Dear friends,

We hope this finds you well.

The rainy season started in Bangkok and although this is giving us a small respite after the March and April heat, our thermometers do not drop below 30 degrees Celsius.

In the office, we continue working at full throttle, with an ever-stimulating agenda focused on strengthening our core strategies: research and feminist knowledge building; strategic communication and publications; support for social movements; advocacy and political influence; and strengthening of the alliance.

In March, we participated in the Commission on the Status of Women whose theme was Social Protections and Public Services. We published a position paper on social protections, public services and sustainable infrastructures for migrant workers and trafficked persons and a related statement on the occasion of International Women's Day. In these briefs, we called on states to increase their investment in public services and social protections as a way to prevent human trafficking and protect the rights of migrant and trafficked women. During CSW, we organised a side event on migrant workers and public services focusing on the garment sector, in cooperation with Komnas Perempuan.

In April we organised a Global Consultation on the prevention of trafficking and unsafe migration. This consultation brought together forty-five representatives of thirty-five organisations working on the promotion of the rights of women, migrants and trafficked persons in twenty-eight countries. Over the course of three days we discussed and reflected on the successes and failures of current initiatives to prevent human trafficking and unsafe migration. On 1 May, International Workers Day, we published a summary of those discussions in which we reiterated the urgency for governments of countries of origin and destination to strengthen labour rights and protections as a way to prevent trafficking, exploitation and other rights violations in the context of work and migration.

Also in April we published issue 12 of the Anti-Trafficking Review themed Sex Work. This issue explores some of the current achievements and challenges facing the global movement for the rights of sex workers. The articles examine the ways in which organising and collectivising have allowed sex workers to tell their own stories, claim their human, social and labour rights, resist stigma and punitive laws and policies, and provide peer-based support. Along with the new issue, we released four videos where some of the authors speak about their articles.

In the past few months we also organised several webinars on topics related to human trafficking, feminist strategies against political and religious fundamentalism, and gender-based violence in the world of work. The recordings of these discussions are available on our YouTube channel.

In June, during the International Labour Conference, governments, trade unions and employers will negotiate an agreement proposed by the ILO to end violence and harassment in the world of work. The agreement is expected to be accompanied by a non-binding recommendation that
contains guidelines for establishing public policies to prevent, assist, punish and eradicate violence and harassment in the world of work with the participation of unions and employers. GAATW is preparing a global report on violence and harassment in the world of work based on the research that our members and partners are carrying out in different countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The migrant workers with whom we have spoken report a continuum of violence, that includes verbal and physical abuse, rape and sexual assault, psychological abuse, bullying and intimidation. They also expressed that their working conditions are very poor, with long working hours, insufficient or complete lack of payment, racism and discrimination. All this has a negative impact on the ability of women workers to resist and respond to violence.

GAATW and our allies know that a world free of trafficking and exploitation requires the provision of social protections and public services for nationals and migrants; quality jobs with guarantee of labour rights; and a transformed economy that serves the majority of the population and not just an elite few. For this, we keep working and fighting.

As always we welcome your feedback and contributions to future issues at borislav@gaatw.org.

---

**News from the GAATW International Secretariat**

**CEDAW General Recommendation on Trafficking in the Context of Global Migration**

Since the end of 2018, the CEDAW Committee has been working on a new General Recommendation on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration. GAATW engaged with the draft GR in several ways and in close cooperation with our partners from the International Women’s Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAW-AP). In December we attended an expert group meeting on the proposed GR in Geneva. In January we co-hosted, together with IWRAW-AP, a global civil society consultation on trafficking in the context of global migration in Bangkok, for around 40 representatives of women's rights, migrant rights, sex worker rights, and anti-trafficking NGOs. In February we made a written submission to the CEDAW Committee, and contributed to the submissions of the Sex Worker Inclusive Feminist Alliance, and IWRAW-AP. And in February we took part in a half-day general discussion on the proposed GR, where we made an oral intervention. The first draft of the GR is now expected to be published at CEDAW’s 74th session in October, which will be followed by regional consultations between November 2019 and February 2020... [Read on...]

