



# I **RAW**

ASIA PACIFIC

# ANNUAL **REPORT** 2012

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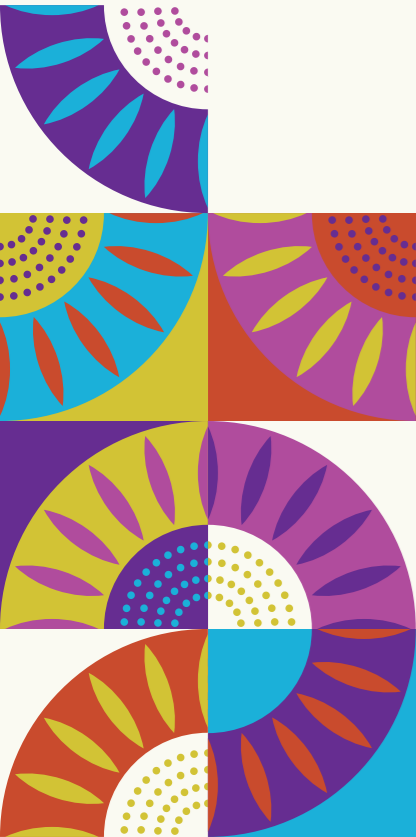


# ABOUT IWRAW-AP

Since 1993, IWRAW Asia Pacific has worked towards the realisation of women's human rights, mainly through the lens of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**.



IWRAW Asia Pacific is an NGO in Special Consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. **We facilitate and monitor CEDAW implementation.**



**Countering**  
Human Rights Regression and UN Capture

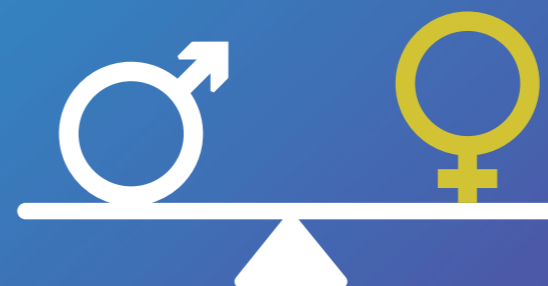


**Interrogating**  
Borders and their Impact on Women's Human Rights



**Transforming**  
Economics and Development through a Feminist Approach

**Connecting**  
Gender Equality to Environmental Justice



**Advancing**  
Gender Equality in the World of Work

## OUR DONORS

Channel Foundation

Co-Impact

Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
(sub-granted through CREA)

Ford Foundation

Hewlett Foundation (sub-granted through  
the Bretton Woods Project)

Open Society Foundation

Belgium Agency for Development  
(sub-granted through Oxfam DGD)

Oxfam Mekong

Swiss Development Corporation

VOICE

Wellspring Foundation

Women's Fund Asia

## OUR NETWORKS

Asia Democracy Network (ADN)

The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)

ESCR-Net Environmental Working Group

ESCR-Net Economic Policy Working Group

#EmptyChairs Campaign

Feminist Action Nexus for Economic and Climate Justice

Feminist Faultlines

Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW)

Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP)

Human Rights and Climate Change Working Group (HR&CC)

The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and  
Intersex Association (ILGA)

NGO Network on UN Treaty Bodies (TB-Net)

Observatory on the Universality of Human Rights (OURs)

Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN)

Sex Worker Inclusive Feminist Alliance (SWIFA)

South Feminist Alliance on Financing for Development

South Feminist Fiscal Justice Working Group

StreetNet International

Tax and Gender Working Group convened by  
the Global Alliance for Tax Justice

Women and Gender Constituency (WGC)



## OUR PROGRAMME PARTNERS

### AUSTRALIA

The George Institute

### BANGLADESH

Bonhishikha

Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF)

Naripokkho

### CAMBODIA

Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC)

### ECUADOR

Centro de Derechos Económicos y Sociales (CDES)

### HONG KONG

Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC)

### INDIA

Jagori

### INDONESIA

CEDAW Working Group Indonesia (CWGI)

LBH APIK Jakarta

JALA PRT

### KENYA

Akili Dada

Kenya Sex Workers Association (KESWA)

### MALAWI

Feminist Macroeconomic Alliance - Malawi (FEAM)

### MALAYSIA

Women Entrepreneur Network Association Malaysia (WENA)

Klima Action Malaysia (KAMY)

### MYANMAR

ALTSEAN Burma

### NEPAL

National Indigenous Disabled Women Association Nepal (NIDWAN)

### PAKISTAN

Special Talent Exchange Programme (STEP)

### THE PHILIPPINES

LILAK (Purple Action for Indigenous Women's Rights)

