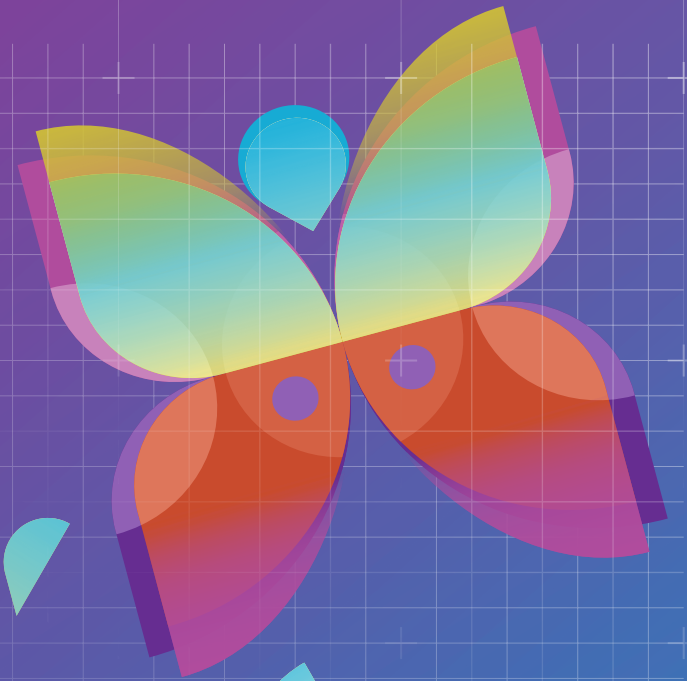


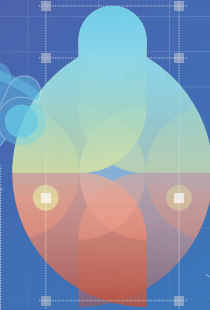
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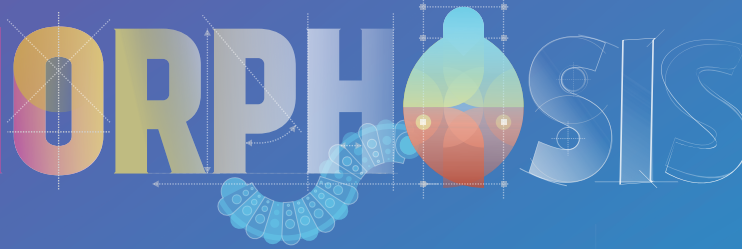
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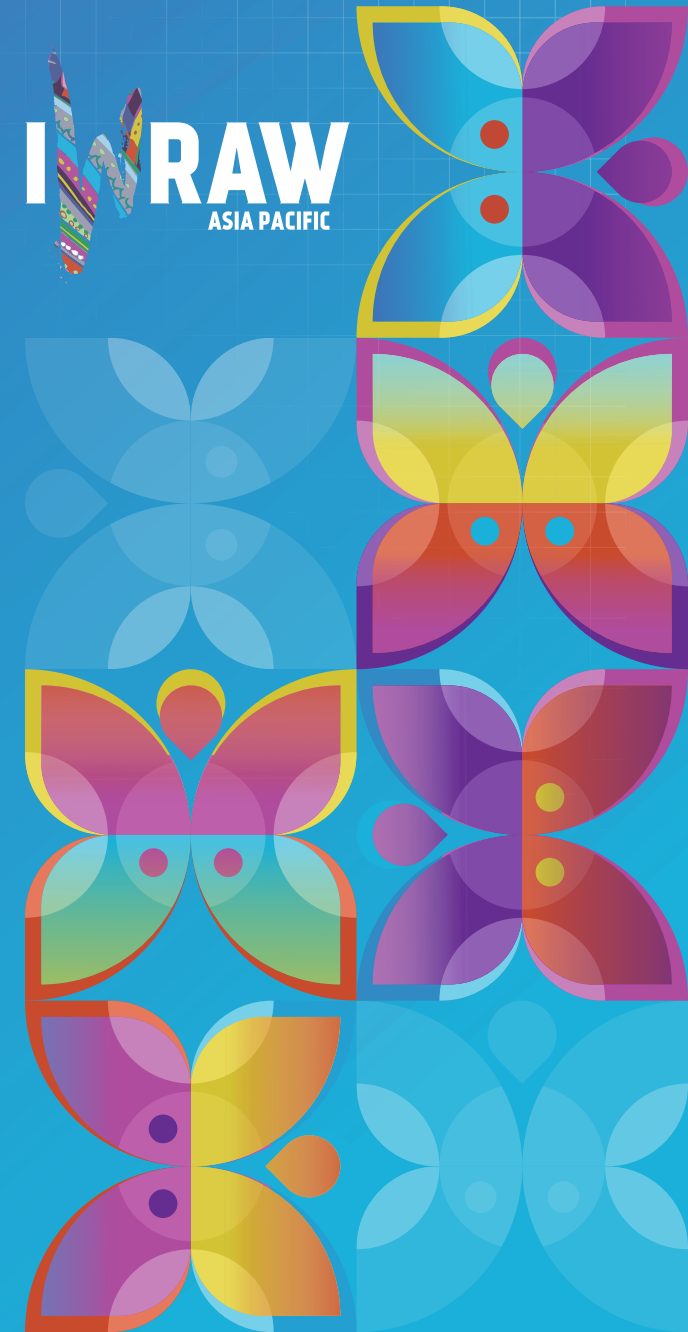
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## NAVIGATING A WORLD IN CRISIS

In 2025, global gender equality crisis continued to peak at an international scale with attacks on bodily autonomy, sex workers, trans persons, Indigenous persons, as well as rising militarisation, unabated genocides — in Congo, Myanmar, Palestine, Sudan and beyond — and the weaponisation of collective rights against individual rights, dominating the lived realities of women and gender-diverse persons.

This crisis is not a sudden occurrence. It is the product of faulty systems and structures, and the lack of accountability which have long enabled the capture of national, regional, and international institutions by oppositional forces, corporations, and hostile states which work in tandem towards a singular goal: the erosion of human rights. This ethos is not one that is new or alien to us; it is repackaged forms of patriarchy, capitalism, war, imperialism, extractivism, and ableism simply manifesting in different degrees and across varying contemporary settings.

We saw an increasing number of governments sidelining their commitments to human rights through the rejection of multilateralism.

We witnessed the rapid undoing of the United Nations and multilateralism as a whole, and more importantly its human rights agenda, as a result of countries refusing to pay their dues, meaning that the exercise of human rights norms and standards — which the UN is mandated to defend and articulate — were now at risk due to the growing pushback against the multilateral agenda. The UN's funding crisis heavily impacted civil society participation in human rights spaces, and in more extreme circumstances, led to the cancellation of such spaces such as the 92nd session of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The threats against our movements, and our collective vision of equality and freedom from discrimination do not only exist in the form of the UN's capture by the anti-rights agenda. The funding ecosystem for feminist movements continued to be heavily impacted by regressive policies in several contexts of bilateral or ODA funding models. This in turn has led to lesser civil society participation — exacerbated by formal spaces such as the UNFCCC's COP, CSW and even treaty body sessions ending live, hybrid participation — in decision making spaces which require travel to New York and/or Geneva.

We must not be disillusioned with *de jure* promises of human rights and instead interrogate and **reclaim** the creation and praxis of its norms and standards on the ground, an exercise undertaken by empowered, resourced, resilient, and robust civil society at the regional, sub-regional, national and grassroots levels operating through a community-led, and decolonial lens.

