



Women Pay the Price as Asian Tigers, IMF, Bail Out of the Crisis

Some 30 women from nearly 20 groups in South East Asia have predicted that the huge number of Asian women and young girls already engaged in prostitution or victimized by trafficking will increase in the near future as a consequence of policies being adopted by their governments and the International Monetary Fund to bail the region out of its current financial crisis. In responding to the crisis, South East Asia governments and the IMF were seeking to protect foreign and domestic financial and business interests, hide government ineptitude and corruption, and confuse the public on who was really accountable, the women said.

The women made their comments at a roundtable discussion on "Economic, Social and Political Impacts of the South East Asian Financial Crisis" (Philippines, April 12-14, 1998). The roundtable was convened by DAWN and APDC-GAD (Asian Pacific Development Centre Gender and Development Programme). The participants

were from groups which work on women and gender concerns at national, regional, or international level. Discussions focused on the patriarchal and classist systems of economics and politics behind the financial crisis, how the crisis is being addressed by states, and its impact on South East Asian women.

Participants agreed that the region's financial crisis resulted from a combination of problems and forces associated with global debt management, and those generated by the recent liberalization of accounts promoted by South East Asian states which hope to come out as "winners" in this period of global economic competition.

Grave concerns were raised about the IMF's blue-print approach of linking bail-out loans with further trade de-regulation, privatization of social services, and demands for national accounts surpluses. Participants observed that while IMF technocrats, Asian leaders and economic planners disagree on some of the strategies to be pursued in moving Asian economies out of the crisis, when it comes to overall management the prevailing "brotherhood consensus" continues to be focused on the primacy of production and profit, and social reproduction remains a consequence of, rather than a primary element in, economic planning.

Women in the region are affected by this approach to the management of the monetary crisis in three significant ways. Firstly, as

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STEERING

Who's doing what, where, when and how in the DAWN network.

• The last DAWN Steering Committee meeting was held in Manila, Philippines (April, 1998) prior to the DAWN/APDC-GAD regional roundtable on the South East Asian Financial Crisis (see report, page 1). Present were: DAWN general coordinator **Clare Slatter (Fiji)**; former general coordinator, **Peggy Antrobus (Barbados)**; Regional Coordinators, **Patricia MacFadden (Zimbabwe)**, and **Gigi Francisco (Philippines)**; Research Coordinators, **Gita Sen (India)**, **Sonia Correa (Brazil)**, **Vivienne Taylor (South Africa)**. DAWN welcomed the following new Regional Coordinators: **Vanita Mukherjee (India)**; **Celita Eccher (Uruguay)**, the General Coordinator of **REPEM (Popular Education Network of Women)** in Montevideo which is DAWN's new focal point in Latin America (see full report on page 9); and **Yvonne Underhill Sem (Samoa)** a geographer/anthropologist who is currently pursuing doctoral studies at the University of Waikato in New Zealand. The Steering Committee also welcomed **Sharon Sindhu Lateef**, DAWN's new part-time accountant. Apologies were received from **Fatou Sow (Senegal)**; **Eudine Barriteau (Barbados)**, and **Vivienne Wee (Malaysia)**, who was busy with the relocation of the ENGENDER office.

• **SECRETARIAT TRANSITION:** It was the first Steering Committee meeting since the DAWN Secretariat completed its move from Barbados to the University of the South Pacific in Fiji where two adjacent rooms and accompanying services have been made available to us. Despite the upheaval of the transitional phase, much has been done to secure funding for the DAWN work programme including completion of the network's global proposal and financial and narrative reports. A big thank-you to former

COMMITTEE NOTES

DAWN Administrator **Sandra Edwards**, and **Nan Peacocke**, formerly of the Women and Development Unit (WAND) of the University of the West Indies, where the Secretariat used to be located. Sandra's employment with DAWN ended in December 1997, but she and Nan, working voluntarily, closed off DAWN's local business and packed up and shipped the Secretariat files, materials and records. Sandra is now doing a full

time consultancy with **UNIFEM's** Barbados office, and Nan is writing a book.

• **GETTING CONNECTED:** All Steering Committee members are now connected electronically. Eudine and Pat were the last members to go online.

• **AFRICA REPORT:** The report of the African Regional meeting in

Dakar (November 1994) has been published. Still in the works is a French translation as well as a popular version, which is being done by **Natasha Primo (South Africa)**. Contact Fatou for more information.

• **MOVING:** Peggy will shortly take up the **Nita Barrow Fellowship** at the **Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, Toronto**. Eudine was a fellow last year. ▼

Memories of Bella

Bella Abzug—lawyer, politician and feminist activist—died on March 31 at age 77. DAWN founding member Devaki Jain pays tribute to her.