### SOUTH AFRICA

Institute for Economic Justice (IEJ)

Women's Legal Centre

### SRI LANKA

Women and Media Collective (WMC)

### TUNISIA

L'Observatoire Tunisien de l'Economie (OTE)

## REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

ASEAN SOGIE Caucus

African Sex Workers Alliance (ASWA)

Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)

Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers

Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network

Asia Pacific Transgender Network

Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR)

Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

CREA

International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF)

International Drug Policy Consortium Asia

Pesticide Action Network Asia Pacific (PANAP)

Sexual Rights Initiative (SRI)

## TOUGH TIMES FOR GENDER EQUALITY

In 2023, IWRAP Asia Pacific celebrated its thirtieth anniversary.

Across those 30 years, we've worked to progress the rights of women and girls at every level through our work within the CEDAW framework, and in collaboration with partners from all over the world.

These relationships are our work's life-blood. They bring us joy and comfort in dark times, offering guidance and perspective as we advocate for the voices of marginalised groups in our pursuit of universal gender equality.

And what dark times we find ourselves in! We're witnessing the resurgence of old foes—patriarchy, capitalism, racism and xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, and fascism—and mourning the escalating violence against the people of Gaza. Discrimination against migrants continues to worsen amid the accelerating climate crisis.

In our highest institutions at the UN, regressive forces are introducing dangerous anti-rights attitudes, and sustained hostility towards sex workers and trans people. Put together, this has deepened disillusionment with the UN system, compounded by the ongoing and deliberate exclusion of civil society voices from multilateral spaces such as the COP convenings and LDC5 conference.

**It's been a challenging year for human rights, to say the least, but the fight must go on.**



We recognise that there is a **chasm between the discursive approaches to gender equality and the local struggles of those whose rights are denied on a daily basis.** We continue to discuss how we should bridge this gap, since the neocolonial hegemony of knowledge (including knowledge around gender equality), and the power that goes with it, **is a clear barrier to many women striving to claim rights at a local level.**

### **PRIYANTHI FERNANDO**

Executive Director of IWRAP Asia Pacific  
2016-2023

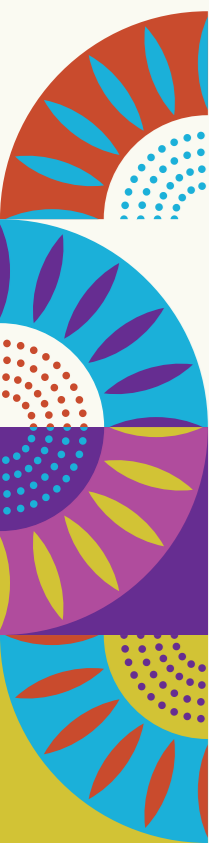
Amid this challenging context, IWRAP Asia Pacific remains focused on strengthening its partnerships and communities, capacity building and advocating where possible. With the CEDAW framework at the centre of our programmes, our team continues to work with national groups of young women, women with disabilities, women workers and labour rights activists, the LBTQI community, Indigenous women, sex workers, women who use drugs and women affected by conflict.

These engagements are helping us further understand the chasm between how gender equality is talked about and the local struggles of those whose rights are denied on a daily basis. Bridging this gap—how we bring power to account— informs our commitment to movement building. 2023 also marked a year of change for our organisation.

At the end of August, we bade a fond farewell to our outstanding Executive Director, **Priyanthi Fernando**.

During her seven-year tenure at IWRAP Asia Pacific, **Priyanthi's charisma, boldness, dedication, and expertise steered our organisation through numerous complex challenges, both internally and externally.**

Her leadership during the tumult of COVID-19 helped keep the team and organisation motivated, providing the essential support we needed to push through with our engagement work virtually. We at IWRAP Asia Pacific are immensely grateful for our joint journey of continuous learning, inspiration and achievements. **We wish her the very best in the next phase of her life.**



In 2023, we collaborated with **58 partners** across **19 countries**, working across more than **30 consortiums** and **alliances globally.**

We continued to support civil society organisations in their engagements with the CEDAW framework, facilitating the submission of **74 shadow reports** to the Committee throughout the year's country reviews.

Through our **From Global to Local (G2L)** programme, we build capacity for activists to engage with the CEDAW framework. In 2023, we provided G2L training to **66 activists from 12 countries**, as well as additional CEDAW support to women's rights groups from **Armenia, Bangladesh, Cuba, Germany, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Spain, Tanzania, Timor Leste, and Venezuela.**



84th Session G2L:  
**17 participants**

85th Session G2L:  
**16 participants**

86th Session G2L:  
**33 participants**



When I think back over the ten or more years that I have worked for SDC, supporting IWRAP Asia Pacific has certainly been some of the most meaningful funding; working with you has been excellent and I am convinced that we have made a small contribution to improving the lives of women—and, therefore, all people—worldwide.

