

Advocacy Update



Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

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This Month is a hectic but exciting one for Advocacy featuring the Human Rights Council main session, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Freedom Network Conference. Last month saw the World Social Forum (WSF) in LAC and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit in Asia as well as the first meeting of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings in Europe (GRETA).

This Advocacy Update will look at the following areas:

1. Reports from the WSF, GRETA and ASEAN
2. Looking forward to the Human Rights Council, US advocacy and the Commission on the Status of Women

Please let us know if you have thoughts, questions or comments arising from this text at caroline@gaatw.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

The ASEAN People's Forum (APF) and Summit

From 20-22nd February GAATW-IS joined around 800 civil society representatives at the ASEAN People's Forum to prepare for advocacy at the following weekend's ASEAN Summit.

2008 and 2009 are big years in the ASEAN region since the 11 member countries decided last year to adopt a Charter for the first time in the body'syear history. The charter, which has security, economic and socio-cultural 'pillars', includes a commitment to developing an ASEAN Human Rights Body (AHRB). The ASEAN Governments have committed to a very fast process for the AHRB, with a decision on the terms of reference to be made in July and the AHRB to be operational by the end of 2009. Thus, over the past eight months civil society groups have been active in lobbying for an AHRB that has some measure of power, and for proper inclusion of women's rights concerns.

The ASEAN People's Forum brought together CSOs working on issues ranging from trade to environmental protection to migration to women's rights. It was three days of wide-ranging discussions on the ASEAN charter and associated mechanisms, including the AHRB and the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (The Migrant Workers' Declaration).



Outside the main event, were a number of side meetings and conferences. GAATW participated in the Regional Consultation of the Women's Group on the AHRB, and the Solidarity for Asia People's Advocacy (SAPA) Working Group on Migration and Labour to plan advocacy for the implementation of the Migrant Workers' Declaration.

GAATW co-organised two workshops as part of the APF:

1. The application of the CEDAW framework in addressing the Rights of Women Migrant Workers in ASEAN countries
2. Strengthening regional action against discrimination towards migrant women of ASEAN nations.

The first workshop organised with IWRAW-AP and Caram-Asia highlighted specific case studies of the abuse of women migrant workers rights, specifically those of a Burmese domestic worker named Aye who is working in Northern Thailand. She noted the lack of employment rights for domestic workers in ASEAN, including no day off (she arranged special leave to attend the panel) as well as the lack of family or social life, fear of violence and sexual violence, and the impact of such isolated and difficult working conditions on women's psychological and physical health. The specific articles in CEDAW, General Recommendation 26 and certain mechanisms in ASEAN were then outlined as a means for women migrant workers rights to be recognised by ASEAN states.

The second workshop, co-organised with ActionAid and the Foundation for Women in Thailand, looked at multiple forms and sites of exploitation and discrimination experienced by women migrating for work and marriage.

Outcome summaries from each workshop were submitted to the organisers for compilation into one overarching statement for delivery to the ASEAN Summit the following weekend. The full text of this statement which was delivered to ASEAN heads of State on 28th February can be found here: <http://www.apf2008.org/media-corner>

Important outcomes from the ASEAN summit and particularly the dialogue with civil society included that the ASEAN Chair, Thai Prime Minister Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, stated that women and children required a separate body to the AHRB to ensure that their needs are met. In this he was referring to the proposed ASEAN Commission on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC); and that in the proposed Terms of Reference for the AHRB, the role for civil society was unfortunately relegated to that of educating and creating awareness amongst the public about human rights: the leaked ToRs can be found here: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/12882981/Draft-of-ASEAN-Human-Right-Body>

Following on from this, GAATW-IS will continue to work with the SAPA WG on Migration and Labour and is now collaborating with IWRAW-AP and Caram Asia to hold a Roundtable on Using CEDAW to Protecting the Rights of Women Migrant Workers and Trafficked Women in South and Southeast Asia in May 2009 in Kuala Lumpur, please contact caroline@gaatw.org if you are interested in knowing more.

First meeting of GRETA

At this meeting which took place on 24-27 February 2009 GRETA adopted its internal rules of procedure and elected Ms Hanne Sophie Greve, President, Mr Nicolas Le Coz, First Vice-President and importantly for us Ms Gulnara Shahinian, Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery its Causes and Consequences, Second Vice-President.

The meeting was used to prepare for the first monitoring cycle of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. The Vice President of the Committee of Parties to the Convention welcomed GRETA stating its essential part of the Council of Europe mechanism and signalled CoPs cooperation and support for GRETA whilst upholding the independence and impartiality of the group.

GRETA's three remaining meetings in 2009 will take place on 16-19 June, 22-25 September and 8-11 December.

The agenda and outcome document from the meeting can be found here:
http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/trafficking/Docs/GRETA1stMeeting/LD1_en.pdf

World Social Forum

Activities for March

10th Session of the Human Rights Council, Geneva, Switzerland

The Tenth Session was opened by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Navi Pillay on 2nd March 2009. In her opening address she highlighted the inevitable negative consequences for human rights, particularly those of vulnerable and marginalised peoples, of climate change, food shortages and the economic crisis whilst also noting the need to combat discrimination and

inequality in reference to the Durban Review Conference.

