as part of the International Organization for Migration's Corporate Responsibility in Eliminating Slavery and Trafficking (CREST) project, an initiative on engaging the private sector in eliminating modern slavery in its supply chains and business operations, which invited IWRAW Asia Pacific programme officer Sanyu Awori to develop a gender strategy. The discussions sought to map the journeys taken by migrant workers, from recruitment in their home country to eventual return, and covered issues such as gender-specific factors pushing women to migrate for work, gendered constraints on migration, and restrictions on workers' rights.

BWHR

September

NGO Roundtable on Migrant Rights

BWHR

A visit from Sasakawa Peace Foundation was the catalyst for a convening by IWRAW Asia Pacific of Malaysian NGO representatives who gathered to discuss the rights of migrants and refugees in the country, particularly in the world of work.



IWRAW
ASIA PACIFIC

**NGO ROUNDTABLE ON
BUSINESS & HUMAN
RIGHTS IN MALAYSIA**

There is no access to justice for migrant workers, and in particular the women workers. One law supercedes the other in the Malaysian context. Labour laws are trumped by the Immigration Act. Pregnant women are deported within 24 hours of testing, as if it's a disease. This is state framework, enabling employers to abuse.

GLORENE DAS
TENAGANITA

2018 TIMELINE

October

71st CEDAW Session



IWRAW Asia Pacific facilitated the engagement of women's rights activists from the Bahamas, Congo, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mauritius, Nepal, North Macedonia, Samoa and Tajikistan, directly supporting the participation of 14 activists.

G2L



The CEDAW Committee, in its Concluding Observations and recommendations, called for tax havens Bahamas and Mauritius to ensure their extraterritorial obligations for women's human rights with regard to financial and tax policies, and for Samoa to monitor effects of entering into trade agreements.

BWHR

Our side event, 'The Legal, Political and Moral Imperative of Grounding Development Priorities in Women's Human Rights', held during the 71st CEDAW session, celebrated the CEDAW Committee's work on a set of guidance questions to state parties on implementation of SDGs in compliance with CEDAW outcomes.

SUSDEV

The panelists – from IWRAW Asia Pacific, the CEDAW Committee, the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the UN, and the Danish Institute for Human Rights – discussed better integration of the human rights framework and the sustainable development framework, and shared examples of how WROs, treaty bodies, National Human Rights Institutions and states are approaching this.

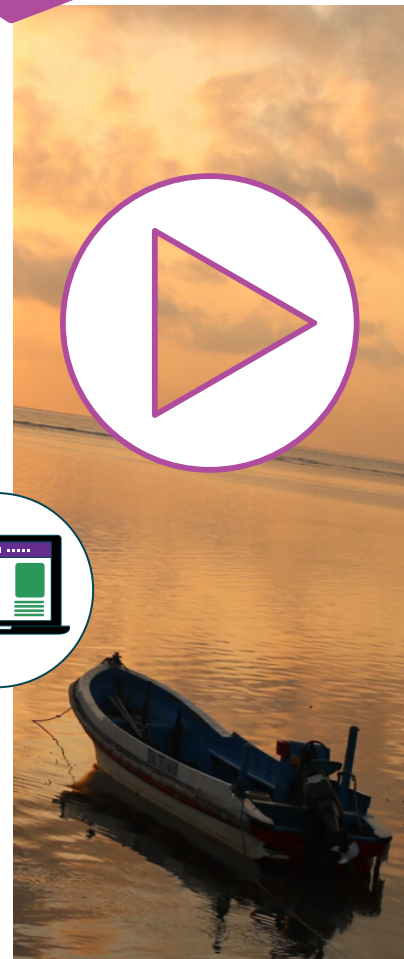


2018 TIMELINE

IMF/World Bank Annual Meeting

WESCR

Our executive director Priyanthi Fernando was invited to the IMF/World Bank Annual Meeting in Bali, affording another opportunity for IWRAW Asia Pacific to challenge IFI thinking from the inside. She shared a panel with IMF Director Christine Lagarde; Indonesian Minister of Finance Sri Mulyani Indrawati; Executive Secretary of UNECA, Vera Songwe; and Carolyn Wilkins, Senior Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Canada. Priyanthi raised issues including unpaid care work, migrant domestic work, and factors preventing girlchildren from attending school. Her interventions aimed to provide a reality check for women discussing gender equality from a very instrumental (#women4growth) and narrow perspective. Although Christine Lagarde stated that the need to count and value women's unpaid work would be discussed at the Sixth IMF Statistical Forum, 'Measuring Welfare in the Digital Age: What and How?', this did not happen - meaning the ball is now in IWRAW Asia Pacific's court to keep up the pressure.