**JÜRIG SCHNEIDER**

Swiss Development Corporation

## OUR PUBLICATIONS IN 2023

### **Promoting the Equality of Women: IWRAP Asia Pacific's Journey**

The first 'definitive' history of IWRAP Asia Pacific's first 30 years. Written by Shanthi Dairiam, our founder, the text offers insights into our story as a Global South-centric feminist organisation, bringing women's realities into international human rights standards through engagement with CEDAW.

### **Universalising Gender Equality Norms: The Critical Role of CEDAW in Protecting Women's SOGIESC Rights**

Over the past few years, the 'anti-gender' movement has established itself to be one of the most concerning threats to women's human rights advocacy. This white paper rebuts the movement's 'gender ideology' and expounds the fact that sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sexual characteristics are protected categories within international human rights law.

Joint submissions by the **FIFF, WGG** and **SWIFA** consortiums for the CEDAW Committee's day of general discussion on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems.

**Joint submission by AWID, IWRAP AP, and Sexual Rights Initiative (SRI) to the Independent Expert on Foreign Debt and Human Rights** for her report on multiple crises, fiscal systems, and human rights.

### **Making the Unheard Heard: Reflections and Lessons from the Global Tribunal of Women Workers**

The 2022 Global Tribunal for Women Workers was a pivotal event that helped make visible the suffering of workers whose human rights are violated. This report documents the findings from the Tribunal, its challenges and steps for the future.

### **CEDAW Shadow Report Guideline on Gender Equality and Macroeconomics (GEM)**

This resource aims to equip women's rights organisations and activists with the knowledge and resources to engage with the CEDAW review process to challenge neoliberal capitalist approaches in macroeconomic policies that actively violate women's human rights.

### **TRIPS is a Broken Model of Innovation: Ensuring Accountability for Human Rights-based Pandemic Preparedness in the Future**

A joint submission by Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Third World Network (TWN), and IWRAP AP on behalf of the Feminists for Peoples Vaccine Campaign for the CESCR Committee's review of France.

# 2023 EVENTS

## JANUARY

- > **Oxfam Care Economy**  
Roundtable in Jakarta, Indonesia
- > **Women's Link Worldwide**  
Venezuela Briefings
- > **Global Tribunal of Women Workers 2022**  
Follow-up:  
Roundtable and  
Writeshop in  
Kuala Lumpur,  
Malaysia



## FEBRUARY

- > **84th CEDAW Session**  
Geneva, Switzerland
- > **Women's Link Worldwide**  
Venezuela Briefings

## MARCH

- > **LDC5 Civil Society Forum**  
Doha, Qatar
- > **Parallel Events at the 67th Commission on the Status of Women**  
New York, USA
  - *Reimagining Women Workers-Centric Online Spaces: Lessons Learned from the Global Tribunal*
  - *Dialogue to Promote the Equality of Women: Book Launch of IWRAP Asia Pacific's Journey*

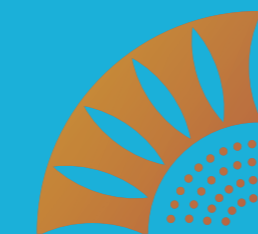


## MAY

- > **85th CEDAW Session**  
Geneva, Switzerland

## AUGUST

- > **IWRAP AP and WMC Joint Full Workshop, CEDAW and Macroeconomics: Advancing Gender Equality through Feminist, Human Rights-Based Economic Advocacy**  
Negombo, Sri Lanka

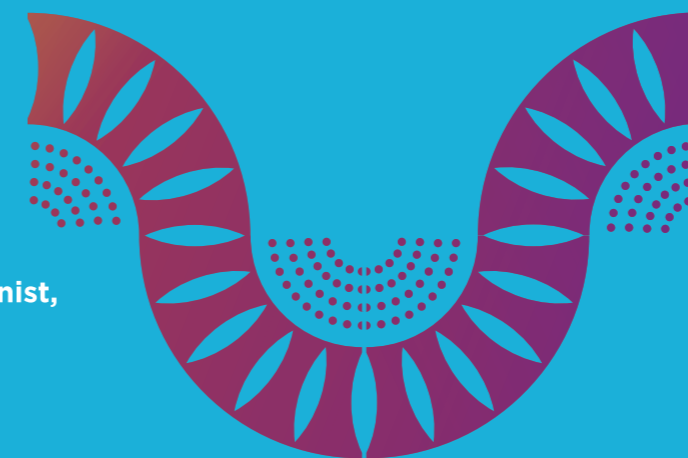
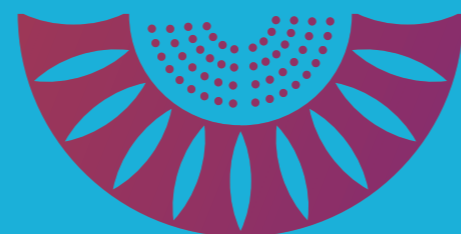


