

**International Networking Workshop in Support
of Women Workers**

**Friends Meeting House, Manchester UK
18th – 20th October 2010**

**Hosted by Women Working Worldwide
Supported by Oxfam Novib**

MEETING REPORT

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1. Purpose of the workshop

In October 2010, Women Working Worldwide brought together thirty organisations from Europe, South Asia, North America, East and Southern Africa and Central America working to support women workers in the formal and informal sectors to organise and improve their conditions at work. The objectives of the conference were to discuss:

- the key challenges affecting women workers;
- actions to assist women workers to organise themselves;
- advocacy strategies to improve working conditions;
- and how we can access the necessary resources for our work.

34 of the 37 participants were women, bringing years of inspirational experience to share with us. The diversity of participants added much to the richness of the discussions. As many of the organisations have very different ways of working it was necessary to set an agenda that identified common ground between us all: a common interest in the need to focus on women in our work; a common belief in the power of organising and shared concerns over the impact of our international advocacy and ongoing scarcity of funds.

One of the principal objectives was to build stronger solidarity and relationships during the course of the three days. By being together and learning from each other, the workshop inspired a feeling of being united through common ground and affirmed a belief that we need to build both cross regional and cross sectoral networking, solidarity and information sharing.

This report aims to capture key points from the presentations, discussion and group work over the three days. It is not intended to provide a full record of discussions but rather a summary of the key insights, outputs and outcomes from the three days.

For a copy of any of the presentations please contact Women Working Worldwide.

2. Overview of the workshop

Day one: Analysis of our global activities in support of women workers in global and local supply chains

Day one opened with a panel of four speakers reflecting on the past ten years of work to build solidarity amongst women workers internationally. They spoke about some of their key achievements, up and coming challenges and their views on priorities and opportunities for the future.

Presentations:

1. **Karin Pape** (International Domestic Workers Network)
2. **Crecentia Mofokeng** (Building and Woodworkers International)
3. **Lynda Yanz** (Maquila Solidarity Network)
4. **June Hartley** (Women Working Worldwide)

Participants split into working groups to review the position of labour rights organisations in respect to:

- Influencing key policy makers to make decisions that positively impact women workers
- Influencing companies to ensure that women in their supply chains receive their rights
- Campaigning and raising public awareness to fight for women workers' rights
- Finding the necessary resources for our work
- Organising women workers internationally

Day two: Women's organising and supporting international advocacy strategies

In the morning a panel of speakers addressed how international solidarity and support actions are enabling women to organise and fight for their rights. We invited those with strong best practice in working internationally to support womens' organising to speak.

Presentations:

1. **Sandra Ramos** (MEC, Nicaragua) - Organising women workers in Nicaragua
2. **Maria Rhie** (Working Women Academy, Korea) - Report from Women Workers Academy Workshop on Alternative Organising Strategies
3. **Vicky Cann** (UK TUC) – Approaches to strengthening international organising – recent experiences of the TUC
4. **Jane Tate** (Homeworkers Worldwide) – Experiences of organising homeworkers internationally

Participants split into working groups to look at how international solidarity and actions can assist women to organise themselves and addressed the following questions:

- What are the key challenges and opportunities facing women workers' organising
- What opportunities do we have to work internationally to strengthen women workers organising?
- How do we reach more women and workers in minority women sectors/outside global supply chains?

In the afternoon we looked at how we can use international advocacy strategies to ensure that women can organise themselves and address women's issues in the workplace. How can we better influence those in the supply chain and international policy makers? What examples of good collaborative action are there and how can we learn from these? How can we better connect grassroots activism in international supply chains?

Presentations:

- **Crecentia Mofokeng** (BWI) - The 2010 campaign on working rights: engaging Fifa
- **Lucia Jayaseelan** (Committee of Asian Women, CAW) – Recent campaigning in support of Asian women workers
- **Karin Pape** (International Domestic Workers' Network) - Involvement of domestic workers in the international domestic workers network and work towards a new ILO convention
- **Rachel Wilshaw** (Oxfam GB) - Engaging with companies to improve the rights of women workers.
- **Sam Maher** (Labour behind the Label/Clean Clothes Campaign) Using international solidarity to fight for workers rights

Day three: Resourcing our work and working together

On day three we took an in depth look at the changing priorities for funders and how we can find the resources necessary to continue to support women workers to organise. Presentations introduced key challenges, such as the reduction in government funds and the shift away from interest in labour rights and trade by the bigger NGOs.

Presentations:

- **Ireen Dubel** (Hivos) – Overview of current funding situation for women’s labour rights, from the perspective of Hivos.
- **Dave Spooner** (WIEGO) – Analysis of current challenges in resourcing our work

Participants split into regional working groups (Africa, Asia and Latin America) to identify any ideas coming out of the workshop that they would like to follow up and identify areas where it would be useful to share information, develop joint communication strategies and work in stronger collaboration.

The conference closed with a discussion about the key strategic activities to be developed as a result of the event as well as reflection on what participants were taking away on an individual level.

3. Outputs and outcomes from the workshops

3.1 Key issues affecting women workers

Stimulated by the speakers and open discussion the following key issues affecting women workers were identified by participants:

<p><i>The Informal Economy</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45-85% of domestic work is informal and not covered by labour laws (<i>International Domestic Workers Network</i>) • With more and more people working in the informal sector they are becoming less organized and not as active. • Trade unions have had difficulties accessing the informal economy including domestic workers. • The approach of trade unions is changing as there is a growing awareness of the size, conditions and poverty associated with informal work and the increasing visibility and organisation of informal workers.
<p><i>Lobbying</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in international structures (such as the ILO) takes a lot of time, energy, skill and resources. • The language used within the ILO and other international forums often isn't accessible to women workers. Most workers do not speak English and dialogue tends to be very technical. • Those with power and resources are telling women workers what to do. They set the agenda and don't let women create their own programmes with their own priorities.
<p><i>Freedom of Association</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women often do not have the right to freely associate. • There is corruption and repression of the labour movements by governments. • Wages are not improving and workers are still being fired for speaking about their rights and trying to organise. • Irregular workers experience weak social protection, weak bargaining power and have less organising rights.
<p><i>Mainstreaming women's issues</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditionally there has been no focus on women's issues within some organisations. • Despite a lot of good work and progress made, there is still a

	<p>lot of work to do to get gender mainstreamed as a topic within trade unions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation and participation of women in trade union activities and membership have not been prioritised enough some members feel. • The number of women in positions of leadership within frontline organisations are very low.
<i>Discrimination and abuse within the workplace</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination against women is commonplace in the workplace. • Patriarchal societies, as well as cultural and religious prejudices can be an obstacle to women organising. • There is inadequate provision of education and skills development for women. • Sexual harassment of women in the workplace remains rife. • Promoting good workplaces is key to reducing discrimination of women, for example by providing childcare facilities, protective clothing or facilities for ablution.
<i>Job security</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% workers in garment industry don't have a contract. 92% of workers in the garment industry do not belong to a trade union and 89% of garment workers in Bangladesh do not know what their basic wage is before overtime (<i>Oxfam</i>) • Women workers in particular, often do not have security of employment. Short term employment contracts mean that women never gain long term job security. • Many countries only offer a weak social safety net, weak law enforcement or even no law enforcement at all. • The international economic crisis is leading to women losing jobs – this is a serious threat.
<i>Paying a living wage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We're not making advances on the importance of the living wage.
<i>Resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are diminishing resources for women workers' projects and organisations partly because of a shift in focus to climate change issues.