### TULIKA SRIVASTAVA

Executive Director  
IWRAW Asia Pacific



# YEAR ZERO

## 2025 AT A GLANCE

2025 marked the first year of work through our IWRAP Asia Pacific's new strategic plan, 'Cultivating Rights, Rooting Resilience'.

After spending the better half of 2024 in the process of drafting, consulting and validating the envisioned future of IWRAP Asia Pacific, 2025 served as year zero of its implementation. After five years of programmatic interventions based on thematic areas of concern regarding the violations of women's human rights, IWRAP Asia Pacific recognised the need to pivot and build a programme strategy that is flexible, adaptive and relevant to a broader range of lived realities and communities in the context of a world in crisis.

The new strategic plan builds on the learnings, outcomes, expertise and partnerships developed in the past five years where information was distilled from thematic focuses and partner interventions. This resulted in a new strategic plan which was grounded in strategic interventions. We envision Cultivating Rights, Rooting Resilience to be operationalised through three strategic pillars:

- **Fortifying Norms**
- **Forging Future for Rights**
- **Movements and Mandates**

These three strategic pillars will, in tandem, respond to three broad themes, emerging from the lessons of our previous strategic plan, that require critical and transformational action by feminist and women's human rights movements due to their direct and pervasive impact on the rights and realities of women and girls. They are:

- **People, Power, and Rights**
- **Transformative Economic Justice**
- **Feminist Climate and Environmental Justice**

### 2025, A Quick Summary

IWRAP Asia Pacific continues to serve as a **strategic feminist ecosystem builder in Asia and the Pacific**, connecting **141 diverse partner organizations** across global norm-shaping institutions, regional movement platforms, and national community-based feminist anchors.

Across **34 activities** participated by **343 activists**, supported by **7 publications**, **5 joint campaigns**, and **3 G2L sessions**, IWRAP AP contributed to strengthening Global South feminist groups' ability to collaborate, influence agendas, and demand accountability. Our work reinforced rights standards, advanced feminist economic and climate justice approaches, and built stronger movements, creating conditions for feminist collectives to shape decisions and drive change.

## IWRAP AP PARTNER ECOSYSTEM

FIG. 1:  
PARTNERS ECOSYSTEM ACCORDING TO CLUSTER (N= 141)

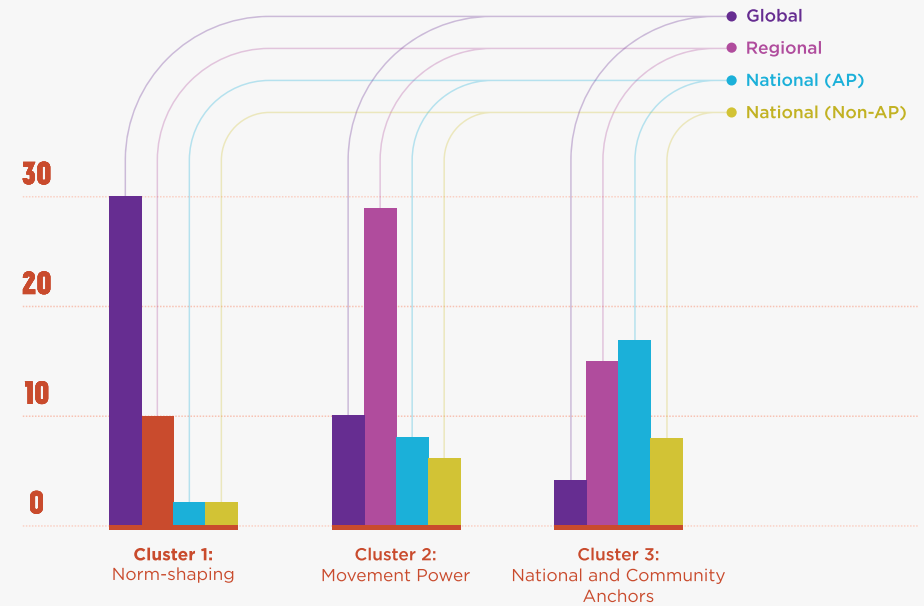
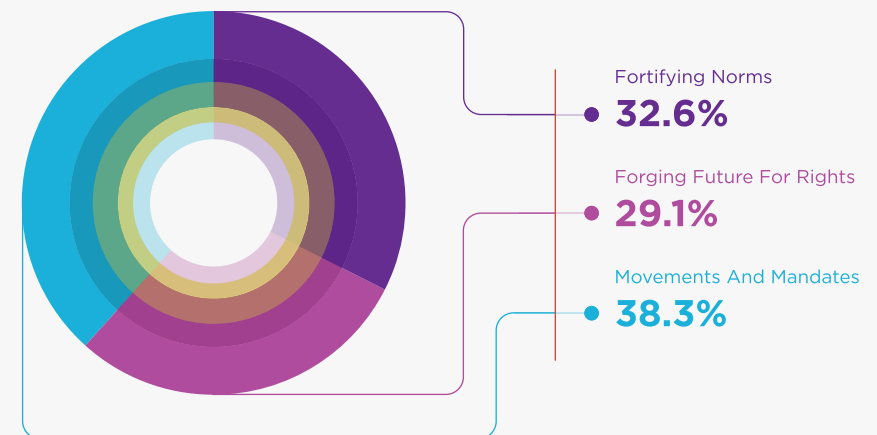


FIG. 2:  
PARTNERS ECOSYSTEM ACCORDING TO STRATEGIC PILLARS (%)



## Thematic Synthesis of IWRAP AP's 2025 Strategies

Across all programmatic interventions and activities, IWRAP Asia Pacific's work in 2025 fell into **11 overarching themes**:

1. Norm-Shaping Through UN Mechanisms and Meaningful Feminist Engagement
2. Evidence Generation and Feminist Knowledge Production
3. Cross-Movement, Cross-Regional, and Transnational Feminist Collaboration
4. Capacity Building and Technical Skill Strengthening
5. Feminist Economic Justice Analysis and Structural Power Mapping
6. Creation of Safe, Intentional Feminist Spaces and Care-Informed Convenings
7. Feminist Engagement with the application of substantive equality and non-discrimination in contemporary manifestations of rights violations.
8. Family Law, Bodily Autonomy, and Reproductive Rights Advocacy
9. Grassroots-to-Global Organizing, G2L Participation, and National Follow-Up
10. Feminist Narrative Building and Countering Backlash
11. Movement Infrastructure, Leadership, Inclusion, and Mandate Strengthening
12. Sustained Strategic Feminist Engagement with CEDAW's framework

2025 also saw the conclusion of several projects which were undertaken through our previous strategic plan. These included:

- **WOMEN GAINING GROUND (WGG)**

A five-year Global South-led consortium of three organisations with deep experience in feminist leadership, movement-building, advocacy, and working with marginalised groups. The consortium was led by IWRAP Asia Pacific, Akili Dada, and CREA, and worked with strategic partners in Bangladesh, Kenya, India, Uganda and Rwanda. The project responded to the interlinked problems of sexual and gender-based violence and lack of political participation with a specific focus on women with disabilities and young women. The project was funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands.