One afternoon in the 1970s a taxi drove up to the gate of my apartment in Delhi and a white woman with a large hat stepped out. And there was Bella Abzug, unfazed by the crowd of curious 'street children' that had gathered, drawing me into her energetic, high profile life. Years later, in Copenhagen, when I told Bella that the US was the only delegation opposing crucial wording in a document, she promptly caught hold of a U.S. delegate and by the next session the issue was resolved. **Signaling to Bella during world conferences, especially about the behaviour of the U.S., produced results for all of us. Yet, the important aspect of Bella's role in the international women's movement was not merely her famous stubbornness, but her sensitivity and flexibility.**

Initiating DAWN as a purely Third World network was not only an affirmation of the difference made by political economy, by culture, by location, but it was also a "separation." This created some unhappiness if not unpleasantness and questions in the international women's movement—especially since the energy and direction of initiatives had almost always come from the North. Bella's strong character and visibility in New York and the United States where the United Nations is located, made it difficult to call attention to the global South as the engine. Willy-nilly, WEDO and Bella became the North-engined global initiative. **But her sensitivity was such that, accommodating differences and flying over the tensions, Bella diligently worked towards keeping feminist friendship**

and mutual regard flowing. She understood this was an ethical imperative for feminists.

Women living in New York or even in Geneva often get overpowered by the UN, the World Bank, American politics—as if the world begins and ends there.

Years of effort have convinced many of us that while international collective action and solidarity is crucial, to make it happen, the collective action, the opinion building and the strategizing have to begin in many disperse locales. Ultimately the strongest force to revive the ideology of building equity will have to come from the new world: Africa, Asia, Latin America.

The old world has ceased to provide the progressive framework: Some of the most difficult obstacles in the Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing Conferences came from the US and British delegations, even though they may have been peppered with brilliant feminists. The political consciousness in these countries remains conservative and divided. Bella was dealing with this and had made great in-roads, but attempts to locate the world wide women's movement in that belly are not wise, because it is not a receptive belly. ▼



SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

by Vivienne Wee

Since the Cold War, trade liberalization and economic globalization have become the major forces impacting on women's livelihoods worldwide. But while there is much debate about the effect of these forces on national economies, very little has been said about the way local economies at the grassroots level are being captured and restructured to fit external economic agendas. The competition for natural resources has intensified significantly. Everywhere, there is competition for the use and allocation of natural resources—from arable land and coastal access to the sea, to forests, flora and fauna—as sources of livelihoods for local communities or as commodified tradeables for private enterprises, both national and transnational.

Trade liberalization and economic globalization are exacerbating the environmental crisis. New trade mechanisms such as TRIPS (trade-related intellectual property rights) are ingenious ways of resource appropriation through legal manipulation and genetic engineering. The processes creating the new rich and the new poor, the new powerful and the new powerless are gender-

ized. This is a new phase of international class formation that is coupled with an international gender division of wealth (not just labour). As a result, women—especially those in the rural and informal sectors—are losing their livelihood resources with hardly any compensatory access to new economic opportunities. The feminization of poverty is thus an increasing phenomenon

globally.

Transnational challenges must be met by transnational responses namely, a global coalition to prioritise the needs, rights and realities of all women, especially the poorest women living in the most remote communities.

Women's livelihood rights include rights to land ownership and access to natural resources. Women's sustainable livelihoods are crucial to environmental conservation, a foundation stone of fundamental human rights. Both corporations and consumers need to be more conscious about the level of suffering that has gone into the goods they produce and consume.

Innovative strategies are needed in a context where governments are increasingly ruled by market forces out of their control. Such strategies could include a transnational network of sustainable communities with the capacity

to counter transnational policies and market forces, to reclaim the market as community space, and to conserve the environment as a natural resource base.

The research programme focusses on the effects of globalization on natural resources and livelihoods sustainability. It includes both micro effects and macro analysis as well as women's responses at both levels. The programme seeks to monitor what is happening to women everywhere and to counter the new processes that are impoverishing them, to increase awareness of how women's systematic impoverishment is endemic to the global crisis of sustainability, and to build coalitions.