3.2 Strategies for improving the ability of women workers to organise themselves

“Organising is one of the most important tools for transforming power relations, especially for people who are marginalised and have less power vis-à-vis more dominant groups. Organising is also crucial for empowering women workers who are bearing the brunt of inequalities and oppressions brought on by neo-liberal globalisation” (Korean Women Workers Academy)

Training

- a. At the Union level, there are various strategies to organise workers such as access to scattered women by going door-to-door or visiting workplaces, collective actions including collective bargaining and protests, training on labour rights and leadership and advocacy and campaigning. Specifically, there are some creative and alternative strategies used by the groups such as recruiting young women and developing communities with shared values.
- b. Development of training materials needs to take place at all levels.
- c. Training should enhance the skills of gender sensitive negotiators.
- d. Standards and codes of conduct can be an important tool to promote women workers' rights
- e. English language is not accessible to everyone – materials must be produced in all languages.
- f. Workers must be trained to understand their rights and opportunities for development within the workplace.

Coordination and collaboration

- a. An interactive process needs to be in place between local, national and international stakeholders in order to achieve common successes.
- b. It is very important to have global codes of conduct as, if properly applied, they can provide good opportunities to promote women workers' rights.
- c. We need to focus on building alliances beyond trade unions and also work together with civil society, women's organisations, etc. This requires a change in approach to find a common ground and work together.
- d. International networks need to work with unions, they cannot work in isolation.

- e. Commonly many of us use legal advocacy as an important strategy to change poor enforcement or no legal protection.
- f. Strong internal democracy is important to avoid competition among members.

Accessibility

- a. It is very important to consult with workers when you're speaking on their behalf.
- b. Use of technology is good to give voice to workers and their attendance in meetings so that they can access the meetings and discussions.
- c. Go to grassroots and create awareness
- d. Strengthen exchanges by women from different regions
- e. Women must not be seen as passive victims who need help. As well as speaking up for women, spaces must be opened up for women to heard.

Sustaining best practice

- a. Identify what the best practice is: what works well within your own context (you cannot apply all good practice everywhere)
- b. Documenting the work you do is key in order to learn from it and make it sustainable
- c. Disseminate materials in different formats
- d. Be clear and transparent with procedures
- e. Stakeholders need clear roles: people need to know who does what and when
- f. The voice of the workers needs to be heard – representation has to be by workers themselves
- g. Coordinate a national lobby
- h. Have coherent demands – too many disparate campaigns weakens our impact.
- i. Bring real life case studies to decision makers at an international level
- j. Campaign for ratification of laws concerning women after implementation
- k. Look at ways of making alliances and working together
- l. Look at sectors that cross regions

Good practice

“Through International efforts from Sweden, Norway and Netherlands trade unions for women have a conference every four years” (BWI)

“Globally we have a committee that meets every year to analyse the work of women around the world. We also have 5 regional committees that meet in Geneva every year to discuss what we are doing in relation to gender, key challenges, where we are and where we are going” (Builders and Woodworkers International)

“A meeting was recently run and represented by women with the International Metal Workers Union. Through linking with small NGOs and being involved in training, traditional unions are having to recognize that frontline creative work in Mexico is being done by women run- NGOs. There was a recognition that there needs to be more connection” (Maquila Solidarity Network)

3.3 Strengthening international advocacy strategies

Based on the examples of good practice presented on day two, participants were able to discuss how international advocacy strategies can be strengthened through better engagement with policy makers, companies and consumers.

Policy Makers

- We need to strengthen links between grassroots organisations and international bodies to foster a better understanding of the abuses which are taking place at a local level.
- We need to open up the space for women to be heard at a grassroots level to ensure that we are working on issues they ask us to address at an international level.
- We need to increase opportunities to influence bodies such as the ILO via a trade union umbrella.
- The development of women's organisations and women-led organisations able to play a leadership role is key.
- Over the last few years the ILO has been talking about the decent work agenda. This has potential to cover a lot of issues, including women.
- Attendance at the Committee for Asian Women helped the NMEC network internationally. By speaking with informal workers at the ILO they had the opportunity to influence governments.
- In order to affect policy at an international level it is necessary to bring case studies to decision makers and show that success stories have an impact.
- We have many voices but by having some shared clear priorities we will strengthen our action.

Good Practice

"In 2006 several domestic workers organisations' met in Amsterdam. Here it was agreed that domestic workers wanted to collaborate more closely at the international level. Another meeting was held in 2008 at which there was a common commitment of the domestic workers to determine the process of pressurising governments to establish an international convention on domestic workers" (International Domestic Workers Network)

Companies

- We want companies to do proactive work on improving wages and working conditions.
- Influencing a company can have an immediate and wide ranging impact. Once companies start addressing the issues seriously, it can have a significant impact on the quality of women's lives at home and work.
- Companies want to see the impact and for a return. Once committed, they will push to ensure things change.
- Pressurising brands is very important. Maquila Solidarity Network has worked with the Clean Clothes Campaign and the International Textile, Garment and Leatherworkers Federation to deal with systemic issues and take proactive action on issues.
- Integrating ethical trade into core business practices is key.
- We can play on the image deficit companies have - they want to be seen to be doing certain things and this can be used as a leverage.
- Companies pick and choose the issues they want to work on. They will avoid core issues such as living wage and focus on things they consider to be more easily resolvable without a challenge.
- To a certain extent groups need to accept they have to develop business cases or win-win solutions to get leverage
- It's not easy to campaign on 'grey' areas. Most of our work is impacting on brands and retailers but not on the suppliers and multinational agents.
- The research we do and evidence we can put into the public sphere is undeniable. Companies are increasingly under pressure to make sure their corporate responsibility image is accurate.

Consumers

- In order to harness consumer activism there has to be very clear links between workers and markets in Europe.
- Consumer activism needs to be based on very strong organizing on the ground.
- Campaigns carry risks and resource costs – they can go on for years requiring workers to be very strong. You must be clear about your demands and what is going to be achieved.
- We need clear roles, clear solidarity and a real belief. Don't water down your demands – we can achieve important things!

- Good communication between workers and the organisations working on their behalf is key.
- Women must stay at the centre and lead the processes.
- The most successful cases are ones where the international solidarity is one component of a wider campaign including local support, legal action and collaboration with other organisations.
- You can only succeed when you are informed: research needs to underpin any campaign.
- Effective solidarity at an international, regional and local level is key.
- The involvement of women, not only passively as workers, but also their role in trade unions is important. They must be trained as organisers and negotiators
- It is still very difficult to use consumer activism as a successful tool to support the most vulnerable – homeworkers, domestic workers, casual workers. There are difficulties in knowing where people are in the supply chain and knowing how to use the information we do collect.
- We need to get better at connecting women overseas to women workers here.
- We need to move beyond the traditional dynamic of northern consumers and southern workers and support consumer action everywhere. Demonstrations taking place in southern countries can have more impact than campaigns taking place in the north.
- Working in English limits the number of people that can contact us.