## JULY

- > **Regional Strategic Consultation on Social Protection**  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- > **IWRAP AP and WMC Joint Training of Trainers, CEDAW and Macroeconomics: Advancing Gender Equality through Feminist, Human Rights-Based Economic Advocacy**  
Negombo, Sri Lanka

## JUNE

- > **Bonn Climate Change Conference (SB58)**  
Bonn, Germany



## SEPTEMBER

- > **Feminist Faultlines**  
Istanbul, Turkey
- > **Feminist Learning Exchange (FLEX) 2.0**  
Bangkok, Thailand
- > **ASEAN Peoples Forum/ ASEAN Civil Society Conference**  
Jakarta, Indonesia

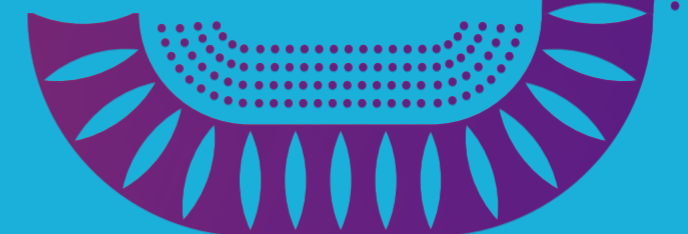
## OCTOBER

- > **86th CEDAW Session**  
Geneva, Switzerland
- > **Global South Women's Forum (GSWF) 2023: Border CTRL**



## NOVEMBER

- > **The Observatory of Universal Rights (OURs) 2023 Meeting**  
Naivasha, Kenya
- > **ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights Meeting (AICHR)**  
Jakarta, Indonesia
- > **COP28**  
Dubai, the United Arab Emirates
- > **Voice & Visibility Regional Convening on Indigenous Women, Gender and Climate Change: Feminist Demands from the Hearts of Indigenous Women and Girls in Asia**
- > **16 Days of Activism**
- > **Regional Workshop on CEDAW, Social Protection and Decent Work with GADC**  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia



## DECEMBER

- > **Musawah International Advocacy Meeting**  
London, UK



## GLOBAL SOUTH WOMEN'S FORUM

The Global South Women's Forum 2023 unearthed and amplified a range of topics relating to borders and their impacts on human rights. Throughout the event, we explored three main themes: **access to documentation, carceral violence in border regimes, and citizenship as a site of exclusion.**

Over the course of four days, participants engaged in **16 live sessions** organised by activists, creatives and collectives from the Global South and partners from all around the world.

These sessions illuminated the extent to which imperialism and Global North nations continue to influence how people move between borders, and outsource their bordering practices—and attendant human rights violations—to the Global South. Xenophobic thinking remains rampant, dividing people into citizens and non-citizens and limiting the latter group's access to education, healthcare, freedom of expression and family life.

**In the face of these bleak circumstances, we were reminded that migrants have long fought for rights and will continue to do so long into the future.**

“

I think of the resistance. Of people who wait on shores or bang on doors, who negotiate and plead and take up court cases and fight for people's release. I think of migrants organising, domestic workers fighting to be recognised. Refugees still finding ways to safety. I think of shelter and survival, the poetry people still write. The love they still grow. Because no matter how much might the state may have, we're still here. **We're still fighting. We're still refusing to bow to the dehumanisation. We're still fighting for dignity and rights, borders, cages and paperwork be damned.**

**KATRINA JORENE MALIAMAUV**

Amnesty International Malaysia

## VOICES FROM GSWF

[GSWF 2023] was wonderfully organised and coordinated. My deep gratitude for organising and putting this together so seamlessly. Kudos to everyone.

**SRISHTY ANAND** Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW)

This forum was life changing for me personally.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER** at GSWF 2023

So remember them. Those lives that have been lost off of the coast of Morocco, the lives that have been lost because the Italian government turned them away or the French government turned them away, or the British government allowed them to die. Those women, those girls, those people, we remember them, and we understand that this is a global issue that we are dealing with. So we say thank you to the Global South Women's Forum for allowing us to centre those realities as we continue to move forward, and we say thank you to each and every one of you for sharing that.