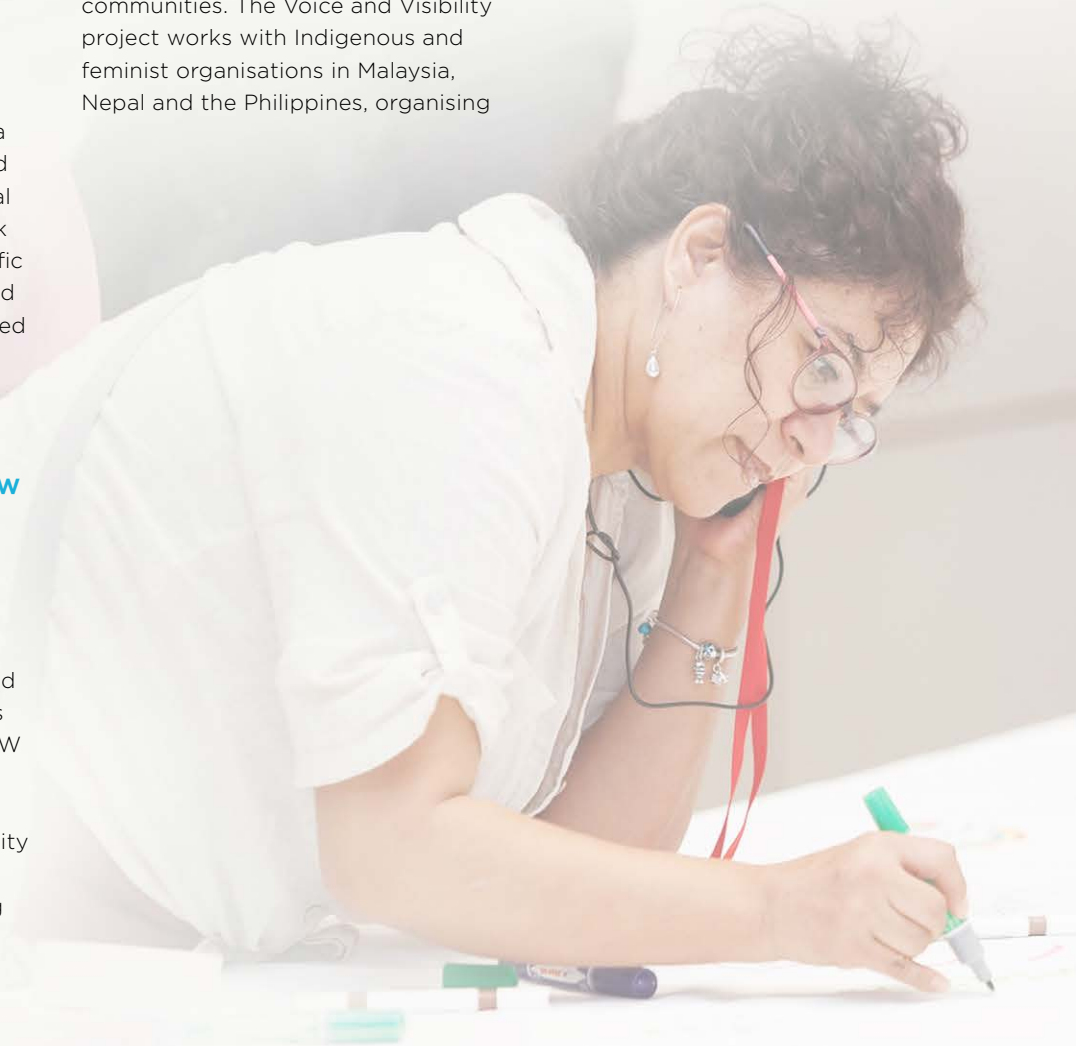
- **GENDER RESPONSIVE RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY THROUGH CEDAW (GRACE)**

GRACE began in 2021, bringing together partners across regions to identify and address concerns related to gender-based violence within a range of social, political, and cultural contexts. The primary focus of the project was to analyse CEDAW compliance in partner countries of India, Indonesia, Kenya, and South Africa through connecting community and national level activism and research efforts, as well as fostering intentional linkages between these advocacy and research. The project was funded by Co-Impact.

- **VOICE AND VISIBILITY**

To promote a regional feminist agenda on environmental justice, the Voice and Visibility project worked to acknowledge the need for marginalised voices in the environmental movement, especially Indigenous women and those living with disabilities and their communities. The Voice and Visibility project works with Indigenous and feminist organisations in Malaysia, Nepal and the Philippines, organising

their work and advocacy to support the empowerment and mobilisation of Indigenous women and their communities towards changes in climate policy. The project was funded through Women's Fund Asia's 'Learning From the South' programme.



# FACILITATING RIGHTS-CLAIMING, POWER DISRUPTION, AND OWNERSHIP

IWRAP Asia Pacific has remained steadfast in the realisation of our core mandate which envisions the advancement of equality and non-discrimination through and within the normative framework of human rights; and the realisation of women's human rights through the mobilisation of grassroots women. We see the praxis of our mandate within undertaking our core work of CEDAW advocacy and mobilisation through its promise as a tool to hold States and non-State actors accountable to the women's human rights agenda.

As women's lived realities continue to exist in a period of intense multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral backlash against their human rights, sustaining CEDAW—as both a framework and institution—proved to be more crucial than ever to prevent further regression while ensuring the progression and further development of human rights standards and norms.

## Pacific Technical Cooperation

2025 marked several successes with CEDAW implementation in the Global South, with the most significant being the Pacific Technical Cooperation (PTC).

The Pacific Technical Cooperation was initiated by the CEDAW reviews of three Pacific countries – Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu – scheduled for the 91st CEDAW session in June 2025. Realising the potential for regional action and cooperation, the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders invited the CEDAW Committee to the Pacific for a regional review where the Committee would focus on the specific issues faced by women and girls in the Pacific through CEDAW's framework.

The PTC was a historic event for Pacific feminists, especially the form in which it took place which allowed the review to be grounded in regional contexts and lived realities, which in turn, saw high levels of meaningful engagement from women who use CEDAW as a tool for accountability and to claim their rights.

The PTC's presentation of a regional review was well received by IWRAP Asia Pacific and Pacific feminists for several reasons:

- **The CEDAW review process** became more accessible to feminists from the Pacific whom, in the case of reviews happening in Geneva by default, face barriers to their full participation such as high costs, long travel distances, challenges in obtaining a Schengen visa, border-related issues, and care duties among other forms of social, economic and structural obstacles to engaging in the State's review.
- **The session allowed for direct interaction** between grassroots and community organisations to engage directly with the Committee, which facilitated the organic of rights narratives and advocacy demands without having to navigate bureaucratic processes at the UN headquarters, while fostering collective ownership over CEDAW.
- **Briefing sessions** between the CEDAW Committee and participating NGOs, as well as the country exchanges between the Committee and the government delegations of Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu were hosted in the spirit of constructive interactions, valuing the input from NGOs.
- **The session was also purposefully designed** to engage Pacific States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the CEDAW Convention (Niue, Palau and Tonga) with the intention to showcase CEDAW's engagement

with States parties as part of the Convention's potential to deliver transformative change.

*If these reviews had taken place in Geneva, only a handful of participants from each island would have been able to attend due to cost and distance. Holding reviews in the Pacific allows broader participation from governments, CSOs, NGOs and other stakeholders. For Pacific countries, this kind of engagement is unique and essential, and it is why we are calling on the Committee to hear future Pacific reports through similar regional sessions."*

*A summary intervention of a **civil society representative from the Cook Islands** during the Country Reflection and Closing session of CEDAW's Pacific Technical Cooperation*

*The atmosphere of the session was frequently described as relational and collaborative. Compared to Geneva, there was more space for dialogue, more openness to listening and more opportunity for exchange with Committee members. The presence of broader national delegations and regional stakeholders reinforced a sense of collective responsibility and shared accountability.*

**Vashti**  
IWRAP Asia Pacific's Global to Local Officer



The PTC was a historic event for Global South feminists, especially the form in which it took place which allowed the review to be grounded in regional contexts and lived realities, which in turn, saw high levels of meaningful engagement from women who use CEDAW as a tool for accountability and to claim their rights.