In the search for viable and sustainable development alternatives it is important to cast a wide net and consider all the possibilities. In this context, the

With this theme, DAWN's concern is with the impacts of the changing economic milieu on the role of the state and on its capacity to deliver women's practical needs, or gender justice. The role of the state has changed as it has been impacted by economic forces as well as political forces, such as fundamentalism, in

Political Restructuring & Social Transformation

the 1960s, the emphasis was on the market, but by the 1970s, in direct response to the failure of the '60s, there was a shift towards the state. In the 1980s and '90s, there has been a shift back to the market. The different histories and experiences in the region will form an important aspect of the research. *Vivienne*

Taylor, the research coordinator, is working on a preliminary outline of ideas and issues.

The workplan includes two important elements: an examination and critique of mainstream ideas and concepts related to such issues as governance, accountability, and democracy, and an alternative perspective that has a gender approach.

Among the issues seen as central to the theme are: The masculinity of the state • The cross-cutting elements of power and macro-policies—both content and the way these policies are formulated • Social citizenship • Redistribution • Women's political representation at local level and prospects for women's empowerment • Forms of representation in different types of democracy.

Papers on these and other related issues as they are manifest at regional level are being sought and others will be commissioned. These will be used to prepare summary analyses of each region.

programme closely evaluates the potential of all approaches—what works to adequately address the magnitude of the problems and to effectively challenge the tide of globalization, trade liberalization and commoditization. The aim is to reach and influence the widest audience possible.

ENGENDER, now nearing the end of its current programme cycle, is completing three substantial research projects: "Women, Trade and Sustainable Livelihoods in Southeast Asia" funded by Unifem, CIDA and IDRC; "Women, Environment and Development in Asia" funded by IDRC; and "Building on Reproductive Health for Sustainable Health" funded by the MacArthur Foundation. ENGENDER also has an ongoing sustainable livelihoods community programme that involves building livelihoods through the development of indigenous knowledge, skills and resources. This blend of macro and micro, research and action, shows how vital it is for the perspectives and realities of the grassroots to be effectively brought into mainstream discourse and decision-making.

Where livelihoods issues are concerned, there's a huge gap between what is happening at the macro level—World Trade Organization (WTO), genome project, U.S. patents, TNCs, Wall Street, commodity markets—and what is happening on the ground.

To bridge this gap, the DAWN/ENGENDER joint project on "Globalization and Women's Livelihood Resources" aims to establish an Internet news

service focussing women's livelihoods in the context of macro-economic restructuring as follows: Mobilize the DAWN global network as a Livelihoods Watch to monitor the resources that women need; keep in touch with the changing conditions of women's lives as changes

take place in the market and the state; and, at a more macro level, track potential threats and possible opportunities in the policy, financial and corporate sectors. This Livelihoods Watch should be positioned to sound the alarm—loud enough to be heard by all and sundry—about deeds and misdeeds, as well as being current and able to stay on top of rapidly changing events.

News from the Livelihoods Watch could form a key component of ENGENDER's online news service. Our aim is to make this online news service sufficiently professional that the content can be picked up and amplified by newspapers, magazines and other media. No such online news service focussing on women's livelihoods in the context of globalization now exists. Livelihoods Watch will communicate through e-mail and the Internet. ENGENDER will build and maintain the Website and play an editorial role vis-a-vis news coming from the grassroots.

An information dissemination plan will be developed to ensure maximum outreach through hyperlinks to search engines, the development of mirror sites, and e-mails to policy and decision-makers. ▼

Political Economy

Research Coordinator, Gita Sen

Capacity building by way of training has been a major focus of the political economy work programme in the last couple of years. As the forces of globalization have continued to sweep us all up, women's organizations, NGOs and other sections of civil society often only have a vague understanding of what is going on—which in turn has weakened their capacity for creative and effective response to the challenges. DAWN's training programme for NGOs, "The Political Economy of Globalization and Liberalization: Challenges for NGOs," is an attempt to fill this gap. Funding has been received from the HIVOS Regional Office in Bangalore to run the training programme and to produce a training manual for use by other groups. India has been the base for the pilot training which is now in its second cycle (each cycle lasts three weeks). A one-week programme was conducted in South Africa in November 1997. The aim is to train trainers and gradually expand the programme to other regions.

The political economy research programme interacts with the World Bank in two ways: • Membership in the steering committee of SAPRIN (Structural Adjustment Programme Review initiative Network), a tripartite review of structural adjustment programmes (SAPS) jointly undertaken by civil society, the Bank and governments in seven countries. Although extremely complex and difficult in both political and logistical terms, SAPRIN is a major effort to make SAPS more transparent and accountable to people. DAWN is working to establish SAPRIN Women's Networks in the different countries. • Membership of the World Bank's External Gender Consultative Group (EGCG), which was set up after Beijing to strengthen gender-sensitivity in the Bank's programmes. Progress has been slow and frustrating, in part because of the turmoil caused by the Bank's own internal restructuring, failure to appoint a head of the Gender Sector Board, and lack of a clear mandate for the EGCG. Women's Eyes on the World Bank recently produced a report which was critical of the Bank's approach to gender and in particular to the EGCG. DAWN's continued participation on the EGCG will depend on who is appointed to head the Gender Sector Board, and if the EGCG's role is made clearer and stronger.