**GUERLINE JOZEF** Haitian Bridge Alliance

Something I noticed when talking to others is how we often ascribe agency to forms. 'The form says I cannot'; 'the form doesn't let me'; 'it doesn't know'. I try to reframe when possible, to remember that usually there's a human behind every little decision and norm and part of the infrastructure..which means things can be changed if people want.

**CHARIS LOKE** Illustrator and educator



Illustration: Appolonia Tesera

## COUNTERING REGRESSION

Through our **Countering Regression** programme, we provide education on concepts relating to gender equality and non-discrimination, counter anti-rights narratives, and support at-risk groups.

### The Countering Regression Programme

- ▶ **From Global to Local (G2L)**
- ▶ **Funded Projects:**
  - Women Gaining Ground (WGG)
  - Forging Intersectional Feminist Futures (FIFF)
  - The GRACE Project (Co-Impact)

The Countering Regression programme is a lynchpin for us to connect, engage with and support a wide variety of coalitions such as **Feminist Faultlines**, **OURs**, the **#EmptyChairs campaign**, and the **Treaty Body Network** (TB-Net).

A major flashpoint for IWRAP Asia Pacific's Countering Regression programme is our ongoing engagement through the NGO Network on **UN Treaty Bodies** (TB-Net) to monitor and participate in the broader treaty body strengthening work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

## BUILDING TREATY BODY SOLIDARITY

Engaging in treaty body strengthening is key to ensuring we are able to facilitate NGOs' participation in CEDAW—and all treaty body—processes and advocate for effective accountability mechanisms in pursuit of women's human rights.

In 2023, we continued to work with women's rights groups to prepare for forthcoming changes to the CEDAW process, namely the transition from the current four-year reporting cycle to the eight-year predictable review cycle, and to invest in organising women's rights organisations within the process of the broader treaty body reform agenda. This work will only become more critical as we face down a human rights environment characterised by increasingly regressive politics, disillusionment with the UN system, and intensifying global conflicts.

In September 2023, we held the second iteration of our **Feminist Learning Exchange (FLEX)** programme on the theme of UN capture. The workshop saw the participation of **25 activists from South and Southeast Asia** through our WGG partners. It helped to introduce IWRAP Asia Pacific's work to activists and inform them of the existence of the advocacy spaces available to them.

Building on our work from previous years, the workshop also surfaced new and interesting ways of defining and identifying the 'anatomy of capture' from a grassroots level.

## FEMINIST LEARNING EXCHANGE (FLEX) 2.0



Above and opposite page: Snapshots from FLEX 2.0.



One of IWRAP Asia Pacific's key roles is to support civil society organisations to become active and effective stakeholders in the **CEDAW process**, especially those structurally excluded from global human rights spaces.

We do this by providing civil society organisations with information, guidelines, shadow report writing support, and preparation for country-level implementation.

## OUR IMPACT AT CEDAW FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL

Running in the background of the CEDAW reviews, our **From Global to Local (G2L)** programme provides women's human rights activists with a crucial space to strategise, collaborate, and receive training on various aspects of the CEDAW review cycle.

### 84th CEDAW Session

February 2023

### 85th CEDAW Session

May 2023

### 86th CEDAW Session

October 2023

Designed to ensure that activists can centre their own local contexts and priorities, G2L's 2023 agenda was especially focused on supporting marginalised and most-at-risk groups in light of the CEDAW Committee's increasingly regressive position on sex work.

## FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL TESTIMONIES

Many thanks for [IWRAP Asia Pacific's] great support in coordinating the G2L Programme for NGO representatives working with CEDAW. You bring us together and help us advance to jointly progress women's human rights, globally—in CEDAW85 and beyond!

**MARION BOEKER** Verein der in der DDR Geschiedenen Frauen (Association of Women Divorced in the GDR), Germany

The Global to Local training helped prepare CSOs to engage with CEDAW days before actual engagement. It was such an empowering process.

**DISABLED WOMEN IN AFRICA (DIWA)**

This was an incredibly useful and informative session. We're relieved that IWRAP Asia Pacific will be coordinating all the national civil society NGOs that are active in Geneva. It is crucial!

**MARCELLA PIRRONE** D.i.Re: Women on the Net against Violence, Italy

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

The **GRACE** project is now in the second year of a three-year collaborative project by IWRAP Asia Pacific and the George Institute for Global Health (TGI), funded by Co-Impact Fund. The team worked with country partners in South Africa, India, Kenya and Indonesia to conduct research into sexual and gender-based

violence law and policy focus areas that speak to their specific national contexts using CEDAW recommendations to drive change in these areas.