UNTB Litigators' Meeting

IWRAW Asia Pacific programme manager Audrey Lee attended the UNTB Litigators' Meeting in Geneva, which brought together NGOs working on legal strategies to address human rights violations through the OP mechanisms, as well as representatives of the OHCHR's petitions unit. The meeting looked at procedural challenges and opportunities in submission cases through the OP mechanisms of the different treaty bodies, as well as its implementation.

A2J

2018 TIMELINE

Strategising for Human Rights

A regional organisation, Strategic Advocacy for Human Rights, received advice from IWRAW Asia Pacific on legal strategies that could be utilised in Afghanistan to enhance CEDAW compliance. Some of the strategies included ratification campaigns for the OP CEDAW and also CEDAW training for lawyers.

Post-CEDAW Update

Mexico committed to a 50/50 gender composition in its new cabinet, following commitments made during its CEDAW review.



WESCR

A2J

November

16 Days Campaign

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence against Women began in late November and continued into December.

This year's campaign particularly focused on the ILO convention on violence and harassment in the world of work, which was then in draft. In our social media messaging, we introduced different themes each day, highlighting the struggles of women workers in a range of sectors and circumstances.



Certain categories of workers - including those in the informal sector, home-based workers, domestic workers and sex workers - face higher risks of violence and harassment at work, and special measures are required to address this.

**END GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE IN THE
WORLD OF WORK**

#16DAYS
#ILOENDGBV

WESCR

GBVAW



#ILOENDGBV
#16DAYS



“Refugees are exploited because local employers know there is no law protecting them. At the end of the month some refugees do not get their salary. Employers tell them that if they come again to request it, they will report them to Immigration.”

HTU LAI MAGAWNG
MYANMAR ETHNIC WOMEN REFUGEES ORGANIZATION,
MALAYSIA

December

Regional Training on CEDAW and Sex Workers' Rights

Sex workers' rights activists from ten countries in Asia and Africa congregated in Chiang Mai for training on using CEDAW. This work was carried out by IRAW Asia Pacific in partnership with the Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers, with assistance from IRAW AP resource person Undariya Tumursukh and Scarlet Alliance CEO Jules Kim, and involved interpreters for an ambitious six languages. The participants comprised a lively group with a strong sense of community, forging connections across language barriers and infusing the proceedings with a sense of fun. The first day of the training was the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers, so participants shared their messages for social media.

RMW



2018 TIMELINE

African Lawyers' Training

A case clinic for lawyers from the Eastern and Southern Africa region was incorporated into a lawyers training organised by IWRAW Asia Pacific in collaboration with Masimanyane Women's Rights International, South Africa and Mentoring and Empowerment Programme for Young Women (MEMPROW), Uganda. Additional participants attended from Ghana and Nigeria due to their similar legal systems. The workshop provided knowledge on CEDAW and a space for and exchange of experiences and mutual learning on effective legal advocacy strategies to support national legal activism. It was mainly attended by lawyers and paralegals who work on cases related to women's rights, with some specifically focusing on strategic litigation and law reform from a rights perspective. Analysis was provided of key elements of CEDAW and the African Union human rights frameworks and processes as they relate to GBVAW, and opportunities for strategically linking advocacy strategies were also presented.

As a result of the workshop, participants mapped out priority issues and gaps in national laws addressing GBVAW. They also identified stakeholders and strategic actions that need to be taken to address these gaps, both specific to their national contexts and collectively as a regional entity.

A2J

GBVAW



DEVELOPMENTS AT CEDAW

New Priority Areas

Contemporary issues and obstacles to the full realisation of women's right to equality and non-discrimination have been addressed by the Committee in various ways. One method has been through the evolution of the scope of CEDAW obligations in relation to these present-day issues through General Recommendations, which are recommendations to states which elaborate the Committee's view of the obligations assumed under the Convention.