**Learning from the experiences of women migrant workers**

GAATW-IS and its partners across nine countries of origin (in South Asia and the Horn of Africa) and destination (in West Asia) have been working on a feminist participatory action research project over the last year to document and learn from the lived experiences of women migrant workers. One 9-11 March, a three-day workshop was organised in Kathmandu to discuss the country findings and to reflect on the research process. This was followed by a civil society roundtable on women migrant workers' access to public services, co-organised by the GAATW-IS and our members in Nepal, coinciding with CSW 63.

The research conducted in the nine countries addresses gender-based violence in the world of work; access to justice; and safe and fair migration. Reflecting on the research process and the emerging findings, partners felt that the knowledge generated at individual country level serves to create new collective knowledge that can be utilised over a longer time frame for the larger discourse on women workers' rights. Strategies may emerge from the community level, from the women themselves which can lead to pragmatic work being done and that as practitioners, we need to reflect on what role the women can take and what is the support NGOs can provide: "NGOs have to know when we have to be in front, beside, or behind".

The report of the research is currently being prepared. Some of the partners’ findings are being shared via GAATW’s current webinar series on “Gender-based violence in the world of..."
Migration from domestic work from Africa to West Asia

In November 2018 we started a new Feminist Participatory Action Research project, together with the International Domestic Workers Federation, to document the experiences of women from six African countries who migrate for domestic work to West Asia (see the January bulletin for more info). Most of the field work took place in January-March and involved several groups of respondents: potential and returnee migrant domestic workers, their families, recruitment agencies and brokers (formal and informal), trade unions and NGOs supporting migrant domestic workers, and government officials. In March the project team met to discuss the progress of the field research, reflect on the research process, and build the national researchers’ capacity in data analysis and report-writing... Read on...

Launch of Issue 12 of the Anti-Trafficking Review ‘Sex Work’

This Special Issue of the Anti-Trafficking Review examines some of the current achievements - and challenges - of the global sex worker rights movement.

The first five articles explore the power of collectivisation among sex workers. They show that, whether in Canada, Latin America, Philippines or South Africa, sex workers around the world are organising to tell their own stories, including through creative and artistic means, claim their human, social, and labour rights, resist stigma and punitive laws and policies, and provide mutual and peer-based support. The next two articles examine sex work through a labour perspective, looking at the working conditions in the sex and entertainment sector in Thailand; and at how anti-trafficking raids undermine labour organising in Durbar - India’s iconic red light district. The final three thematic articles focus on the introduction of recent laws and policies that directly affect sex workers in the United States and France. One describes the process of developing the ‘Prioritizing Safety for Sex Workers Policy’ in San Francisco, which allows sex workers to report violent crimes against them without fear of arrest and prosecution. Another analyses the debates leading to the introduction of the sex purchase ban in France in 2016, linking them to anxieties about public order, national security and border control. Finally, one article picks apart the term ‘sex trafficking’ as used in American legal discourse and FOSTA as a form of epistemic violence against sex workers and urges academics and activists to stop using the term... Read on...

Reconference

More than 500 activists, artists and allies from more than 50 countries participated in the CREA Reconference to address the most challenging socio-political issues and their intersections with feminism, art and technology.

GAATW was invited to speak at Reconference and share our approach to human trafficking from the perspective of sex work as work. We stressed that the founders of GAATW, many of whom were migrant women, forged alliances with the movement for the rights of sex workers, a movement that was composed of women who came together to speak for themselves and make their demands heard. As feminists, our founders thought it was natural to support the struggle of this group of oppressed women without questioning the way in which they defined their lives. If sex workers said that “sex work is work”, then this is what it was for GAATW. It is also important to remember that the Alliance has always recognised migrant and trafficked women as courageous and enterprising women who set out to improve their lives and those of their families... Read on...

News from our Member Organisations

EUR 280,000 reward in compensation to trafficked women in Austria

LEFÖ - Intervention Centre for Trafficked Women and Girls has been providing psychosocial and legal assistance to a large number of women from Latin America, who were sexually exploited in Austria. On 9 April 2019 the court convicted the perpetrators and rewarded 16 victims a total amount of EUR 280,000 in compensation for material and non-material damages.
This criminal proceeding shows that the vulnerability to human trafficking is dynamic and context-specific. The abuse of a position of vulnerability has to be looked at as a linkage of factors, including not only class or formal education, but also gender, age and residency status. Many victims were middle-class women with education and degrees and all shared the wish for a safer life. This wish was exploited by the perpetrators. In this case, the understanding of working conditions entailed not only the material conditions, e.g. working hours, but also the abuse of power and psychological pressure. The judge emphasised that violations of working conditions, no matter which sector, are evidence of exploitation.