### 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023, the GRACE project partners focused on implementing the research and advocacy work that had been planned the previous year. A major highlight was our June 2023 in-person meeting in Bangkok, during which GRACE project partners met for the first time to strengthen interpersonal bonds and align on next steps. These research plans were implemented throughout the second half of the year.

The IWRAP Asia Pacific team also conducted two capacity-building events with GRACE partners:

- ▶ In **November 2023**, we ran a one-day training for KESWA's network partners in Nairobi on engaging with CEDAW and other treaty bodies on sex workers' rights.
- ▶ In **December 2023**, we conducted a two-day training for CWGI and their network members in Jakarta, Indonesia, on CEDAW General Recommendations No. 33 and No. 35, helping participants highlight areas of concern and strategise for change.

### India

#### Jagori

**Focus:** The impact of the Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2013, especially with regards to informal-sector women workers and gaps in their access for redress.

### Indonesia

#### CEDAW WORKING GROUP INDONESIA (CWGI)

##### - LBH APIK Jakarta

**Focus:** The implementation of Article 55 of Indonesia's Domestic Violence Law, which would augment the power of a victim-witness' testimony in a domestic violence case.

##### - JALA PRT

**Focus:** The Domestic Worker Protection Bill and challenges to enactment.

### Kenya

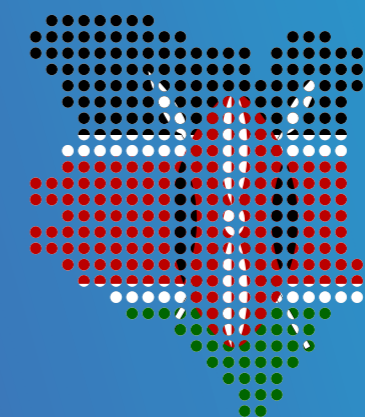
#### Kenya Sex Workers Association (KESWA)

**Focus:** Violence, stigma and discrimination against sex workers and the criminalisation of sex work.

### South Africa

#### Women's Legal Centre

**Focus:** Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 (amended in 2022) and its implementation.





The **Women Gaining Ground (WGG)** consortium enables us to explore opportunities for movement building on international platforms beyond the CEDAW framework. Alongside our consortium partners CREA and Akili Dada, our work with WGG focuses on sexual and gender-based violence against women, and strengthening women's leadership and participation in decision making.

We collaborate with **15 strategic partners** across five priority countries: **Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda.**

## WOMEN GAINING GROUND (WGG)

### 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

In February, we hosted our annual partners meeting for our Bangladesh partners to plan for the year ahead and hold discussions for our strategic and political agendas. That same month, IWRAP Asia Pacific conducted a four-day training programme for WGG East Africa partners in Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda, to introduce them to the UN human rights system and the CEDAW framework.

To build capacity on different themes, we also organised two learning circles in May 2023. The first was a collaboration with Kontinentalist (Singapore) on data storytelling, while the second focused on 'pleasure-centred activism', which was led by Bonhishikha.

In June 2023, we held an all-partner meeting in New Delhi, India, to catalyse cross-country collaboration and knowledge sharing.

As we move into WGG's fourth year of implementation, we are exploring opportunities to decentre leadership and empower our partners to become architects of the programme.



**Top left, right, and middle left:** WGG CEDAW Training for East Africa Strategic Partners from Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda. **Middle right:** WGG all partners meeting in Delhi. **Bottom:** WGG Bangladesh Strategic Partners CEDAW and Human Rights Advocacy Training.

## FORGING INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST FUTURES (FIFF)

The **Forging Intersectional Feminist Futures (FIFF)** consortium is a project focused on collective capacity building and cross-movement advocacy through the lens of intersectionality. The FIFF project continuously implements national projects in five countries: **Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, and the Philippines.**

Led by IWRAP Asia Pacific, the consortium features seven regional partners who collaborate and strategise on how structurally excluded groups can use CEDAW to demand their rights.

### FIFF PARTNERS

Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact  
 Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers  
 Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network  
 Asia Pacific Transgender Network  
 ASEAN SOGIE Caucus  
 International Drug Policy Consortium Asia  
 Special Talent Exchange Programme

### 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023, FIFF entered its third and final year of implementation, during which CEDAW-specific advocacy played a major role.

- ▶ At the 86th CEDAW session, we provided SOGIESC recommendations during the Philippines' state review and engaged in a roundtable discussion on trans rights.
- ▶ The FIFF consortium collectively submitted a written contribution to the CEDAW general discussion on equal and inclusive participation of women in decision making.
- ▶ FIFF provided Indigenous women's rights activists in Asia with training on CEDAW and GR39 at an event in August 2023 organised by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP).