*This page: From Global to Local participants from Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu at the Pacific Technical Cooperation.*

IWRAP Asia Pacific in collaboration with the Fiji Women's Rights Movement and funding from the Pacific Feminist Fund, was able to mobilise women's human rights activists from the three reporting States (Fiji, Solomon Island and Tuvalu) to actively participate in the review of their governments, as well as organisations from non-reporting States (Micronesia, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Vanuatu, Tonga, Niue, West Papua and Nauru) to observe CEDAW and its framework in action.

For feminist organisations from Fiji, Solomon Island and Tuvalu, IWRAP Asia Pacific hosted our flagship training programme, From Global to Local, parallel to the PTC, as a space to build their capacity and ability to strategically engage with the CEDAW Committee in person to advocate for their demands. G2L facilitated collective analysis and mock sessions, through which participants deepened their understanding of substantive equality, non-discrimination and state obligations as tools to utilise in efforts in pursuing State accountability.

The primary takeaway from the PTC is recognising the value in regionalising global processes. The structure of the PTC yielded results which Global South feminists have demanded since the adoption of CEDAW: international human rights frameworks must meet women and girls at their lived realities. For too long, engaging with CEDAW was presumed to be too technical, bureaucratic, legalistic, inaccessible,

and distanced from the experiences of women and girls in the Global South. Demystifying the Convention's framework has been a crucial aspect of our work, and the PTC has indispensably contributed to this effort.

Learning from the Pacific Technical Cooperation, IWRAP Asia Pacific calls for the model of regional reviews to be further explored, developed and adopted by the CEDAW Committee, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and by intergovernmental blocs in the Global South. We also stress the need to fund NGO engagement in CEDAW processes, and thus urge donors–bilaterals, overseas development agencies, foundations, and movement funders–to integrate resourcing CEDAW activism in their funding opportunities to ensure and realise equal access.

*This session showed us that treaty-body mechanisms can be operationalised differently. We had more time with the Committee, NGOs had more space to engage, and the Committee was able to understand our context by being in our region. For the first time, many of us felt validated as feminist movements. The issues we raised were no longer marginal. They were reflected directly in the questions asked. This has been groundbreaking and one of the most innovative processes we have seen.*

*Nalini Singh, Executive Director of Fiji Women's Rights Movement and IWRAP Asia Pacific's Board Member*

## CEDAW 90 and 91: Setting Precedence, Sustaining Architectures

Aside from the PTC, IWRAP Asia Pacific also undertook our facilitation and capacity building roles for the 90th and 91st CEDAW sessions held in February and June 2025 respectively. We coordinated overall NGO coordination for:

### CEDAW90:

Belarus, Belize, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Nepal and Sri Lanka

### CEDAW91:

Afghanistan, Botswana, Chad, Ireland, Mexico, San Marino, and Thailand

Through our independent From Global to Local (G2L) programme and collaborative funding with feminist funds such as the African Women's Development Fund, Urgent Action Fund Asia Pacific, and Women's Fund Asia, IWRAP Asia Pacific was able to resource and support women's rights NGOs and feminists from Nepal and Sri Lanka for the 90th session; and activists from Afghanistan, Mexico and Thailand to travel to Geneva, attend G2L, and engage tactically with the CEDAW Committee.

In addition to the participation of mainstream organisations, IWRAP Asia Pacific also supported the engagement of marginalised communities of women including Indigenous Women; young women; rural women; women workers and farmers; migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women; and sex workers.

## CEDAW at Stake, Challenges Ahead

Systems of authoritarianism, democratic deficits, violence, and militarisation at the national and regional level, have emboldened States to structurally push back against their CEDAW–and other international human rights–obligations, invoking sovereignty, cultural and religious practices, and implementation challenges as justifications. This pushback manifested in States refusing to pay their dues to the UN, citing “acting in the interest of national priorities”. As a result, the [United Nations](#) reported that it “entered 2025 with a \$135 million deficit and by the end of September had collected only 66.2 per cent of the year's assessments, down from 78.1 per cent at the same point in 2024”.

The uncertainty of funding resulted in the late confirmation of the 91st CEDAW session. It was only confirmed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights less than a month before the start of the session, and almost a week after the deadline for NGOs to



submit their shadow reports, due to uncertainty of funds. Leading up to the confirmation, NGOs were assumed to commit resources to participate in the session, even in the absence of clear confirmation. Given that NGOs had a brief, three-week period to undertake preparations for in-person engagement in Geneva, physical NGO participation in the session was significantly lower in comparison with previous sessions.

Amidst already low numbers of participating NGOs, engagement of marginalised communities of women—such as Indigenous Women, women with disabilities, sex workers, trans women and persons, and ethnic minorities, amongst others—were disproportionately impacted by the acute lack of time and resources to plan their travels.

The UN's liquidity crisis forced the CEDAW Committee to cancel its third session in 2025 and several pre-sessional working group meetings, adversely affecting its mandate and threatening the function and sustainability of global accountability mechanisms.

IWRAP Asia Pacific expresses grave concerns about the now frequent cancellation of sessions, namely the:

- Reduced CEDAW sessions from three sessions a year to only two sessions
- Cancellation or last-minute adaption of pre-session working group meetings into an online modality

These challenges threaten the functions of the global accountability architecture and pose serious, fundamental challenges to the advancement of women's human rights through universal normative frameworks, principles and standards. But, we continue to remain inspired by the CEDAW Committee's dedication to holding the line of CEDAW's mandate and ensuring that rights are respected, protected and fulfilled, and welcomed the election of 7 new and 11 re-elected Committee members who are committed to the realisation of this vision.

Simultaneously, we express deep gratitude and admiration for the groundswell, both existing and further developing, of women's rights and feminists activists who continue to see the promise of and in CEDAW. Our work does not end just because systems falter, it instead is reignited with a resolve burning brighter than ever.

## PILLAR 1 FORTIFYING NORMS

'Fortifying Norms' entails IWRAP Asia Pacific adopting a proactive approach to strengthening the human rights frameworks and systems, as well as its application at the domestic level, we will centre the voices and needs of the people most significantly impacted, and work with them on a platform for solidarity and accountability building to challenge the multilateral system and States to deliver on their obligations under international and domestic laws and their commitments on equality and rights.

This requires us, as the global feminist movement, to reinvest in a new vision of the multilateral system and the human rights architecture at UN and State levels to deliver on their obligations to women. Through this pillar, we work alongside partners to hold States accountable to their obligations under CEDAW.

The core areas in which this strategic pillar was operationalised in 2025 are

1. Strengthening CEDAW and UN mechanisms.
2. Expanding interpretations of rights.
3. Co-leading normative shifts grounded in grassroots narratives on women's human rights.

### Strengthened Engagement with Human Rights Mechanisms

IWRAP Asia Pacific's core work in facilitating CEDAW compliance has historically been designed and undertaken through the mobilisation of women's rights organisations and feminist collectives, with an intentional focus on marginalised communities of women. This builds, establishes and maintains an interpretation of international human rights standards as one which is reciprocal: as more feminists interpret and utilise frameworks such as CEDAW to claim their rights, the more efficient and capable these frameworks become to respond to rights violations in all of its manifestations.



Throughout 2025 we undertook several activities which aimed to build the capacity of feminist movements to gain and develop the skills, knowledge and resources needed to effectively participate in CEDAW processes such as alternative reporting, briefings, and follow-up advocacy - expanding their ability to claim rights through systems of accountability. These were:

#### 1. FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

Referring to our approach to CEDAW activism, G2L's modality, principles of inclusion and participation, structure and objectives remain the model standard for CEDAW-related capacity and movement building, knowledge creation, and accountability practices.