February: The CEDAW Committee adopted its 37th General Recommendation on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change



March: The CEDAW Committee agreed to develop a new draft General Recommendation on trafficking of women and girls in the context of global migration



State Reviews

In 2018, the following countries were reviewed by the CEDAW Committee, with the number of NGO shadow reports given in brackets:

Australia (18)
Bahamas (2)
Chile (10)
Congo (3)
Cook Islands (2)
Fiji (3)
Laos (3)
Liechtenstein (2)
Luxembourg (3)
Malaysia (9)
Marshall Islands (1)
Mexico (22)
Nepal (25)
New Zealand (17)
North Macedonia (17)
Palestine (1)
Samoa (2)
Saudi Arabia (8)
South Korea (12)
Suriname (1)
Tajikistan (8)
Turkmenistan (2)

Trends Impacting Marginalised Groups of Women

Marginalised groups of women are increasingly accessing the CEDAW space, including groups that face barriers to participation in civil society in their own countries. Issues that they highlighted and which the CEDAW Committee reflected during state reviews included the following:



sexual violence against indigenous women during armed conflict

sexual abuse in special schools and group homes, particularly against Roma girls



access to health, education and the justice system for women with disabilities

mandatory HIV testing of sex workers



barriers faced by ethnic minorities, including Creoles in

Mauritius, Hmong in Laos and Roma in North Macedonia

harassment of sex workers by law enforcement agencies



infanticide, genital mutilation and forced marriage of intersex children



homophobia; criminalisation of lesbian, bisexual and transgender women; same-sex marriage



RESOURCES

Some highlights among the publications and videos produced by IWRAW Asia Pacific in 2018:

A Feminist Approach to Economic Justice



Outlining our aims, motivations and activities, this four-page information brief connects IWRAW Asia Pacific's work on women's economic, social and cultural rights and business and women's human rights.

Four Things to Know about the Purple Economy



A two-page briefing paper in which IWRAW Asia Pacific Advisory Committee member Professor Ipek Ilkkaracan outlines her vision of an economic model which recognises care work. Until economic policies are implemented which reduce and redistribute care work, gender inequalities will not be addressed.



Priyanthi Fernando at the IMF/World Bank Annual Meeting

In these clips from the IMF gender seminar 'Empowering Women in the Workplace', Priyanthi highlights barriers to empowerment, particularly for women in the Global South; and calls for the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work.



Not Without Us

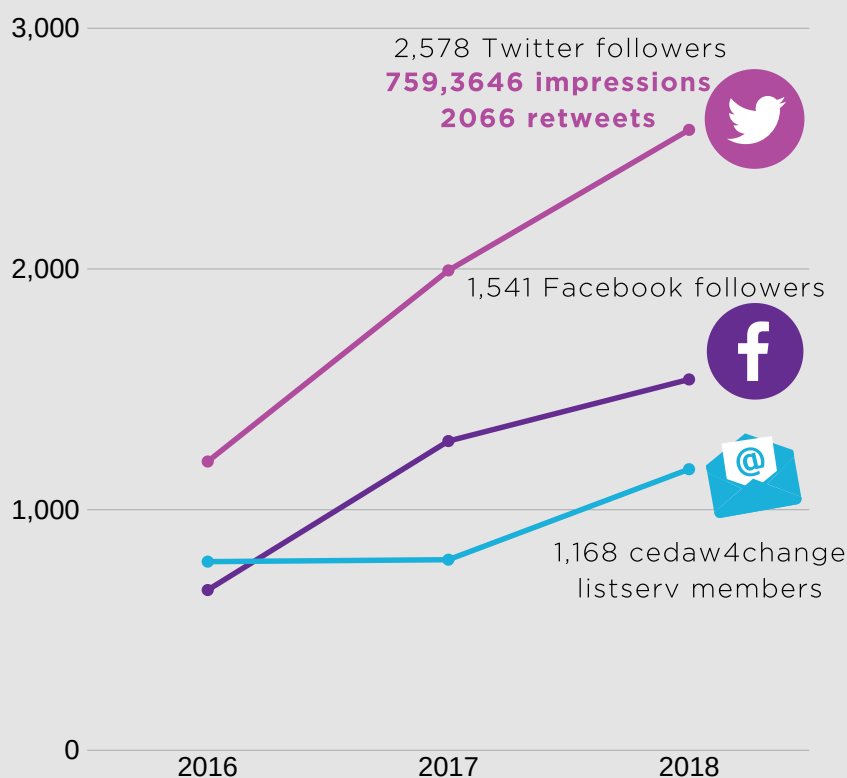
As well as the outcome documents from the Global South Women's Forum MENA Convening, available in English and Arabic, we produced a series of videos profiling participants and highlighting the various challenges faced in their countries.



Nada Nashat
Center for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (CEWLA)
Egypt

2018 BY NUMBERS

Online



27,903 website pageviews

2018 saw the launch of our new website and brand redesign.