3.4 Finding the necessary resources for our work

This reflects discussions on day two where the participants in-depth look at the changing priorities for funders and how to find ongoing resources:

- a. We need to figure out how to tackle an issue that's more important than ever with **fewer resources**.
- b. When looking for funding, we are being heavily influenced in the way that we work, with **unreasonable pressures** put upon us. This is unmanageable for **smaller organisations**.
- c. Organisations may be asked to work with actors they might not want to.
- d. **Bureaucracy and corruption** in southern countries restricts organisations' abilities to deliver projects.
- e. The informal spaces and linkages that we build along with **systematic communication** is what we need to focus on.
- f. We need to look at how we can better **support and learn from each other** and improve communication.
- g. Time and resources need to be put into **lobbying national governments** to enhance policies and reduce corruption.
- h. There is often a **mismatch between what funders** want to give, the countries they want to focus on and the **priorities of the NGOs**.
- i. **Trade unions** and the **women's committee are missing** from our discussions. It is important to take the discussions back into the trade union structures and the women's committee.
- j. We need to be able to communicate with the donors that we will be able to get funding from and see how we can use the **smaller donors for leverage**
- k. We need to build both **cross regional and cross sectoral alliances**.
- l. We need to **share information** on new reports, studies, conferences, new legislation, case studies, campaigns etc
- m. We need to get better at educating each other through examples of **good practice** across different regions, for example, organising in Asia and the America's and leadership and advocacy in Africa.
- n. We need to move beyond reasearching **supply chains** and look at how we can organise them, linking formal and informal workers and related organisations, for example, shoe firms crossing India, Bangladesh and Europe.
- o. How do we work towards **strategic advocacy** together?

- p. We should use the **AWID forum** in 2012 as a way of advocating broad issues of women's labour rights.
- q. As a very underfunded area, we need to **reframe women's issues** to enable us to draw money from other areas of work.
- r. We must use opportunities to **strengthen collaboration** with the feminist movement and also with trade unions.

4. Recommended strategic activity

The following activities were recommended by participants as a set of strategic actions which they would like to see developed:

1. Set up a **donor meeting** to enable us to influence the development of funding streams and access additional funding sources.
2. Formation of a **women's labour rights network** to share information, stories, campaign information and funding news between partners.
3. A mapping and **analysis of funding sources** across different sectors
4. A mapping and **analysis of our needs** in real terms
5. A mapping and **analysis of the work being delivered** by us to persuade donors of what can be achieved and to enable us to be more strategic in the planning and delivery of new pieces of work.
6. Coordination of a women's group to deliver sessions at the **AWID Forum** in April 2012

APPENDIX

a. List of participants

Organisation	Country	Participant
Facilitator	UK	Celia Mather
Alternative Movement for Resources and Freedom Society (AMRF)	Bangladesh	Khorshed Alam
Association for Women's Rights In Development (AWID)	Canada	Diana Aguiar
Building and Woodworkers' International (BWI)	Switzerland	Crecentia Mofokeng
Committee for Asian Women (CAW)	Thailand	Lucia Jayaseelam
Central American Women's Network (CAWN)	U.K	Angela Hadjipateras
Comic Relief	U.K	Nina King
Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI)	U.K	Candida Barbato
Global Horticultural Workers' and Environmental Rights Network (GHOWERN)	East Africa	Flavia Amoding
Global Horticultural Workers' and Environmental Rights Network (GHOWERN)	East Africa	Phillipina Mosha
Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation (HIVOS)	Holland	Caroline Wildeman
Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation (HIVOS)	Holland	Ireen Dubel
Homeworkers Worldwide (HWW)	U.K	Jane Tate
The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)/ International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN)/ Global Labour Initiative (GLI)/ Women in the Informal Economy Global Organisation (WIEGO)	Switzerland	Karin Pape
Labour Behind the Label (LBL)/Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC)	U.K	Sam Maher
Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN)	Canada	Lynda Yanz
Movement of Working and Unemployed Women (MEC)	Nicaragua	Sandra Ramos
One World Action	U.K	Carolina Gottardo
Oxfam GB	U.K	Rachel Wilshaw
Oxfam Intermon	Spain	Erika Guzman

Oxfam Novib	Holland	Imad Sabi
Trade Union Congress (TUC)	U.K	Vicky Cann
Union Network International	Switzerland	Denise McGuire
University of Manchester	U.K	Barbara Evers
University of Nairobi	Kenya	Maggie Opondo
University of Portsmouth	U.K	Marina Prieto-Carron
War on Want	U.K	Graciela Romero
Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP)	India	Neha Kagal
Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)	U.K	Dave Spooner
Women Working Worldwide	U.K	Rachel English
Women Working Worldwide	UK	June Hartley
Women Working Worldwide	UK	Jo Smith
Women Working Worldwide	UK	Marta Medusa
Women Working Worldwide	UK	Maggie Burns
Working Women Academy	Korea	Maria Rhie
World March of Women	Brazil	Renata Moreno
Zimbabwe chamber of informal Economy Associations (ZCIEA), a member of Streetnet	Zimbabwe	Beauty Mugijima

b. Responses to Scoping Exercise

Prior to the workshop Women Working Worldwide asked participants to complete a short questionnaire asking them about their organisation and their current work programme. Findings were shared with participants prior to the event so they had knowledge about each other prior the event. The following is a copy of the responses. Whilst not all participants responded to our questionnaire, the responses that we did get were extremely interesting. We have therefore done a little editing but left many of the answers intact.

1. What is your current programme work? Please include sector and regions covered, brief objectives, partners.

- ***International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN) – Karin Pape***
 - IDWN covers membership-based organisations of domestic workers worldwide, mainly but not exclusively, trade unions.
 - Currently we are covering Latin America, the Caribbean, the US, Africa and Asia. There are attempts to closer connect Europe.
 - The objective is to build an international organization, based on democratic principles in order to protect and support domestic workers worldwide.
 - The short term objective is to achieve an ILO Convention for domestic workers. The decision on an ILO Convention will be in June 2011.
 - IDWN is developing under the auspices of the IUF, with a strong support of WIEGO. We are working together with the official trade union structures at all levels, with the ILO, UNIFEM, government structures, NGO's of various sorts, but in particular FES, women's organizations, church based organizations, migrant organizations. We are ourselves an organization in the making.

- ***Homeworkers Worldwide (HWW) - Jane Tate***

HWW has the general aim of supporting homeworker organisations all over the world, particularly in the form of support for the Federation of Homeworkers Worldwide, an independent organisation with members from different continents. We currently have very limited funds for this general work and a specific project with homeworkers in the UK; we are hoping to be doing work in Europe and South India in 2012 if funding proposals are successful.

➤ ***Public Sector International (PSI): Chidi King (cancelled attendance due to unforeseen circumstances)***

We are a global union federation for public service workers, whose membership comprises approximately 65% women. We have offices and programmes in Europe, Asia and Pacific, Africa and Arab Countries and Latin America. Our main sectors are health, water and sanitation and public administration, with health and public administration in particular being female dominated in terms of the number of workers. Our work includes promoting and defending the rights of all workers, promoting and advocating for gender equality both in and outside the workplace (through capacity building, collective bargaining, social dialogue, participation in international forums - to give a few examples).

➤ ***Trade Union Congress (UK): Vicky Cann***

The TUC has a range of programmes. The bulk of our programme work is in Africa and Asia. Our programme work is backed up by our policy, campaigns and advocacy work, including our membership of the governing body of the ILO and of the board of the Ethical Trading Initiative.

All of our overseas projects meet at least 1 of our DFID PPA strategic objectives which are:

- Improved capacity of developing country trade unions to promote decent work and good governance to government, business and international institutions at the national level
- Poor workers and their families have improved rights and improved capacity to enforce those rights leading to higher income and better employment conditions
- Strengthened UK and developing country trade union international development policy engagement and influence at national, regional and international levels
- Greater British trade union membership understanding of and commitment to: sustainable development; and to the challenges of the Decent Work Agenda for developing country workers

➤ ***University of Nairobi: Maggie Opondo***

- a. Assessments of Gender Equity in Certified Chains (Tea and Coffee) in Kenya – funded by HIVOS, RA and UTZ (2009-2010) - The objectives of these assessments was to identify and document the structure of gender

roles, relations and the gender-specific problems and constraints facing plantation workers and smallholders in the coffee and tea sector in Kenya and recommend possible solutions.