G2L continues to undergo diverse configurations of evaluation and adaptation where its structure, methodology and strategies are continuously evolving to best serve the activists who seek to learn from it.



IWRAP AP team with participants for the 91st and 92nd G2L cohorts.

However, IWRAP Asia Pacific's engagement with the CEDAW framework as a tool for accountability extends beyond our facilitative role in the review process. We engage in international advocacy efforts through expanding the application of CEDAW's jurisprudence on substantive equality and non-discrimination to other international and regional human rights frameworks. This is a cornerstone of IWRAP Asia Pacific's identity as an independent advocacy organisation.

In 2025, we carried the CEDAW and the global south feminist agenda to:

- The 69th Commission on the Status of Women
- The Global Disability Summit
- ASEAN Intergovernmental Human Rights Commission's workshops on business and human rights, and regional drug policies
- Critical analysis of borders with specific focus on the impact of Schengen Visa process on impeding the fulfillment of women's rights to participation in international processes through a report for Switzerland's CEDAW follow-up procedure.
- GQUAL's stakeholder briefing on the implementation of CEDAW's General Recommendation No 40
- Joint submission calling for state accountability for the right to health through the Feminists for a People's Vaccine coalition's engagement with the UK's review at CESCR.

## 2. NGO CONSULTATION ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND FEMINIST LEADERSHIP WITH A FOCUS ON CEDAW'S GENERAL RECOMMENDATION 40

Following the adoption of CEDAW's General Recommendation No. 40 (GR40) on equal and inclusive representation in decision making processes, IWRAP Asia Pacific hosted a three-day consultation with partner organisations from Asia, Africa and the Pacific. The consultation focused on power, political participation, feminist leadership, and the right to equal and inclusive participation of women in decision-making across all spheres. Our goal was to bring together learnings, and insights from different country contexts and movements that can strengthen women's rights organisations' ability to critically unpack and use the CEDAW's now established framework on political participation at an international and a domestic level.

### Key takeaways from the consultation included:

- Interrogation of the role of power and privilege within participation
- Expanding participation beyond representation in electoral politics
- Identifying the gaps in our conceptualisation and understanding of participation through analysing access, temporary special measures, tokenism, and meaningful representation.

## 3. GENDER-RESPONSIVE RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY THROUGH CEDAW (GRACE) PROJECT BRIEFING WITH THE CEDAW COMMITTEE

Over the last four years, The George Institute for Global Health, Jagori from India, CEDAW Working Group Indonesia (CWGI) from Indonesia, Kenya Sex Workers Alliance (KESWA) from Kenya, the Women's Legal Centre (WLC) from South Africa, and led by IWRAP Asia Pacific, worked on an innovative collaboration between grassroots activists, legal practitioners, and researchers aimed at highlighting practical gaps in approaches to ending gender-based violence with a focus on the obligations under CEDAW, the recommendations by the CEDAW Committee, and compliance therewith by state parties. This included examining national policies on sexual harassment in the workplace (India); laws on the rights of migrant and domestic workers (Indonesia); the decriminalisation of sex work and the rights of sex workers (Kenya); and the implementation of national legislative framework on domestic violence (South Africa).

The briefing was co-designed by the project partners and IWRAP Asia Pacific and sought to share the project's outcome, analysis and partner perspectives on CEDAW implementation in their countries. The partners presented gaps in CEDAW's current approach, especially around participation, protection, and strategies for state inaction. This also included a critical assessment on the inclusivity

and effectiveness of existing CEDAW processes; with a focus on barriers to the meaningful participation of marginalised women.

The briefing was attended by CEDAW Committee members Ms. Brenda Akia (Uganda), Ms. Madina Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan), Ms. Bandana Rana (Nepal), Ms. Patsili Toledo Vasquez (Chile), Ms. Mu Hong (China), Ms. Esther Eghobamien-Mshelia (Nigeria), and Ms. Marianne Mikko (Estonia). Committee members were engaged in partner-led sharing, and the work undertaken, especially in research-oriented strategies, and appreciated the deep involvement of NGOs in the CEDAW implementation process.

### FORTIFYING NORMS ENVISIONS THAT EXISTING EQUALITY NORMS, PRACTICES, AND SYSTEMS ARE FORTIFIED. IN ACHIEVING THIS OUTCOME, THE IMPACTS OF OUR ACTIVITIES IN 2025 WERE:

#### More Robust Use of CEDAW and Human Rights Frameworks at the National Level

CEDAW's concluding observation and General Recommendations are increasingly used by feminist organisations in national and community-level advocacy and implementation monitoring efforts.



Participant Fay Evangeline Volatabu at IWRAP AP's NGO Consultation on Political Participation and Feminist Leadership.

#### Enhanced Quality and Impact of Evidence and Reporting

High-quality shadow reports, stronger data on informal workers, and grounded evidence from marginalised groups materially strengthened the accuracy, relevance, and persuasiveness of submissions to treaty bodies, and of treaty body recommendations to States.

#### Strengthening Accountability Pathways

Engagement with treaty bodies has led to improved efforts towards state accountability, where NGOs take the lead in documenting and presenting evidence of governments' failure in complying to their obligations under CEDAW.

#### Greater Influence on Legal and Policy Standards at the National Level

Through sustained NGO engagement — especially the engagement of marginalised communities of women — CEDAW recommendations have become more grounded, specific, and responsive to grassroots realities.

## PILLAR 2 FORGING FUTURE FOR RIGHTS

This pillar envisions using CEDAW and other existing alternative frameworks on rights and equality to respond to the structures and specific contexts that significantly diminish women's human rights and gender equality. Simultaneously, it also means innovation in new areas and with new concepts and practices to meet today's and tomorrow's realities. It is through this pillar in which we set out to build our internal, institutional capacity while contributing to and co-creating feminist knowledge and conceptual resources on phenomena, systems, and institutions that are currently under explored but necessary to forging feminist futures.

Some of the core components of this strategic pillar which were explored in 2025 are:

- **Building feminist futures**
- **Exploring alternative economic models**
- **Narrative building from feminist perspectives**

2025 was a year of many firsts in activities, modalities, conversations and thematic discussions while we explored conceptualising rights-based futures as a forward-looking goal.

These included:

### 1. TULA TWOGERE: ECONOMIC VIOLENCE CONVENING

Tula Twogere (Lugandan for “come, sit, let's talk”), was convened in Nairobi, Kenya, and brought together a diverse group of feminist legal practitioners, scholars, activists, policy actors, and community organizers from across the Global South to critically examine and reframe gendered economic violence. Anchored in intersectionality, the convening sought to develop a shared conceptual framework that reflects the structural, historical, and lived realities of economic injustice faced by women and marginalized communities.

Utilising an analytical lens to examine systems of patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism, participants drew from lived experience, legal case studies, policy critiques, and regional insights to interrogate how economic violence manifests in both public and private spheres.

A critical thread throughout was the call to distinguish economic violence from other forms of gender-based violence while recognizing their intersections. Participants advocated for more precise legal definitions, feminist accountability measures, and a reimagining of justice that transcends punitive models and centers healing, dignity, and community-led systems.

### 2. CONVERSATIONS ON CARE

Building on the learnings from the Global South Women's Forum (GSWF) 2024 under the theme of 'Disability Joy and Justice', Conversations on Care was designed as an intimate gathering and a reflective space, hosting 15 participants from different activist backgrounds who came together in a facilitated conversation to contribute towards a deeper conceptual clarity on 'care' as both an everyday practice and a political strategy.