FIFF also continued to facilitate knowledge sharing at our annual partners learning exchange.

Now in its third and final year, FIFF is exploring potential future roadmaps beyond 2023 in recognition of the consortium's significant work.



**Large photo:** Training on CEDAW and General Recommendation No 39 hosted by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) and Network of Indigenous Women in Asia (NIWA). **Middle right:** IWRAP Asia Pacific and FIFF partners at the ASEAN People's Forum/ASEAN Civil Society Conference 2023 in Jakarta. **Bottom:** Training on CEDAW and General Recommendation No 39 hosted by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) and Network of Indigenous Women in Asia (NIWA).

Within the **Interrogating Borders** programme, we recognise and work to counter the impact of borders in perpetuating global inequalities and blocking progress on equality and non-discrimination.

CEDAW's General Recommendation 38 on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration was a setback for rights-affirming approaches, particularly with regard to sex workers. Since 2022, the Interrogating Borders programme has recalibrated to focus on building solidarity and connections to advance more progressive standards relating to trafficking and migration.

## INTERROGATING BORDERS

In 2023, we engaged in targeted outreach to groups working on migrant rights and border-related issues, particularly in Germany, Hong Kong, and Spain ahead of the 85th CEDAW session.

We additionally collaborated with three other organisations to make two UN submissions on issues relating to women marginalised by borders. These submissions were confidential in order to avoid reprisals against our NGO partners. The necessity of this approach underscores the threat to civil society which persists even in high-level spaces.

### GLOBAL SOUTH WOMEN'S FORUM 2023

In 2023, the programme's big challenge was shifting from a focus on written input and small meetings to spotlighting border-related issues through large-scale platforms. The 2023 edition of the Global South Women's Forum focused on borders and the need to challenge systems that permit the denial of rights due to lack of citizenship or paperwork.

For more information on GSWF 2023, please refer to:  
<https://www.iwraw-ap.org/tag/border-ctrl/>



The **Environmental Justice** programme supports and creates spaces for civil society to engage within the CEDAW and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) processes on the issues impacting their communities and livelihoods. Through the project, we work towards gender-responsive climate engagement and advocacy at the national, regional and global levels by collaborating with various networks on human rights, gender and climate change.

## CONNECTING GENDER EQUALITY TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

### 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Following the timely win for the Loss and Damage Finance Fund at COP27, our work in 2023 has been focused on identifying opportunities to engage with activists and feminists from marginalised communities to document the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

In light of the possibility that the Global South could be compensated for the losses and damages incurred as a result of the climate crisis, the Environmental Justice programme worked within different networks and projects to support and contextualise this concept in the Global South. Hence, we remain focused on the need to build capacity, both internally and among our partners, on feminist approaches to environmental justice as well as the utility of CEDAW in analysing the gendered impacts of climate change.

Throughout 2023, the programme participated in five Loss & Damage Fund Transition Committee workshops virtually as a member of the Women and Gender Constituency (WGC). This was useful in helping the programme further enhance its knowledge on the operationalisation and financial components of the fund.



*Above left:* IWRAP AP environmental justice team together with Voice and Visibility project partners from NIDWAN and KAMY, Orang Asli youth activist Diana Tan Ben Hui, and WGC facilitative committee member Hwei Mian Lim of Malaysia at COP28. *Right:* Malaysian environmental activist Meena Raman and Orang Asli youth activist Diana Tan Ben Hui.

The Voice and Visibility project has now entered its second year, and our partners—**LILAK from the Philippines, NIDWAN from Nepal, and KAMY from Malaysia**—continue to improve their knowledge of feminist environmental justice and climate-change-related concepts including loss and damage, just energy transition, climate finance, and adaptation. The Voice and Visibility partners' continued engagement in UNFCCC processes bolstered their advocacy and research at the local level in 2023.

### TESTIMONIES

The CEDAW shadow reporting process was very important not only for LILAK but most especially for the Indigenous women human rights defenders who were able to put forward their situation and were able to engage the CEDAW mechanism to seek accountability from the Philippine Government.

#### LILAK

Our engagement with the IWRAP AP Environmental Justice team at COP28 was genuinely enlightening and offered a great learning experience.

#### KAMY

The **Women and Work** programme—probably the most enduring pillar of IWRAP Asia Pacific’s work—looks to tackle the structural discrimination facing women workers.

In 2023, we arrived at the end of our five-year strategy, marking a moment of immense reflection and planning for the programme’s future. As the year opened, the programme entered a deep phase of reflection on the key learnings of the Global Tribunal of Women Workers 2022.