The original compensation claim was for EUR 710,000.

Migration is a Right, Work is a Right

In Buenos Aires, AMUMRA held the First Migrant Fair under the theme "Migration is a Right, Work is a Right" to recognise the cultural, economic and educational contributions of migrant women in Argentina and, at the same time, promote migration as a human right.

Twenty-five migrant women participated in the fair, both from other countries and from different regions of Argentina, promoting their work ventures. The fair was organised in three different spaces: a gastronomic and artisanal one; another one of visual art with activities like photography and murals on the rights of migrants in Argentina; and a third dedicated to the artistic musical expression with a fashion show and a musical closing by Freda Montaño, Ecuadorian migrant singer-songwriter, who presented the anthem of the migrant woman. Officials from the Bolivian Consulate in Buenos Aires attended the fair.

The event was held on 27 April at the Recoleta Cultural Center with the support of Fondo de Mujeres del Sur. In addition, the Government of the City of Buenos Aires and many companies joined as sponsors of the initiative.

Read all news from GAATW members.

Resources

Human Trafficking - From a criminal justice to social justice approach
Borislav Gerasimov
In this speech, delivered at the conference “Disrupting Traffick?” in New Delhi in May, our colleague Borislav demonstrates that the currently dominant criminal justice approach to human trafficking has failed to punish traffickers, or secure justice for victims. Instead, it has led to a number of human rights violations of trafficked persons, such as forced rescue and rehabilitation, retraumatisation during criminal proceedings, and assistance made conditional on cooperation with authorities. He argues that a different approach to trafficking is necessary, one that would address the root causes of trafficking, such as lack of decent jobs and social protections, gender discrimination, and inhumane labour migration regimes.

The Risks of Exploitation in Temporary Migration Programmes: A FLEX response to the 2018 Immigration White Paper
Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX)
The 2018 UK Immigration White Paper described the Government's proposals for post-Brexit labour migration, including three temporary migration programmes. This report looks in-depth at such programmes and how they can exacerbate or relate to risks of labour abuse and exploitation, including human trafficking. Drawing on examples from around the world and UK history, it highlights the risks in such schemes and describes in detail the three proposed programmes. It provides strong recommendations to Government on how to design, implement and monitor such programmes to prevent abuse and exploitation.

What’s a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Job Like This? Comparing sex work with other jobs traditionally done by women
Sex work is often characterised as inherently exploitative. In this research, ECP compares pay and conditions between sex work and other jobs disproportionately done by women. In doing so, they uncover many similarities and some crucial differences and throw light on the oft asked question: “Why do women become sex workers?” By looking at sex work in the context of other “women’s work” ECP hopes to break through the mystification and break down the divisions between sex workers and other women and other workers. Doing so would enable exploitation to be judged and addressed similarly across the range of jobs done by women.

Shadow Report Guidelines on Women’s Right to Work and Women’s Rights at Work
International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific
This guide is intended to assist NGOs in drafting their shadow reports on women's rights to and at work. It refers to the CEDAW, ICESCR and ILO conventions and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. What is fresh and bold about this comprehensive guide is that it addresses specifically the rights of women working in factories and on plantations, and as domestic workers, homebased workers, rural workers and migrant workers. It also underscores the multiple forms of discrimination experienced by women in vulnerable and marginalized situations, among them women with disabilities, in violation of their rights to and at work. The guide's approach, therefore, is to reach and protect the most vulnerable women workers by confronting the deeply embedded social, economic and cultural structures that enable inequality and discrimination.

All about power
Srilatha Batliwala
All About Power: Understanding Social Power and Power Structures is an essential primer for activists who want to explore how power impacts their work in order to design strategies from a more comprehensive, shared definition and analysis of power as it operates in society. It recognises that concepts like power are abstract and that we each understand power in our own way. At the same time, it is critical for social change activists to expand and deepen our analysis of how power operates in diverse spaces and with many faces, regardless of our specific areas of work, constituencies or geographies. The publication structures the approach to understanding power through five core questions - providing a framework for approaching the complex concept, defining key sources of power, and analysing how it operates, in order to effectively challenge the power structures which perpetuate injustices, inequalities and marginalisation.