- b. Advisory Committee Member of the Better Work (BW) Programme of ILO/IFC (2009-2011). The BW programme seeks to reduce poverty through improving compliance with labour standards and increasing competitiveness in supply chains. The role of the advisory Committee is to advise the Management Group on the overall Better Work Effort, specifically with regard to strategic directions, strategic partnerships and key developments in the area of global supply chain management and labour standards.
- c. Governance Implications of Private Standards Initiatives in Agri-Food Chains (The Politics of Private Standards) research project – funded by the ESRC of the UK (2006-2010). This project examines how EUREPGAP (GLOBALGAP) and Fairtrade initiatives impacts on the responsibilities, roles and inter-relationships of different stakeholders in flower and vegetable production in Kenya. It involves engaging smallholders and workers in participatory focus groups discussions to understand their contribution to and involvement in Private Standards Initiatives (PSIs).
- d. Lead Coordinating Author of the IPCC 5th Assessment Report (Chapter 13 – Livelihoods, Poverty and Climate Change) (2010-2014)

➤ ***Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation (HIVOS): Ireen Dubel & Caroline Wildeman***

Hivos currently implements a 4 year strategic plan during the period 2007 – 2010. Hivos has just finalised a new strategic plan for the period 2011 and 2015. In this period Hivos will in association with around 500 (local and a number of global) civil society organisations and other relevant parties implement four programmes in 23 countries and globally. The programmes are:

- ***Expression & Engagement***, aimed at freedom of speech and expression, space for debate and culture and active involvement of citizens in social processes that influence them directly;
- ***Rights & Citizenship***, which supports men and women who seek recognition of human rights and women’s rights, good governance and a pluralistic society;
- ***Green Entrepreneurship***, which aims to strengthen the economic position of enterprising men and women in rural areas;
- ***Action for Change***, which encourages behavioural change in the North so that the lives of people in developing countries can truly improve.

The 23 countries are Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru in Latin America, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Namibia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe in Africa, Iran, Iraq, Syria in West Asia, India, Indonesia and Timor Leste in Asia. For more details see the Hivos website:

<http://www.hivos.nl/eng/We-are-Hivos/Hivos-partners-projects/Hivos-partners-in-Africa-Asia-and-Latin-America>

➤ ***Oxfam Novib: Erika Guzman***

The "Economic Justice" Program in Morocco has the overall objective of enhancing the working conditions of women working in the strawberry fields of the north of the country (Larache and Moulay Busselham regions).

The Program is composed of three main projects: the Economic Justice Campaign, the Labour Rights Observatory and the Agricultural Women's Association.

The Program works to achieve its objective at all relevant levels of intervention, that is: government (Ministry of Employment and the National Agency for Social Security), civil society, women workers in the strawberry sector, the entrepreneurs (land owners and agro-industrials conditioning and freezing the product for export) and the general public. There is a specific strategy for each one of these actors.

It has various partners, one of which, the Unit, was created in the course of the identification process: it is a platform composed by 10 human rights' associations, women's associations, development associations, unions and women working in the strawberry sector. It is the Unit for the defence of the economic and social rights in agriculture.

➤ ***Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations: Beauty Mugijima***

Two activities focusing on women include:

- 1) Lobbying and advocacy training for members so that they are able to lobby Government and authorities for working space, and are able to advocate and negotiate for policies that are user friendly e.g. negotiate for an affordable maternity fee and that the women can get travel documents for their children without the husbands.
- 2) Rights awareness workshops to sensitise women of their rights so as to defend themselves from illegal harassments and abuse the Police and Municipal Police.

➤ **CAW: Lucia Jayaseelan**

Committee for Asian Women (CAW) is a regional network of 46 women workers member groups in 14 Asian countries, who together with other women workers groups and networks in the region and globally work to empower women workers to protect, advocate and advance their rights.

Our current programmes are;

In the *formal economy sector*

1. Decent Work, Decent Wage Campaign - mapping, advocacy and campaigns on a national and regional level
2. Permanent people's tribunal in Sri Lanka on right to decent work and right to organise in the garment sector.
3. Training for workers: Training of trainers workshops on engendered Occupational Safety and Health trainings. Training of trainers on Production Mapping as an alternative form of organising.
4. Monitoring the impact of free trade agreements to highlight the ways in which trade policies impact on livelihood and rights of women workers, and advocate for policy change that incorporate gender and labour perspective.

In the *informal economy sector*

1. Domestic workers – local and migrant workers build the network of local, adult domestic workers in Asia, strengthening their capacities and provided exchanges of experience and advocacies, through Asian Domestic Workers Network (ADWN) organised by CAW.
2. Regional advocacy on Labour migration and regional campaigns on issues of the need to prioritise social protection spending for women, arresting the tide of trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation and to create sustainable jobs that provide decent wage and safe working conditions to women workers.

On the rights of *women workers in areas of conflict and political suppression*;

1. Mapping and exchange and exposure programmes for women workers in conflict, affected by war and other forms of suppression ie extremism, religious fundamentalism and labour suppression.

Women Workers Leadership Training Programme - a labour education programme for women workers organisers to raise the awareness and leadership of women activists on a regional level.

➤ **Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat: Neha Kagal**

We work with waste pickers on issues of livelihoods in India. KKPKP is a mass based organization committed to rights based advocacy with protection of livelihoods being the cornerstone of work. Along the years Education, Credit , Health and micro enterprises have emerged as strategic programmes. The larger

vision in organising waste collectors is with a view to develop a sector specific collective organisation of unprotected and unrecognised waste-pickers and itinerant buyers who are the poorest and the most marginalised among poor urban workers. The Union seeks to establish scrap collection as socially relevant, economically productive and environmentally beneficial work.

KKPKP is based in Pune in western India. KKPKP along with a couple of other organisations, promoted a network of organisations of waste pickers in India and currently functions as the network secretariat. KKPKP was also among the organisations that promoted a global network of waste pickers' organisations.

➤ ***Comic Relief: Nina King***

As a funder we support the work of organisations rather than acting as implementers of projects. Our support to projects is both financial in the form of grants and also learning and convening.

➤ ***Women Working Worldwide***

We are currently working with local Trade Union and NGO partners in Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia on a project to improve the rights of women horticulture workers on farms supplying to the EU market. We are implementing training programmes to inform workers of their rights and encouraging them to organise into existing Trade Union structures. Action research has been carried out to assess the conditions on the farms over the three year period as well as in depth research into the impact of buying practices on workers. Advocacy is carried out at national level to influence farm owners to improve conditions but also at international level to influence buyers/retailers to review their purchasing practices and act on key labour rights violations.

We are currently developing work in the garment sector with women workers in Lesotho, Madagascar, India and Bangladesh.

Our small projects fund supports women-led organisations to raise awareness and implement small actions with women workers around the world.

➤ ***University of Manchester (and others), Capturing the Gains Programme: Barbara Evers***

Capturing the Gains has a focus on employment and workers conditions in global production networks.

It is a research and policy-focused programme based at the Brooks World Poverty Institute at the University of Manchester.

The research has just started, and will be done in about a dozen countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America - and in four sectors – horticulture, apparels, telecoms, tourism. It is gathering information from both producers and workers. It will look at changes in producer strategies in these four sectors, and changes in employment conditions (wages, overtime, collective bargaining, stress levels).

It will include interviews with workers in these countries/sectors.

The purpose is to try to understand how changes in producer processes, products and improved efficiency are related to changes in employment conditions, wages and the quality of work. On the basis of these findings, the research will propose measures which can be taken by governments, multilateral organisations (ILO, WTO), workers organisations and CSOs to promote social upgrading (better working conditions, wages, ..) and economic upgrading (better productivity, more competitiveness). The research is focused on the workplace, and the gender dimensions of employment/work, and of producers strategies, is central to the research and will inform the findings.