The space was hosted around three main conversation prompts: decolonising care, the messiness of care, and pedagogy and practice of care which were explored through participant-led conversations and speaker presentations on:

- Decolonising Care
- Care, Citizenry and Commons
- Care and Tech
- How to care for those who we disagree with
- Reconciliation and Healing in Post-Genocide Cambodia
- Care, Grief and Loss

Ultimately, Conversations on Care left us with more questions than answers. Honest, raw and true to life sharings hit at the many underlying faultlines in our communities and movements when it comes to translating care from the embodied self, to the movement and the ways in which we navigate human-to-human and human-institution relationships in our ways of working.



**Top:** Participant and guest presenter, Ratnaboli Ray, leading a session on Care, Citizenry and Commons. **Middle and bottom:** At the end of the gathering, participants were asked to draw and present their revised understanding of 'Care', visualising how their ideas and conceptions of 'Care' as both a concept and practice, had evolved over the course of the three days.



Conversations on Care was designed as an intimate gathering and a reflective space, hosting 15 participants from different activist backgrounds who came together in a facilitated conversation on 'care' as both an everyday practice and a political strategy.

Ultimately, it left us with more questions than answers.

Honest, raw and true to life sharings hit at the many underlying faultlines in our communities and movements.

***This page:** Conversations on Care hosted participants from Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Syria, and Uganda working across the intersections of young women, Indigenous women, women with disabilities, sex workers, women in conflict, philanthropy, and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women among others.*



### 3. REGIONAL CONVENING ON SOCIAL PROTECTION

IWRAP Asia Pacific's work with informal women workers has persisted across several strategic plans. In 2025, our focus was sharpened to exploring the rights of women in the informal economy to social protection, through a collaborative funded by OXFAM GDG. Following the first regional convening in Kuala Lumpur and the second regional convening in Yogyakarta, the third and final convening under the Social Protection for Agri-Food Sector workers in Southeast Asia project was held in Bangkok, in June 2025.

The convening was a direct follow-up to its previous iteration in 2024 which kickstarted the process of developing an advocacy toolkit on the right of informal sector workers to social protection. The convening focussed on validating the overall content of the toolkit in consultation with a diverse network of informal sector workers and representatives including:

- Indigenous Women
- Fisher women
- Home-based workers
- Women farmers
- Trade unions
- Sex workers

The advocacy toolkit, drafted alongside the FPAR Academy, was developed throughout 2025 as a practical guide and knowledge resource which aims to equip activists with tools, resources and strategies — both existing and emerging

— to demand better laws, norms and CEDAW implementation to realise the right to social protection regardless of labour categorisations.

### 4. NGO CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT ADDENDUM TO CEDAW'S GENERAL RECOMMENDATION NO.30

In the later half of 2025, the CEDAW Committee began the process of drafting an Addendum to their General Recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict, and post-conflict situations, in relation to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. This Addendum addresses evolving threats such as climate change, digital violence, cyberwarfare, extractive industries, I-enabled conflict, shrinking civic space, and increased impunity for violations of women's human rights.

The NGO consultation aimed to: analyse the Addendum text through feminist, intersectional, decolonial, and survivor-centered lenses; identify gaps, opportunities, and risks in the current framing; ensure diverse global perspectives, especially from conflict-affected, Indigenous, Black, migrant, queer, and climate frontline communities, are reflected; and, strengthen collective advocacy through a joint, movement-led submission to the CEDAW Committee. This culminated in a joint feminist submission to the CEDAW Committee in response to the draft Addendum.

IWRAP Asia Pacific, as a Global South feminist organisation, recognised the need for feminists to mobilise around a process of norm setting and creation. The genocides in Congo, Palestine, Sudan, and Myanmar revealed gaps in the praxis of the UN's WPS agenda, thus this was a crucial point in time to strengthen the global articulation of women's human rights in current and historical contexts of occupation, colonialism, war, apartheid, and militarisation - and the violence which they enact on women.

### IN THE PURSUIT OF NEW EQUALITY NORMS AND PRACTICES, FORGING FUTURE FOR RIGHTS CONTRIBUTED TO THE FOLLOWING OUTCOMES:

#### Generation of New Feminist Frameworks and Narratives

Participants co-created new ideas, including feminist economic frameworks, structural understandings of economic violence, and intersectional analyses that shift the normative landscape beyond existing standards.

#### Promotion of Gender-Transformative Justice Approaches

Movements advocated for justice mechanisms that address systemic discrimination, not only individual harms, promoting new ideas around redistribution, care economies, and transformative remedies.

### Evolving Norms Around Identity, and Bodily Autonomy

Feminist actors advanced CEDAW's normative development on diverse families, reproductive technologies, gender identity, migrant women's rights, and cross-border obligations, creating new interpretive standards.

### Development of Policy Frameworks for Future Advocacy

Collaborative analysis produced new strategic pathways for policy reform in labor rights, economic justice, digital governance, and feminist social protection systems.

### Norm Conscientisation Across Regions

Cross-regional learning and solidarity accelerated the uptake of new feminist ideas, enabling emerging norms to spread across countries and movements.



The advocacy toolkit, drafted alongside the FPAR Academy, was developed throughout 2025 as a practical guide and knowledge resource which aims to equip activists with tools, resources and strategies — both existing and emerging — to demand better laws, norms and CEDAW implementation to realise the right to social protection regardless of labour categorisations.

## PILLAR 3 MOVEMENTS AND MANDATES

This strategic pillar describes IWRAP Asia Pacific's intentional approach to co-creating an organisational mandate and strategy on the key feminist challenges of our times, and its corresponding political agenda. It invites partnership and collaboration through our flagship programmes From Global to Local, a training and mentoring programme-centred around CEDAW activism; the Global South Women's Forum, our annual alternative platform for growing and conscientising of the Global South women's movements; and other strategies that aim at linking CEDAW obligations to change at the local and country level. The pillar acts as a platform for leadership and learning that strengthens Global South feminist collectives.



The framing of 'Movements and Mandates' makes us pause, think and strategise how we co-exist, collaborate, extend solidarity and allyship, and undertake our roles in pursuit of a shared goal of equality.

In 2025, the pillar undertook work in the following streams:

- Strengthened movements, leadership, alliances, and advocacy capacity
- Cross-regional solidarity
- Multi-level engagement
- Shared movement initiatives, spaces and analyses



Activities under this pillar were undertaken through a mix of flagship initiatives and new initiatives for movement building. They were:

### 1. STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

In August 2025, IWRAP Asia Pacific initiated a strategy meeting between six regional feminist and human rights organisations. They were:

- The Asian-Pacific Research and Resource Centre for Women (ARROW)
- Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW)
- Musawah
- The Third World Network (TWN)
- International Women's Development Agency (IWDA)

The justification was simple: the Asia Pacific region, which hosts two-thirds of the world's population, continues to be rife with excessive human rights violations, economic injustice, and environmental degradation and disasters, amongst others. However, the region also hosts a rich tapestry of civil society movements for independence and autonomy, with a track record of nation-building efforts that have been self-led, -motivated, and -sustained.

*Top left: GSWF 2025's opening plenary aimed to understand the dismantling of multilateralism at our community, national, and regional levels, and how it manifests in the international spaces and frameworks we use and occupy. Left: GSWF 2025 hosted over 80 feminists from across the Global South.*

The six regional organisations (including IWRAP Asia Pacific) have worked together over the years, and share a deeply connected history of ways in which we have evolved. At the same time, in the last decade or so, despite common interests, partners/members, and political positioning, we have worked distinctively from one another, only coming together to attend convenings, or cosigning protest notes.