The full text of her speech can be found

here: <http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/CBDDC2EE9683766CC125756D0037B882?opendocument>

Also at this session, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Ms. Joy NgoziEzeilo will deliver her first report. The text of the report is available on the HRC website here: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/10session/A.HRC.10.16.pdf>

In general the report seems good, framed from a human rights approach and founded in the core human rights treaties. Ms NgoziEzeilo chooses to address the following nine areas of concern in relation to her mandate:



Ms. Joy NgoziEzeilo

Gaps in research and data; migration and linkages; HIV and Aids; Conflict; the Millennium Development Goals; Gender dimensions including violence; demand; integrated provision of assistance and services; and international, regional and sub-regional cooperation and coordination.

From this broad range of issues she focuses on trafficking in men and boys and addressing root causes of trafficking; working on facilitating a framework for a database disaggregated by gender, age, sector and region; and promoting a human rights approach to trafficking.

Several GAATW issues have been included, such as conditional assistance and preventing the practice of deporting trafficked persons as irregular migrants. She has also interpreted trafficking to include multiple forms of labour exploitation and has applied a broad definition of 'demand', making it explicit that it is not just about the client's demand for sex workers.

At the HRC we hope for further clarification from her on the following points:

What she hopes her developed trafficking database will be used for and how she personally intends to carry out a comprehensive data review;

What her views are on the proposed monitoring mechanism to UNTOC and whether she intends to engage in this debate;

And whether she could elaborate on her vision of a "global agenda to end trafficking in human beings."

The Tenth Session runs until 27th March 2009. At this session the following agenda items are of interest to GAATW:

- 5th March 2009, all day: The High Commissioner for Human Rights will give her annual report, followed by an interactive dialogue.
- 9th March 2009, 14h, Room XXI, Palais des Nations, Geneva: NGO briefing with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. NaviPillay
- 11th March 2009, 10-13h, Rm. 1-016 Palais Wilson, 52 Rue des Paquis: IGO Contact Group on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling organised by Ms Mariana Katzarova, Adviser on Trafficking to the High Commissioner on Human Rights
- 12th March 2009, 10-13h, HRC Plenary: The Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in persons will present her report (as yet unpublished, but once available can be found here: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/10session/reports.htm>) followed by interactive dialogue.
- 12th March 2009, 13- 15h, PalaisWilson: Side event on Trafficking organised by the OHCHR with panel participants including the SR on Trafficking in Persons.
- 18th - 20th March 2009, Plenary session: Consideration of UPR reports for the following countries, in order of consideration - Botswana, Bahamas, Burundi, Luxembourg, Barbados, Montenegro, UAE, Israel, Liechtenstein, Serbia, Turkmenistan, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Colombia, Uzbekistan, Tuvalu.

Other advocacy opportunities

- Networking: GAATW-IS will also hope to meet with like-minded NGOs to form coalitions in response to issues raised by the SR on Trafficking.
- UNTOC monitoring mechanism: we hope to speak to relevant government representatives about the monitoring mechanism to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC).
- Meeting with the High Commissioner and Special Rapporteur: We have requested meetings with the HC and separately with the SR on Trafficking.

US Advocacy, Dallas and DC, US.

GAATW-IS has been invited to speak at the Freedom Network conference on 18-19th March in Dallas, Texas. This is an opportunity to talk about collaborations with US anti-trafficking organisations on advocacy both looking at the US annual Trafficking in Persons report and the implications of US anti-trafficking expenditure.

At the freedom network meeting I will hold a discussion with the title: The global impact of US anti-trafficking policies and a new era of hope. The aim of this discussion will be to outline the global response to TIP from a human rights perspective and coordinate with others on common advocacy goals.

The following three areas of discussion will be considered:

- The US annual TIP report;
- Prostitution and trafficking;
- GAATW member organisations' responses to and experiences of US foreign policy.

I will then travel to Washington DC in order to meet those working at the TIP office to continue the dialogue GAATW began with them last year in response to the TIP report.

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), NYC, US.

GAATW MOs are attending the CSW which takes place between 2-13 March in New York. The theme for this CSW is: "The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS".

Girls Power Initiative (GPI) and the Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON) hold a joint workshop on linkages between women trafficking and HIV AIDS on 6th March. Other GAATW MOs represented include APWLD, WOREC, and Open Gate - La Strada Macedonia.

Further details of parallel events can be found here: <http://www.ngocsw.org/en/events/csw53/parallel-events/list>

Details of documentation and procedures can be found here: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw53/OfficialDocuments.html>

Membership participation - monitoring mechanism to UNTOC

Last month we raised the urgency of discussions regarding a monitoring mechanism to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and the protocols thereto (UNTOC), these will take place at the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on and around 21st April in Vienna.

As noted GAATW-IS hopes to play an active part in these discussions and has developed a position with membership input on the monitoring mechanism. Please find this position attached. Regional programme officers will be in contact with you regarding this and national level advocacy in the lead up to the CCPCJ shortly.

In the meantime if you have any questions or would like to comment on the GAATW position please contact caroline@gaatw.org