The project brings together an international team of researchers from Asia, Latin America, Africa and Europe. Partners include the ILO, research institutes in South Africa (Univ of Witwatersrand), Brazil, US, India as well as their networks. Many of our partners are working with workers organisations in their own regions/countries.

2. Have you produced any useful resources that can be used by other organisations?

➤ IDWN: Karin Pape

We have produced an information leaflet about the ILO process and why domestic workers need an ILO Convention. For the discussion in the ILO we prepared a “Platform of demands”, A global statistical overview (gathering all information, including estimates), and a special statistical publication for Latin America, based on official data. The publications seem to be useful for everyone involved in the ILO process to develop an ILO Convention for domestic workers.

➤ HWW: Jane Tate

HWW has produced a number of manuals on horizontal and vertical mapping of homebased workers (action-research with the aim of organising homebased workers); and has other popular materials on homeworking, including a newsletter in English. We have some materials in other languages from the mapping programme that we carried out from 2001 to 2006.

➤ **PSI: Chidi King**

http://www.worldpsi.org/TemplateEn.cfm?Section=Equality_equality_diversity&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=13034

➤ **TUC: Vicky Cann**

On our website are all our published resources and reports, including learning materials, and case study booklets which give a flavour of our work. We have some monitoring and evaluation tools, either finalised or in development: a tool to help plan and monitor increases in an organisation's capacity, a 'ladder' which helps with understanding increases in an individual's capacity, and a 'theory of change' which maps TUC (and possibly wider union) interventions on international development and how they lead to change. Major reviews of the TUC's international development work are underway, including an independent review of our work over the past five years or more, and an evaluation of our most recent DFID-funded programme. Finally, we are just coming to the end of a process to develop an international development strategy. This will be available on our website in early November.

➤ **Maggie Opondo, University of Nairobi:**

Articles in refereed journals and books

Research reports – whose intellectual property rights lie with the commissioners of the studies

ETI Smallholder Guidelines and ETI Supervisor Training Manual

➤ **HIVOS: Ireen Dubel & Caroline Wildeman**

Hivos has created a permanent platform with its knowledge programme (since 2007), where academics and activists in the North and South can cooperate in dealing with urgent problems. At present the knowledge programme focuses on:
Promoting Pluralism aimed at providing answers to question on how civil society organisations can get to grips with fundamentalist tendencies;
Digital natives with a cause? Examining the potential role of youth in social and political change;

Civil Society Building aimed at developing new perspectives on social change, from active citizenship to social movements;

Civil society in West Asia aimed at development of strategies how to strengthen the voice of citizens and their organisations in politically unfavourable environments in West Asia.

Small Producer Agency in the Globalised Market aimed at formulating options for small farmers and their organisations in the context of price fluctuations, stringent quality requirements, climate change, the financial crisis and large-scale international land acquisition.

For knowledge products developed see the Hivos knowledge website:
<http://www.hivos.net>

In addition Hivos collaborates in a number of different learning trajectories with other Dutch development agencies and academic institutions on:

gender mainstreaming under the name On Track with Gender. For resources see the website: <http://www.ontrackwithgender.nl> (in particular the policy brief).

Promotion of farmer entrepreneurship under the banner of Agri-Profocus, a.o. including a trajectory on gender in value chains. For resources see the website: <http://www.agri-profocus.nl>

Micro-finance under the name of MicroNed, a.o. a focus on social performance management. For resources see the website: <http://www.microned.nl>

➤ **CAW: Lucia Jayaseelan**

Resources produced: CAW's newsletters, ebulletins and websites, research material, pamphlets posters, videos.

➤ **Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat: Neha Kagal**

Recycling Livelihoods: Integration of the Informal recycling sector in solid waste management(GTZ).

- Economic Aspects of Informal Sector Activities in Solid Waste Management (GTZ 1).
- Study of Scrap Collectors, Scrap Traders and recycling enterprises in Pune (ILO).
- Solid Waste Generation and Collection in Pune: A situational Analysis (AIIISG).
- Rising from waste - organising waste pickers in India, Thailand and the Philippines (CAW). Study of child labour in the wastepicking sector.
- Organising the unorganised: Case study of KKPKP

A film called "Purna Chakra" (full circle) which highlights the struggles, success, joy and disappointments in the last 17 years of the Union. It portrays the challenges faced, and obstacles surmounted from inception till date.

➤ **Comic Relief: Nina King**

There will be a full scoping study and literature review undertaken at the beginning of 2011 which will address the Comic Relief around the question of how much women workers are benefiting from international trade. A report will be available and disseminated with UK and local partners.

➤ **Women Working Worldwide**

Key outputs from our current work should come online shortly including a training manual for women workers in the horticulture sector and research reports and analyses.

A range of other resources are available on our website www.women-ww.org.

3. Is there anything that you're working on at the moment that may be of particular interest?

➤ **IDWN: Karin Pape**

Our experiences in building a network of mainly informal, women workers in one sector, in close collaboration with an official trade union structure (IUF) and close collaboration with an international research policy network (WIEGO) are somewhat unique. The different “members” (we don't have an official membership status yet) of IDWN need to judge in which respect this has changed/improved the impact of their organizations on the ground. We are trying to use the ILO process as organizing tool.

➤ **HWW: Jane Tate**

Building the Federation, particularly supporting the capacity of grassroots organisations to work internationally; how to use international organising to support workers organising in global supply chains; international campaign for right of association for new homebased worker trade union in Turkey, Ev-Ek-Sen.

➤ **PSI: Chidi King**

The global unions are developing a joint action plan and charter on quality public services at the heart of which is the belief that quality public services provide the essential foundation for decent work, democracy, equity, and quality of life for all citizens. We believe that universal access to vital public services such as health and care services and water and sanitation are essential to the economic and social empowerment of women. Equally important is the access of women to decision-making and policy development positions in all areas of public services.

➤ **TUC: Vicky Cann**

Our new international development strategy will have 4 themes including one around vulnerable workers and one around equalities. The TUC has a long history of working on equalities, especially gender issues, although our ID work on vulnerability is newer.

Under equalities, we are likely to be looking at the following areas:

- Trade union organisations reflect the diversity of the workforce in their membership and within their representative and decision-making structures.
- Trade union organisations' bargaining agendas reflect the diversity of working people
- National policy and legislation, especially on labour issues, provision of public services and social protection, reflects the needs of all groups
- The policies and practices of international institutions reflect the needs of under-represented groups

Under vulnerable workers, we are likely to be looking at these areas:

- Trade union organisations' agendas reflect the needs of vulnerable workers
- Vulnerable workers organise to enjoy Decent Work in their places of employment
- Governments ensure that vulnerable workers enjoy equal rights and access to public services and social protection
- International institutions' policy and practice reflect the needs of vulnerable workers

➤ ***HIVOS: Ireen Dubel & Caroline Wildeman***

The Action for Change programme focuses on three specific themes that will take shape in three campaigns. One of these campaigns is called Women@Work, acknowledging and upholding the right to decent work for women. This campaign is currently being developed. For a brief summary, see the document Hivos Alliance Campaign Women@Work. The start of this campaign however remains dependent on the outcome of the decision by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Hivos funding application for the MFS (co-financing) programme.

➤ ***Oxfam Novib: Erika Guzman***

The Caravan, which is the most important activity within the Economic Justice Campaign, is travelling through the *douars*, the places where women working in the strawberry sector live. Its objective is to inform and sensitize women about their labour rights in general and their right to the social security in particular. In the 2009, the Caravan touched more than 3,000 women.