6,425 YouTube views
13,073 minutes

Most popular video:
Business and Women's Human Rights: Women Migrant Workers



Offline

In 2018, IWRAW Asia Pacific held workshops and convenings in the following locations:

Switzerland
3 CEDAW sessions
108 pax

Jordan
2 events
31 pax

Uganda
1 event
24 pax

Nepal
1 event · 50 pax

Thailand
2 events
37 pax

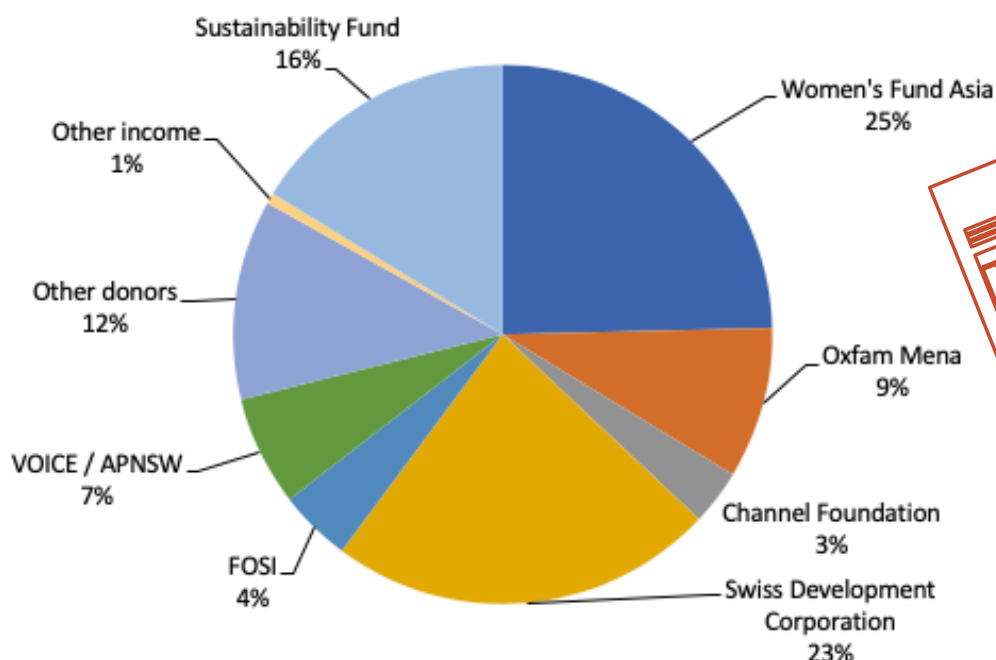
Malaysia
2 events · 74 pax

FINANCES

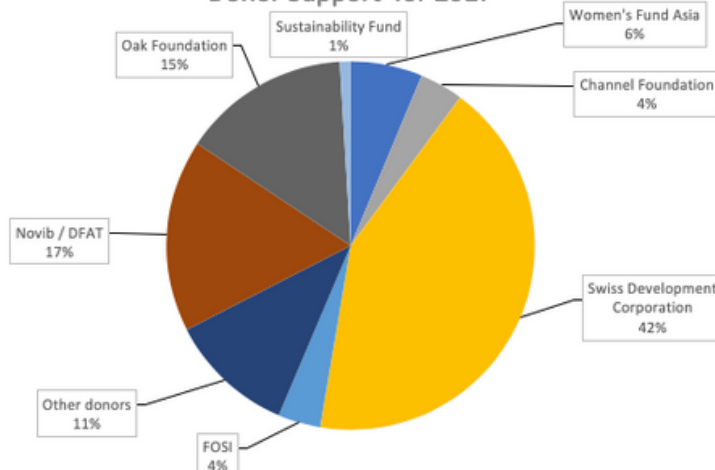
Donor Base

Fundraising continues to be a challenge. Grants received in 2018 were 16% lower than those received the previous year. But we were able to maintain the same level of programmatic activities as in 2017 by restructuring the manner in which we support participants to the CEDAW session review and by drawing from our sustainability fund. The Swiss Development Corporation continues to be the key core donor for IWRAW Asia Pacific.