The meeting, designed between the directors and second-line leadership of these organisations, discussed role clarity, constituency/network/member/partner bases, implementation challenges, resource mobilisation and priority issues affecting feminist work in the region with the end goal of developing and undertaking a regional strategy.

The Strength to Strength regional strategy, endorsed by all six participating organisations, entails:

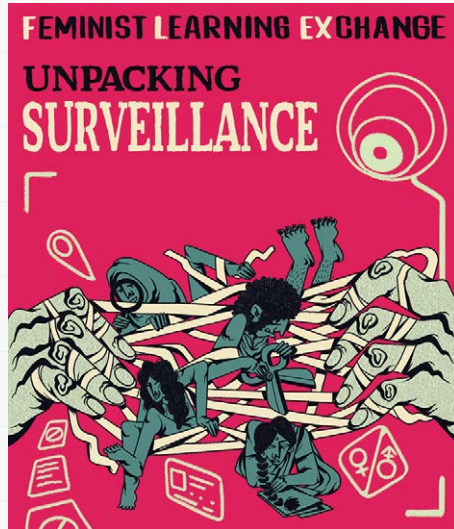
- Generation of issue analyses from a regional perspective to feed into advocacy initiatives
- Convening alternative and supplementary CSO spaces within processes which lack a regional lens
- Joint funding initiatives

The newly established configuration of regional collaboration will continue to evolve, learning from implementation practices and hopes to take stock of our impact within the next year - all exercised with the intention of expansion and further consolidation.

## 2. LEARNING EXCHANGES

The concept, and principle, of fostering transnational and cross movement learning has always guided IWRAP Asia Pacific's capacity and movement building strategy. In 2025, we hosted two learning exchanges, both employing different modalities and a diverse range of Global South feminists, to analyse contemporary issues in challenging contexts.

### 2A. Feminist Learning Exchange (FLEX 3.0) on Feminist Unpacking and Strategising on Surveillance



*FLEX 3.0 poster designed by Mia Jose.*

Initiated in 2021, the **Feminist Learning Exchange (FLEX)** is a reflexive workshop that brings together feminist activists from across countries and movements to interrogate contemporary threats to human rights.

The third edition of **Feminist Learning Exchange (FLEX 3.0)**, supported by the Women Gaining Ground project, aimed to critically examine 'surveillance' from a feminist and Global South perspective. Together with feminists from Central Asia, East Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, we unpacked the relationship between power and surveillance, from both a historical and a contemporary lens, and its intersections with various identities and social-economic constructs.

**FLEX 3.0** explored a learning exchange through multi-medium methodologies which required participants to engage with a diverse range of materials and resources on historical and contemporary forms of surveillance—which extend beyond the realm of digital surveillance—prior through and during the workshop. At its heart, **FLEX** is both an exploratory modality and a movement strategy: a space dedicated to gathering feminists to discuss contemporary issues in our movements while building our counter-narratives.

**FLEX 3.0** unearthed critical Global South feminists' perspectives on surveillance which included:

- The role of surveillance in perpetuating and sustaining harmful gender stereotypes.
- Surveillance as a tool of structural violence and marginalisation
- Deputised surveillance where individuals and communities directly or indirectly surveil each other, resulting in forms of policing and profiling.
- Digital surveillance is prompted and sustained by capitalism — and its linkages to authoritarianism — where individuals and communities are seen as data sets for industrial complexes.

### 2B. Myanmar - Sri Lanka Learning Exchange on Alternative Economic Models

This convening builds off of IWRAP AP's long-term partnerships and collaborations with both ALTSEAN-Burma and Women's Media Collective (Sri Lanka), most recently in the area of economic justice and developing community-led, country-specific economic recovery plans based on the principles of non-discrimination and substantive equality for all. One of the exchange's primary objectives was to explore points of convergence that present and exchange knowledge for shaping or refining existing alternative economic policy proposals and recovery plans.



*FLEX 3.0 participant, Jia Vern from Malaysia.*

The exchange brought together community members, activists, and policy experts with lived experience of the inequalities of dominant economic policies and working on alternative solutions, focusing in particular on the realities, movements, and demands arising out of the ongoing economic crisis in Sri Lanka and resistance movements in Myanmar.

Common themes which emerged from cross-analysis included structural gender inequities in labour and care work, suppression of labour rights and union exploitation, displacement and land grabbing weaponised and as tool for control, economic injustice and debt crisis, inadequate integration of economic justice, which culminate to develop calls for transitional justice which must centre economic redress and, alternative governance models.

### 3. CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF ALTERNATIVE FEMINIST ORGANISING AT THE GLOBAL SOUTH WOMEN'S FORUM 2025

A decade ago, IWRAP Asia Pacific initiated the Global South Women's Forum as a movement-dedicated space for conversations about feminist human rights agendas as an alternative to exclusionary, inaccessible, and increasingly weakened multilateral spaces and systems. A decade later, we gather to take stock of where engaging in the multilateral system got us, and how to recalibrate in the face of the dismantling of multilateralism.

In November 2025, IWRAP Asia Pacific hosted the tenth edition of our flagship convening, with the theme of 'Rightfully Ours!', illustrating the feminist reclamation of multilateralism.

Guided by IWRAP Asia Pacific's position paper on the Global South feminist take on multilateralism, GSWF 2025 was crafted as a checkpoint for feminists to take stock of where decades of engaging with multilateralism have landed us in 2025: the rollback on gender equality, attack on bodily autonomy and rights, fundamentalist geopolitics, funding cuts, and the continued genocides in Myanmar, Palestine, Congo, Sudan, and many more.

The agenda for GSWF 2025 was also one that was developed in collaboration with Global South feminists, ensuring grounded conversations that are relatable to the fragmented realities of our region. The GSWF 2025 advisory group comprised members of the Strength to Strength network, African Women's Development and Communications Network (FEMNET), and Equidad de Género.

**Day 1** of GSWF aimed to unpack how we, as Global South feminists, understand the dismantling of multilateralism at our community, national, and regional levels, and how it manifests in the international spaces and frameworks we use and occupy. We interrogated the context(s) of Treaty Body cancellations, the inequality between UN human rights systems and the global financial architecture, and extreme wealth inequality as jugular manifestations of multilateralism's failure, and used these conversations as launchpads to begin reimagining our feminist alternatives.

The central theme of **Day 2** of the Global South Women's Forum 2025 was 'Our New Norms & Feminist Alternative(s)', where feminists were invited to sketch—both ideologically and literally—their visions of Global South-built and -led, alternatives to the current multilateral infrastructure.



**Top:** GSWF 2025's session on "Creating the Feminist Roadmap for Our New Norms and Alternative(s)," saw participants collectively construct roadmaps towards their new and intended feminist norms as well as alternatives to the current structure of multilateralism. **Bottom left:** Chair of IWRAP Asia Pacific's Board of Directors, Nalini Singh, delivered the closing statements at GSWF 2025. **Bottom right:** GSWF 2025 ended with a 'weaving interconnectedness' activity, reflecting on the three days of introspection whilst strategising for the feminist futures we envision.



*This page: GSWF 2025 hosted several participant-led conversations through interactive modalities such as a world cafe, open floor technology, and a fishbowl.*

As the Global South feminist movement reconceptualises functional systems and sets tangible goals in pursuit of accountability and justice, we must recognise past challenges while hoping for a better tomorrow. This means expanding our imaginations beyond what we perceive to be possible, while simultaneously acknowledging the colonial legacies of multilateralism.

By the **third day** of the Global South Women's Forum 2025, three clear strands of thought around engagement in the multilateral system had emerged from the participants' discussions, namely: engage strategically; engage to disrupt; and abandon to dismantle.