➤ **Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations: Beauty Mugijima**

As we embarked on the revamping and Rights Awareness programme many women are now able to deal with any situation without waiting for the men. Many local authorities now appreciate ZCIEAs work and the Informal Workers are now being allocated working space and low cost housing stands.

➤ **Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat: Neha Kagal**

Integration of wastepickers into Solid Waste Management systems in the city. Lobbying for this at the State and Central Government levels too. Challenging WTE plants as CDM beneficiaries.

➤ **Comic Relief: Nina King**

Developing links between the Comic Relief Women & Girls and Trade programme, referred to as Trade Links.

4. What key challenges are you currently facing as an organisation?

➤ **IDWN: Karin Pape**

We have to do many things at the same time and we are driven by the ILO process. We would have liked to have a bottom-up approach but need to do a lot of things the other way round. On the other hand we are getting a lot of attention and possibilities to put domestic workers' issues on the agenda, which would have been difficult without the ILO process. So key challenges are; lack of time and lack of (more) financial resources.

➤ **HWW: Jane Tate**

How to develop international organising; communications across many languages; how to develop a dual strategy of self-reliance for resources and specific projects where possible; working with researchers.

➤ **PSI: Chidi King**

Attacks on the trade union rights of our affiliates, including the right to freedom of association, right to organise and collective bargaining; drastic cuts in public spending and services, linked to a neo-liberal ideology and agenda; increase in precarious working conditions throughout the public sector, affecting in particular women, young workers and migrant workers.

➤ **TUC: Vicky Cann**

With the major public sector funding cuts and the challenges posed by the new coalition government in Britain, we anticipate that British unions may find it increasingly hard to allocate as many resources to international development as they have done in recent years, especially if there are mass public sector redundancies.

➤ **HIVOS: Ireen Dubel & Caroline Wildeman**

The key challenge in the Netherlands is the current process of constituting a new government, based on the outcomes of the elections on 9 June 2010. The new coalition government currently being formed will imply a serious budget cut of Dutch Development Aid reducing the current 0.8% to 0.7% of GDP, whereas the overall GDP is lower than previously anticipated due to the financial and economic crisis.

Hivos and all the other Dutch development NGOs are currently awaiting the final decision to be announced on 1 November 2010 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on their funding application for the MFS (co-financing) programme for the period 2011 – 2015. The available budget is substantially lower than the total amount applied for by all the Dutch NGOs. The budget may be further reduced.

➤ **Oxfam Novib: Erika Guzman**

To work with the Moroccan government and achieving change of practices within the entrepreneurs, which are extremely reticent to change.

• **Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations: Beauty Mugijima**

- Lack of adequate resources in the form of revolving fund for women
- IT tools for information dissemination
- An HIV/AIDS Policy for the Informal Economy
- Capacity building i.e leadership business management trainings.

➤ **CAW: Lucia Jayaseelan**

In the current economic situation many rights based groups working on issues of economic justice, mobilising on issues of labour solidarity and unionisation are facing cuts in funding. Women and women workers groups will therefore become more marginalised while the issues these groups work on become more severe.

As the struggles of women workers in response to their situation intensifies there is a groundswell of spontaneous women leadership at grassroots such as, among domestic workers, migrant workers, etc. However as governments in Asia become more repressive these women and women's groups become targets.

➤ ***Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat: Neha Kagal***

The threat of privatization of SWM systems, Waste to Energy Plants and their effect on livelihoods and the environment.

➤ ***Comic Relief: Nina King***

As a grant maker there are appear to be few organisations that are focusing on the specific priorities of women workers. Particularly, women who are working in the informal labour market.

- Varying qualities in the monitoring and evaluation of work with this group.
- Really good evidence base of what is working/what is not working and how change is brought about for women workers.
- What approaches are effective in bringing about change for women workers and why.

➤ ***Women Working Worldwide***

Resourcing our work, capacity and time and other challenges related to being a small organisation.

5. What key challenges are facing the women you are currently working with?

➤ ***IDWN: Karin Pape***

The work of women domestic workers is invisible in private households and undervalued because it is not regarded as work. Traditionally women provide this work unpaid. In many countries domestic workers are not recognized as workers and therefore fall out of the scope of labour laws. When they are covered by labour laws, the rights are poorly implemented and still there are a lot of exclusion clauses for domestic workers in many countries (i.e. minimum wage coverage, health & safety regulations etc.). Domestic workers face enormous difficulties of organizing because of their isolated position. Their employment relationship is often connected to dependent personal relationships, in particular for live-in domestic workers, so that not only their labour rights are violated but also their human rights. Domestic workers complain about not being respected as workers and human beings.

➤ ***HWW: Jane Tate***

Homebased workers are usually invisible because most of them are women. They work informally and do not usually have any of the rights associated with

work e.g. minimum wages, health insurance etc. They are extremely busy and it is difficult to build stable organisations with limited time and resources

➤ **PSI: Chidi King**

(See above). Lack of equality in their unions and in the workplace (career progression, job segregation, access to leadership positions etc.), work-life balance (including equal sharing of family responsibilities), violence in the workplace.

➤ **TUC: Vicky Cann**

- Continued issues around lack of access within union structures and leadership positions and a lack of voice in some (but not all) union organisations. There is a need to challenge unequal power relations within unions and to work with men to open up these structures to be inclusive and representative of the whole workplace.
- Cultural 'traditions' which in some countries continue to hold women back at home and in the workplace
- Women already make up the vast majority of vulnerable workers. But now there is increasing threat of vulnerability and precarious work due to the global economic crisis, which compounds globalisation. This covers many sectors including agriculture, farming, pressure to migrate
- The threat of trafficking and exploitation
 - Conflict or post-conflict situations which can place added pressure on women i.e. growth in widowhood
 - Lack of adequate social protection such as maternity rights and access to public services such as health or education, both for them and their children (girl children especially)

➤ **Maggie Opondo, University of Nairobi:**

- a. Violation of rights among female farmers and workers in global supply chains.
- b. Intimidation of female farmers and workers that have participated in the research project.
- c. Fulfilling the expectations of female farmers and workers amongst whom I have conducted research.
- d. Post-research management - Providing for the needs of the female participants in research projects often opens up a Pandora's Box. This is because in the process of establishing a rapport the thin line between researcher and participant is often blurred demanding certain obligations which are usually not part of the objectives of the research.

➤ **HIVOS: Ireen Dubel & Caroline Wildeman**

The Netherlands is the most important donor (including both aid channelled by the Dutch government bilaterally and aid channelled via Dutch NGOs) for women's rights organisations in the Global South. A specific MDG3 Fund was created and funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a budget of 70 million € for a 3 year period ending mid 2011, enabling 45 international women's rights programmes to scale up their work. At present continuation of the fund is not yet guaranteed and under threat given the planned budget cuts by the new coalition government. Depending on the outcome of the decision on their MFS funding application Dutch NGOs are also likely to face the need to cut their budgets and programmes. This might have repercussions for their support to women's rights organisations, including their support to organisations that focus on women workers.

Thus a key challenge will be fewer Dutch (and other) ODA resources for women's rights work, including the rights of women workers, in the context of the global systemic crises of food, finance, fuel, climate change and land acquisition. Poor women, e.g. women workers, in the global South disproportionately bear the brunt of the consequences of these crises and trends.

➤ **Oxfam Novib: Erika Guzman**

The status of women in Morocco is a delicate issue. There is grave discrimination against women in general, and women working in the fields are more severely mistreated. Their labour rights are inexistent and their living and working conditions are miserable.