Donor Support for 2018

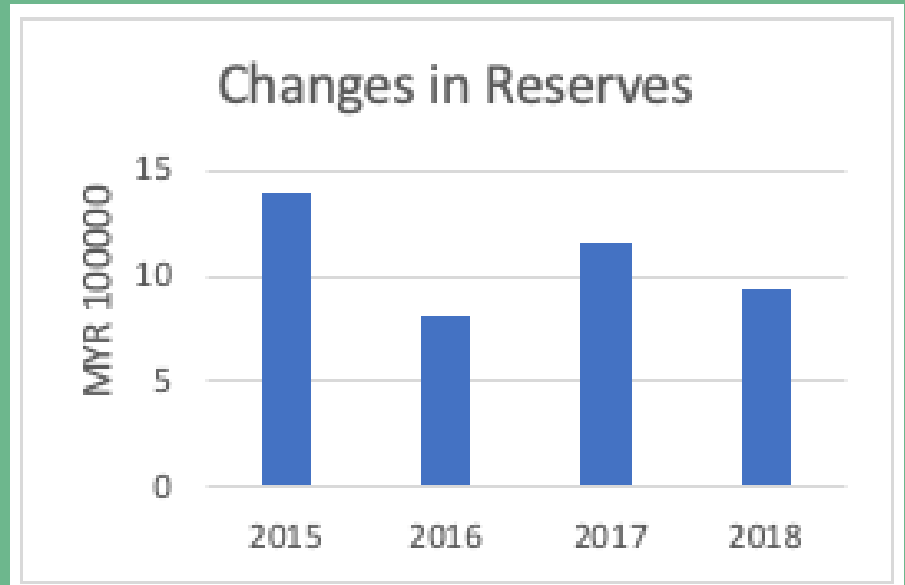


Donor Support for 2017



Sustainability Fund (Reserves)

This chart shows the changes in IWRAW Asia Pacific's reserves (now called the Sustainability Fund) over the last four years. We were able to maintain a higher level from the amount of funds that were in the reserve at the beginning of this strategic period (i.e. at the end of 2016) but the funding challenges meant that we had to draw from this fund to match the core funding contribution. So our ability to grow the fund was severely constrained.



Fundraising Intensive

At the beginning of 2018, with support from a small grant from OSF, we launched a six-month fundraising intensive with Sky(lark), a group of consultants from the USA, led by Christina Gallegos. The aim was to establish a system that would not require a firefighting methodology of fundraising, but would allow us to have capacity to have constant interactions with donors as part of our operational processes. Over the six-month period, we worked intensively to build a pipeline of prospects, and develop the capacity as team members, to make pitches to donors. We had developed a strong database of donors and a system for following up with regular fundraising meetings – but the six-month period was not sufficient to be able to integrate systematically into our regular working style, even though team members are very motivated to raise funds for their work. This is a challenge we need to work on in 2019 and into our new strategic period.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

In September, the IWRAW Asia Pacific team held a retreat to plan the organisation's direction from 2020 to 2025. This is still being finalised but key areas of focus were identified:



Challenging Right-Wing Populism

IWRAW Asia Pacific sees it as crucial at this juncture to challenge the xenophobic and anti-immigrant sentiments that are prominent components of populism: an 'us vs them' agenda which seeks to capitalise on fears about a demonised 'Other'. Our work will resist and reframe essentialised narratives.

Interrogating Borders

Borders impact – unequally – the movement of people, the movement of resources and the movement of capital. Our global advocacy cannot be carried out without dealing with the nation state, which enables Othering at a social and political level, and presents new forms of colonisation. We want to reimagine and reframe the concept of state obligation as a way to overcome the current failures of multilateralism.

Demanding Accountability

Ensuring accountability for women's human rights in multiple spaces is an overarching and constant aspect of our advocacy. We must reflect, reframe, learn and unlearn, especially in relation to dismantling hierarchies within and outside the movement.

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Staff

Executive Director
Programme Manager
Programme Officer
Programme Officer
Programme Officer
Programme Officer
Communications Officer
Administration and Finance Manager
Administration Officer
Junior Finance and Admin Officer

Priyanthi Fernando
Audrey Lee
Sanyu Awori
Ishita Dutta
Umyra Fikri Ahmad
Sachini Perera
Shanti Uprety
Nine
Pook Li Ping
Phang Lai Yoong
Zahirah Zainal

Board of Directors

Shanthi Dairiam
Noor Farida Ariffin
Lesley Ann Foster
Amal Hadi
Noraida Endut
Maria Herminia Graterol
Chee Yoke Ling

Advisory Committee

Andrew Byrnes
Savitri Goonesekere
İpek İlkkaracan
Shireen Huq
Ruth Manorama
Nalini Singh

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With thanks to Asyraf Abd Samad for the cover photograph.

International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP Asia Pacific)

is an independent, non-profit NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. IWRAP Asia Pacific has gained expertise, experience and credibility from over 25 years' work of mobilising and organising women's groups and NGOs to support the work of the State in fulfilling its obligations to respect, promote and fulfill women's human rights under CEDAW, through capacity building, advocacy and knowledge creation initiatives aimed towards development of effective national women's rights advocacy strategies.