The diversity of this thinking was by design. GSWF functions as a strategic space, not a consensus-building exercise. Dozens of distinct agendas coexisted, imperfectly but needfully, and participants learned to be comfortable with that reality. Those who choose to work within the system sat beside those who seek to disassemble it entirely—the aim is not uniformity.



Participants were also introduced to an “Actioning Our (Re)imaginings” session, where five Global South activists co-led a panel discussion on selected topics: feminist resistance under military rule; using a Pacific lens to connect indirect and direct causes of harm; experiences applying CEDAW at the grassroots level; and the Palestinian case and its implications for multilateralism.

These deeply interconnected stories show one truth: women's rights are fought on the front lines of fascism, colonialism, structural misogyny, and broken global systems. Together, Global South feminists are rewriting the rules and demanding real accountability.

#### **IWRAP ASIA PACIFIC'S MOVEMENTS AND MANDATES PILLAR SEEKS TO STRENGTHEN FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AND REJUVENATED EQUALITY MANDATES, TO THIS EXTENT, OUR ACTIVITIES IN 2025 CONTRIBUTED TO THIS OUTCOME THROUGH:**

##### **Deepened Cross-Movement Solidarity and Shared Purpose**

Collective political analysis, intentional inclusion, and multi-country exchanges built stronger alliances across sectors, identities, and geographies, forming a more coherent and unified feminist movement.

##### **Enhanced Capacity, Leadership, and Strategic Coordination**

Movement actors improved their skills in advocacy, organizing, framing, and power analysis. Leadership development, including nurturing young feminists, ensured long-term sustainability and political alignment.

##### **Strengthened Collective Identity and Political Consciousness**

Shared frameworks, common language, and collective understanding of systemic oppression reinforced a unified feminist political identity rooted in Global South experiences.

##### **Improved Movement Resilience and Relational Infrastructure**

Relational trust, emotional support, and solidarity practices strengthened resilience, enabling activists to withstand repression, backlash, and authoritarian contexts while sustaining long-term advocacy.

##### **Strengthened Coordination and Strategic Memory**

Joint planning, shared evidence, and collaborative strategy-making improved cross-country coordination, ensuring that movements operate with cohesion and build on collective learning for future campaigns.

“ The diversity of this thinking was by design. GSWF functions as a strategic space, not a consensus-building exercise. Dozens of distinct agendas coexisted, imperfectly but needfully, and participants learned to be comfortable with that reality.

GSWF 2025 Closing Plenary

# ACTIONING OUR (RE)IMAGINATIONS

**Samira & Ethel**, ALTSean Burma

**Maria Nailevu**, Pacific Sexuality and Gender Diversity Network (PSGDN)

**Renu Mishra**, Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives

**Lubnah Shomali**, Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights

Moderated by **Undariya Tumursukh**, MONFEMNET & IWRAW Asia Pacific



*This page: GSWF 2025's closing plenary, 'Actioning Our (Re)Imaginations', platformed a conversation which allowed activists to raise calls to and for action rooted in national/grassroots realities as we collectively built our feminist roadmap to alternative infrastructures.*



## CHANGES IN IWRAP Asia Pacific

With the onset of our new strategic plan, the organisation initiated an internal restructuring process which aimed to match the team's existing expertise to strategies of movement engagement and building, capacity building, and advocacy in line with our strategic pillars. Teams and portfolios previously designed according to thematic issues and projects, were now recast in the lens of practical strategies.

The newly emerged structure constructs the organisation's structure into three pillars, each hosting functional portfolios:

### Finance and Operations

- Finance
- Operations and Compliance

### Programmes

- International Advocacy including From Global to Local Advocacy
- Strategic Partnerships including Capacity Building & Access to Justice
- Feminist Commons including Research and Knowledge Building

### Institutional Resilience and Strengthening

- Monitoring, Evaluation, Adaptation and Learning
- Strategic Communications
- Resource Mobilisation
- Human Resources

### Chrysalis in Motion

In the true spirit of change, the IWRAP Asia Pacific that started the year in 2025, looked vastly different compared to the team that closed the year in December 2025.

In 2025, we said goodbye to six team members who transitioned out of IWRAP Asia Pacific. We also bid farewell to Audrey Lee, Senior Programme Manager, who resigned after being a part of IWRAP Asia Pacific's journey since 1998 and played an instrumental role in strengthening CEDAW implementation in the Global South. Audrey has left an indelible mark on IWRAP Asia Pacific and her legacy of curiosity, kindness, and an unwavering dedication to the advancement of equality no matter the realities, is now etched into the history of our organisation.

As we continue to rebuild, we were excited to onboard IWRAP Asia Pacific's first Programme Officer on Monitoring, Evaluation, Adaptation and Learning.

In the year to come, IWRAP Asia Pacific will seek to expand while committed to the promise of growth and evolution.

### Institutional Resilience and Strengthening

Resulting from the organisational restructure, the Institutional Strengthening and Resilience pillar oversees the building of IWRAP Asia Pacific as a sustainable and resilient organisation committed to realisation of equality and non-discrimination through the implementation of its vision and mission.

It develops interventions to examine both internal and external implementation of our work, ensuring it is grounded in our values, while providing a framework for organisational learning, so that we grow in our understanding of issues, processes, and communities.

In addition to working to ensure the internal value-based work informs all our work methods and programme development, the IRS will be specifically responsible for:

- Strengthened Institutional Resilience, Programmatic Excellence, and Operational Efficiency
- To build a robust, values-driven, and agile organization capable of delivering high-impact programs, ensuring internal cohesion, and maintaining accountability, transparency, and operational efficiency.

Since the formalisation of the institutional resilience and strengthening pillar in April 2025 as a functional arm of IWRAP Asia Pacific, the team has been able to interrogate and exercise institutional strengthening as a key pillar instead of a standalone afterthought, as a crucial core of the organisation.



*Left: Audrey Lee at the Global South Women's Forum 2024, in Sri Lanka, engaging with movements on CEDAW implementation through creative advocacy methodologies to ensure State accountability.*

# CONCLUDING 2025

**2025 was a year in flux.** A violent external climate prone to constant volatility, and internal shifts further proved one truth: change, although never easy, is inevitable.

Despite these changes, IWRAP Asia Pacific remained committed to undertaking and executing an ambitious plan, from intimate conversation circles to large scale convenings. Culling from our newly established MEAL framework, IWRAP Asia Pacific through our activities in 2025 were able to contribute the following movement goals:

- Translating Lived Experiences to Power
- Redistributing Access to Norm-Setting Spaces
- Shifting Narratives
- Building Collective Power
- Challenging State Control In UN Processes
- Expanding Normative Power

Working on shaking grounds gave us more than it took. We learnt that despite the honest limitations of our work, an unshakeable core allowed us to fare through a year of unforeseen challenges. 2025 was a year ripe with lessons. As we conclude the first year of implementing 'Cultivating Rights, Rooting Resilience', we learnt adaptability, flexibility, fluidity, and accountability.

And we will continue to learn in 2026, and in the years to come. We are committed to learning from the lessons of 2025 within the scope of working with CEDAW and other human rights frameworks, strengthening the global accountability architecture, nurturing and expanding our partnerships, and building a responsive, relevant, and resilient organisation.

In a time where realities are changing by the second, **an organisation cannot afford to be in stasis.** We look forward to 2026 and the opportunities for further development of our strategy in the Asia and Pacific region, and beyond.

## PEOPLE

### TEAM

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Pook Li Ping

Pravind Premnath

Shanta Rani

Shanti Uprety

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Siti Zainab bt Abdullah

Tharaanni Manikam

Tulika Srivastava

Vashti

Zahirah bt Zainal

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