➤ **Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations: Beauty Mugijima**

- Shelter
- Sanitation
- Access to loans
- No legal framework to protect them especially during course of duty.
- No social protection schemes

➤ **CAW: Lucia Jayaseelan**

CAW sees the trends in global economy of rising unemployment, poverty and the erosion of labour rights directly affecting women workers rights. In the past three years CAW identified informalisation of labour, irregular and unfair labour

practices, conflict and suppression of political and labour rights as key issues affecting women and work. The financial crisis which impacted the manufacturing and garment sectors only deepened the adverse effects of these situations as more women workers lost jobs and experienced gender based violence and discrimination with the resurgence of fundamentalism, conflict and militarism, fueling further labour migration. The crisis left more than 30 million workers in Asia unemployed, of whom 80 % are unskilled and lowly paid women workers swelling the ranks of the working poor by 1.4 to 2 million. Greater advocacy, organising and mobilising for change remains a challenge for CAW.

Lucia has provided us with a long and very interesting analysis of the challenges faced by women workers in Asia. It is appended at the end of this document.

➤ ***Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat: Neha Kagal***

Within DTDC the problems may range from- adjusting to the concept of providing a “service” (dressing, timings, politeness), maintaining relationships with citizens/corporators/PMC, husbands joining work along with women, newer entrants into waste, servicing slums.

For Wp’s who work at the landfill sites; Closure of the landfill sites, WTE plants, new exploitative terms of engagement between the WTE plant owners and the wp’s.

Itinerant Waste Buyers- Private E Waste Recyclers coming in is a perceived threat, harmful dismantling techniques

Kundi (garbage bin) Wps’- Fewer number of Garbage bins on the road, OHS injuries, longer working hours

Common Issues: Threat of Privatization, Effect of inflation on eating habits, Corruption in the Public Distribution System (Ration), Rising cost of health care

➤ ***Comic Relief: Nina King***

- Challenges in access to basic education/adult literacy
- Women’s ownership and management of assets
- Challenge of protecting those at risk from violence
- Lack of representation of women in bodies that lead to changes in policy and practices

➤ ***Women Working Worldwide***

We work with women in formal supply chains. These women are experiencing a wide range of problems including low wages, casualisation of their jobs, difficulties with long hours and short-notice overtime affecting their ability to care for their children, sexual and other forms of harassment, being situated in lowest paid jobs, OHS problems and more.

6. What are your present funding sources and/or have you interesting funding news? (If you do not feel this is too sensitive).

Funding sources given were:

- Dutch trade unions and Dutch government (MDG3 fund)
- Oxfam (GB, Novib, Australia)
- EU (very difficult to attract)
- UK Government – Department For International Development
- Comic Relief (UK)
- Trade Union Affiliation fees
- Spanish government
- FNV
- EED
- Mama Cash
- Kairos

7. Please identify key forums for networking, collaboration and influencing in which you are active (including NGO/Union dialogue).

International forums listed included:

- Tripartite meetings organised by ILO
- Consultation meetings organised by trade unions, NGOs etc
- Regional workshops with programme related participants.
- Clean Clothes Campaign
- Ethical Trading Initiative
- United Nations Committee on the Status of Women
- International Labour Conference
- Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (coordinated by the ITUC)
- Better Work Programme
- Local Resources Network
- Oxfam International Labour Rights Team

- Network groups of CAW – 46 women workers labour groups in 14 Asian countries
- Regional groups/NGOs: Solidarity for Asian Peoples' Advocacy (SAPA), the ASEAN Peoples Forum (APF), Asian Rural Women's Coalition (ARWC), the Asian Transnational Corporations Monitoring Network (ATNC), United for Foreign Domestic Workers Rights Network (UFDWR), and the Asia-Europe Peoples' Forum (AEPF), APF, ATNC, UFDWR, AEPF and ARWC, APWLD, CARAM ASIA, PANAP, CCC.
- Alliance of Indian Wastepickers (AIW), WIEGO, GAIA, Angamehanati Kashtakari Sangharsh Samiti (local), Stree Mukti Andolan Sampark samiti (local), JAA (state level), Action for the Rights of the Child, Campaign against Child Labour, citizens civic action groups and environmental groups.

Appendix One

Additional Information from Lucia Jayaseelan at CAW on the situation of Asian Women Workers.

Loss of rights in the Formal sector / Informalisation of labour

- Loss of Legal protection and job security:* The last three years has seen the growing erosion of the formal industrial sector generally, especially for women workers in the garment and manufacturing sectors. The erosion of jobs has impacted on decent work and with it the protection from labour laws for adequate wages, safe working conditions, job security, social protection and provision, reasonable career prospects, and worker rights. People's livelihoods and sense of dignity, whilst bound up tightly with their jobs, have dwindled away as changes in the law take away any protection and rights to organise causing workers to lose rights they had gained after years of struggle.
- Right to association:* Where trade unions exist, union busting and government repression is prevalent through political detention, torture, disappearances and murders of unionists and labour activists, as in the Philippines, China and Bangladesh. The strength of unions to stand up to the crisis is undermined by closures of factories and informalisation. The first workers to be removed are leaders of unions as experienced by workers in Ssangyong Motors, Korea and Triumph in Thailand. Women workers in the manufacturing and garment sectors who are not organised can expect little protection from the law or these trade unions. In a bid to attract markets and investments, governments have compromised basic rights of workers while condoning violent forms of repression against organising. Migrant workers are particularly vulnerable as they have no right to organise or join any trade union.

- c. *Minimum wage laws.* Workers' demand for a minimum wage law and a living wage calculation is an area of great resistance by governments and industries. Very few countries in Asia have a minimum wage laws. Industries basing on maximising profits and governments' reluctance to enforce the law kept workers incomes below poverty level. The ILO decent work campaign pushes for this recognition by extending the decent wage campaign to 2015.
- d. *Loss of Occupational Safety and Health at work.* Women workers in every sector of work are exposed to the day-to-day reality of extremely poor work practices characterised by long working hours, limited space for body movement and exposure to hazardous substances. The impact of the financial crisis reduced critical resources and allocations to health and safety in the workplace, as well as compromised government policies on the health and safety of workers. This can be seen in the rise of cases of accidents, injuries, work-related mental stress, and fatalities. In Fox Conn, in China, the work overload and intensification of work in 2010 has led to suicides among women workers.
- e. *Mobilisation and Alternative Forms of Organising.* Workers have organised in response to deteriorating working conditions, repression and loss of work due to job retrenchment in the formal sector. For instance, Triumph workers in Thailand staged a long protest from 2008 – 2009, Triumph union members in Thailand, eventually set up their own workers factory (Try Arm). In Indonesia workers took court action against factories that closed with unpaid wages and occupied them to assert their rights. General strikes were organised in Korea and Cambodia.

Non-recognition of labour rights for the Informal sector

- a. *Even less legal protection or job security.* The traditional informal sector has been brought into the global market production chain as companies move away from the formal sector in search of cheaper production through outsourcing and subcontracting of labour. This has resulted in the unprecedented growth of the informal economy where in the process women workers work for even lower wages, less labour rights protection unregulated and unmonitored working conditions with no job security nor access to social provisions or benefits. In Asia many women workers have lost life-long jobs to informal employment that increasingly became precarious, irregular and unsafe. Despite the alarming trend in informal employment in the last three years, governments of Asia have exhibited an inability and an unwillingness to extend recognition and rights of formal sector workers to the informal workers.
- b. *Right of association.* Apart from some sectors of work such as farmers unions, waste pickers union and domestic workers unions in some countries, unions hardly exist for women workers in the informal sector. Legislation to protect the rights of informal sector workers do not exist but in a few countries such as in India.