## WOMEN AND WORK

The first half of 2023 was spent following up on Tribunal outcomes, strengthening partnerships with collaborators and exploring deeper

engagement with trade unions and funders. These reflections will shape the next five years of our programme, and we will publish a toolkit on the Tribunal’s outcomes in 2024.

Care work and social protection remain top priorities for us, especially for women informal workers, and we will continue to tackle these through our continuous engagements with ESCR-Net and various domestic workers’ organisations. As part of our collaborative project with Oxfam DGD, we continued to push ASEAN-level advocacy for better social protection and decent work for women workers in the agrifood sector.

*Opposite page: Women and Work programme representatives and attendees at regional strategic consultation on social protection of agri-food sector workers.*



### 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ As an immediate follow-up to the Tribunal, an event was organised in Kuala Lumpur to revisit recommendations and develop a toolkit to support civil society groups.
- ▶ A parallel event to the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) was held to bring together collaborators, witnesses and jury members from the Tribunal to reflect on its existence as a space dedicated to women workers and their advocacy.
- ▶ IWRAP Asia Pacific wrapped up the ILO C190 project supported by Laudes Foundation.

### TESTIMONIES

I’m grateful for the spaces shared, the generosity, the accommodation of domestic workers’ needs, the worker-centric methodologies and processes IWRAP Asia Pacific employed with us, the care with which you heard and have seen every worker that has ever taken part in one of our joint events. It also doesn’t escape me to thank you infinitely for the prompt and tangible support you have given in the time of crisis—you have certainly made it easier for us as an organisation, and for me, personally, by feeding my faith in solidarities across borders and movements.

**ROULA SEGHAIER** International Domestic Workers Federation

Our **TrEAD** programme interrogates the impact of macroeconomic policies, actions and development agendas on women's human rights. Now in its fourth year, it continues its work in surfacing these issues at CEDAW reviews and mobilising women's rights groups around a feminist agenda rooted in the priorities of marginalised groups of women.

### 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

At the start of 2023, we published our CEDAW Shadow Report Guidelines on Gender Equality and Macroeconomics (GEM) which have substantially assisted in formulating national-level, CEDAW-compliant economic policy recommendations and support advocacy by women's rights organisations with their governments. We were thrilled to use this resource to support the Feminist Macroeconomic Alliance-Malawi in submitting a shadow report for Malawi's CEDAW review in October 2023, and have also relied on it in other various collaborations.

## TRANSFORMING ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A FEMINIST APPROACH (TrEAD)

This year, our work in supporting national-level and community-led advocacy and policy proposal development has largely focused on Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

- ▶ In partnership with Women and Media Collective, we ran two workshops in Sri Lanka to support activists as they draft a collective shadow report on the country's economic crisis.
- ▶ We also collaborated with ALTSEAN Burma on a community-led inclusive, human-rights-based federal economic policy project, with ALTSEAN Burma leading a four-week training and policy development series in Thailand and Malaysia with diverse communities from Burma/Myanmar.

We've also strategised and collaborated closely with Southern-led feminist economic justice alliances, strengthening our collective action and knowledge building across regions and advocacy spaces, such as our contribution to a campaign to counter the IMF's Gender Strategy and our continued work with the Feminists for a Peoples Vaccine Campaign on removing intellectual property barriers to the right to health.



*Workshop titled 'CEDAW and Macroeconomics: Advancing gender equality through feminist, human-rights-based economic advocacy', held jointly with Women and Media Collective, 28 August to 1 September 2023, Negombo, Sri Lanka*

# PRIORITIES FOR 2024

**2023** was not just a year of challenges but **a year of transition** for IWRAP Asia Pacific. Aside from a change in leadership following the departure of our Executive Director, this year marks the end of our strategic five-year strategy—the coming months will be **a time of reorientation** for the organisation as we chart our future for the years ahead.

At the end of 2022, we initiated the **Change Project** which will help us develop a new five-year strategy for **2025-2029**. In the next year, we'll focus on building new structures and procedures to align our work models and feminist principles, streamlining internal accountability processes, and strengthening relationships with our stakeholders.

In addition to our various ongoing projects, we are excited about the start of our two-year project, **Feminist Economic Futures: Co-creating intersectional feminist rights-based economic policies and post-COVID alternatives**, funded by the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund. Housed under the TrEAD programme, this project focused on feminist economic justice while drawing on the knowledge, expertise, and networks built across our five programmatic areas, allowing IWRAP AP to deliver on the depth of analysis and action required to meet the intersecting systems of oppression that threaten gender equality today.

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