- c. *Exchange and Exposure.* Informal economy women workers have expressed the need for interaction and exchanges among themselves to gain more learning and experience on organising. Among domestic workers and waste collectors there have been some exchanges but this has yet to be done more extensively.

A. Unabated vulnerability, invisibility and precarious living and working conditions of Migrant workers

- a. *Job insecurity during financial crisis.* Migrant workers, both documented and undocumented, are on the increase in Asia, within Asia and worldwide. The downturn in the economy has most affected local and international migrant workers employed in household and construction work, who have been forced to return home in droves. The impact of this is the further burgeoning unemployment in the home countries and loss of remittance for economies dependent on migrant workers. Migrant workers are the first to be retrenched as governments desperate to open local jobs for dismissed nationals grapple with their own unemployment crises. Migrants who have no means of repatriation or who have no employment options in their home countries are forced to work underground, putting themselves in even more hazardous and abusive conditions. Governments of the sending countries have exhibited an inability and an unwillingness to intervene to generate decent local employment.
- b. *Source of cheap labour.* The presence of migrant workers who are willing to receive lesser pay for greater work have created a preference for them among employers especially in the most dirty, demeaning and dangerous occupations of receiving countries. Complex layers of gender, racial, ethnic, sexual, and religious xenophobia have contributed to their continued invisibility and non-recognition of their labour rights.
- c. *No access to legal protection or labour standards.* A large population of migrant workers in Asian countries as well as Asians who work in Western countries and the Middle East are not recognised as part of the labour force and do not have legal standing to organise unions nor undertake collective bargaining. Receiving countries such as Malaysia now openly seek undocumented workers to meet labour shortages without offering legal protection or rights. On the other hand, sending countries, in order to maintain a steady flow of remittances, enter into agreements with governments without securing proper protection and rights for migrant workers. The increased flow and trafficking of migrants within the Asian region from Burma, Cambodia, Laos is unprecedented. Little has been done to document or raise these issues with governments and ASEAN.

Outsourcing and subcontracting in the global production chain

- a. The global production chain is now so complicated that it has changed the world of work. Relocation in international production have dramatically increased. New technologies allow for the production process to be split and spread over to different locations. There is now a greater dispersion of production and more layers of outsourcing and subcontracting of particular sections of the production process.
- b. *Cheap Labour Source*: This has led to the emergence of international suppliers and the phenomena of manufacturers without factories. This is now the norm in textiles and garments, computer hardware, consumer electronics and related sectors. For labour this has meant that a few highly skilled professional workers together with a vast army of semi-skilled workers form the production chain. Needless to say these are women-dominated sectors.
- c. *Challenge to big brand names*. This also challenges what the big brands have been promoting – Corporate Social Responsibility. CSR standards are almost impossible to enforce further down the production chain. To support actions against unfair and unhealthy production practices of brand names greater consolidation on identifying the factories and the branded products in the Asia region is needed.

Rise in Conflicts and Suppression and impact on women

- a. Increased in violence, conflicts and militarisation in Asia has impacted women disproportionately in terms of their ability to recover and rehabilitate themselves and their communities. Tools used to aggravate war are often gendered where sexual assaults and exploitation of women and children are widespread. Women make up the majority of refugees and internally displaced people fleeing conflict and are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse while leaving conflict areas, and in the refugee camps in the host countries. Conflict and post-conflict environments breed conditions for trafficking of women and girls for labour and sexual exploitation, further escalating violence against women, eroding options for decent livelihoods, entrenching poverty for generations thereon.
- b. The rise of religious fundamentalism in Asia today can be interpreted in terms of a reaction to the dependency of states on a world system of core western powers and as a direct challenge to modernisation, westernisation and their accompanying values. Extremist fundamentalism weakens the already fragile space of women in Asian societies dominated by patriarchal, religious and conservative forces. Such extremisms disempower women and women workers from recognising and asserting their rights within the family, at work, in the community, and in society.
- c. Especially in times of political instability and economic crises, governments use extralegal powers to enforce a so-called industrial peace, through national security legislation, emergency decrees or anti-terrorist polices. During these times of extreme insecurity on the part of governments they

resort to silencing the most active assets in their societies- the workers. This results in widespread political suppression of the most basic freedoms of expression and association. Workers' resistance to political repression spirals into higher forms of abuse and gross human rights violations such as assassinations and involuntary disappearances of labour leaders.

Gender, Trade and Development

- a. In terms of development in trade and labour, a gender perspective that values gender equality and women's empowerment involves not only the use and availability of domestic resources to spur development but also specific policies on gender equality impact assessments of broad development policies.
- b. The economic activities private capital chooses to invest in may not benefit women equally to men and may even mean greater gender inequalities. The market is not gender neutral and thus private capital reflects unjust gender norms that need to be specifically addressed by consistent policies.
- c. Trade liberalisation impacts gender differentiated roles, gender-based constraints, men's and women's time and control of and access to resources. It impacts women and men differently in terms of social and reproductive responsibilities, employment, wage level and the nature and process of pauperisation of men and women as well as their overall economic and social well-being.
- d. Multilateral trade agenda is part of and enhances the impact of a production and development model that is unsustainable and inequitable. Multilateral trade agenda has diminished food sovereignty, undermined small agriculture producers and basic livelihoods. Further, the liberalisation of basic services threatens people's basic needs and should be stopped. Women, as the main providers of care work and as the majority of the poor worldwide, are specially affected as they are implicitly expected to carry the burdens of state reduction.
- e. Debt burdens are a historical problem to many developing countries, whose development resources have been lost to debt servicing. The impact on women's empowerment and promotion of gender equality is felt also as governments have fewer resources for public services provisioning. Women carry the majority of the burdens of this shortfall because care work is disregarded in economic policies, which implicitly assume women's work time is more elastic and can be called upon to replace lack of some public services.

B. Leadership of Women Workers in the regional labour movement

- a. In the last two decades, women have outpaced men as new members of unions, particularly in industries where women are a majority of the workforce. However, women are significantly under-represented as leaders

throughout the union movement. Even among women workers' groups, developing strong and effective women's leadership remains a critical challenge as women have particular difficulties in their involvement in organising because of their competing family obligations, the transient nature of their work, and the predominantly patriarchal culture in the workplace and at home that restrains women from being a public leader. Gender roles remain disadvantageous for women in the labour movement, whose traditional voices have been of men, particularly men leading trade unions.

- b. Building the capacity of women workers for leadership in the labour movement requires immensely more than simply transferring speaking and mobilising skills. The need to eliminate barriers to effective learning by addressing cultural values and practices, building women's self image and confidence in their self worth, and promoting their awareness of life changing decisions made by women who made history, are some of the issues that confront many women's support organisations. Promoting women's voices and leadership in the labour movements can lead to their visible leadership in all aspects of their life as women and as workers.

H. Sustaining Activism

- a. As women activists, defenders of women workers rights as organisers we recognise that human rights work is a powerful, fulfilling and challenging vocation. We are often exposed to distressing situations directly and indirectly; from those working directly with survivors of human rights abuses to those working indirectly on human rights abuse issues.
- b. Our activism work is carried out within the contexts of a male dominated, patriarchal system; in our roles as mothers, carers, homemakers and workers; where women's role in the productive and reproductive spheres are devalued in society.
- c. These issues have often been directly connected to the high turnover and low morale of staff and volunteers in both regional and local workers' organisations which become a persistent threat to the sustainability and strength of the movement.
- d. Spaces for alternative resources in addressing and defining the risks of human rights work: compassion fatigue, burnout, job security, secondary and vicarious trauma and stress. These risks can harm ourselves, our partners and our families, and those that we work to protect and other risks to our health.