Gita's recent writing has included a background paper for *Human Development Report 1997* on empowerment as an approach to poverty. She also gave the first annual Development Lecture at the University of Amsterdam in June 1997 on "Globalization in the 21st Century: Challenges for Civil Society" (see *DAWN Informs*, Autumn '97).

Gita is currently one of the two vice-presidents of the Society for International Development, a board member of the UN Research Institute for Social Development, vice-chair of International Women's Health Coalition, and chair of the International Advisory Group of the MacArthur Foundation's Population Programme. In July she received an honorary doctorate from the University of East Anglia in the UK for her work on gender and development.

Gearing up for Cairo+5

SOCIAL REPRODUCTION, REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS, SEXUALITY & GENDER RIGHTS

by Sonia Correa, Brazil

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, 1994, legitimized the notions of reproductive health and reproductive rights, and agreement was reached that population and family planning programmes should be transformed to accord with women's needs. DAWN's main contribution was in consolidating the idea that reproductive rights and gender were very much a part of the women's agenda in the South. The main challenge now is to promote clarity around the concepts of reproductive health and sexual rights.

Despite legitimization of the reproductive rights agenda at the governmental level and the incorporation of the issues into the discourse of the women's movement, the concepts of "rights" and "health" remain indistinct, often used synonymously, or as interchangeable terms—even within the women's movement. In promoting clarity, the areas on which to focus are:

• Sexual Rights

Feminists do not use this term even in countries that are less constrained than Brazil. The

concept is being shaped not by the women's movement, but by the initiatives taken by the lesbian and gay movement.

• Male Responsibility

Agencies talk about male "involvement" but this is not the same as male "responsibility", which is the precise definition adopted in Cairo and Beijing.

• Human Rights & Citizens Rights

In many settings, there has always been a tension between human rights and nationally based norms and citizenship rights. In the wake of definitions agreed at ICPD and the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, these tensions have increased particularly with respect to abortion and sexual rights.

• The Enabling Environment

It is vital that the reproductive rights/sexual rights framework is located within an enabling environment with linkages to globalization, political restructuring, environment, and gender and culture.

The strategic components of the reproductive rights/health research programme are:

• Training

Efforts are being made to improve

and/or create linkages with the various institutions providing training in the regions. Initiatives are already underway in a few regions, particularly in Latin America, where academic institutions are already involved in research and training.

• Policy Analysis

This has become a strategic need in the post-conference era, and within this frame, Cairo+5 has emerged as a critical target. To avoid a repeat of Rio+5 (where the formal UN conference model adopted proved unproductive) a more non-conformist Open Forum will be staged (February 1999, Amsterdam), followed by a special session of the UN General Assembly to review/approve the report of the Secretary General coming out of the preparatory process which began last February. The emphasis is on governments and agencies finding ways to make the Cairo agenda feasible. Case studies are being prepared by locally based consultants for presentation at the open forum. Among the countries the UN has selected for case studies are Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, Mexico, South Africa, Uganda, and several of the

newly emerging states in Eastern Europe. The Centre for Development Cooperation is doing other case studies and the UNFPA may also get involved.

UNFPA has organized a series of roundtables in preparation for the conference—up to press time, three had been held, on “Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health” (April, New York); “Reproductive Rights and Implementation of Reproductive Health Programmes” (June, Kampala), and “Cairo Implementation in Partnership with Civil Society” (July, Dhaka). The preparatory process also includes technical meetings and NGO and regional conferences (see box).

Funders are moving faster than women’s organizations in preparing for Cairo+5. Many activists are not yet tuned into the process, finding themselves caught between national commitments, the preparation of case studies and global mobilization. The need is for a sharper and clearer division of labour between national and global initiatives as well as between the various global oriented networks. In this context DAWN is collaborating with the network HERA (Health, Empowerment, Rights, Accountability), a close partner in this particular area of investment.

From a preliminary assessment, HERA is planning an inter-regional meeting to address the situation. Scheduled to be held in Mexico on November 25, 1998, the meeting is expected to bring together about 100 activists to produce an in-depth collective analysis of what has happened since Cairo, from which a publication will be produced to inform the Cairo+5 Forum and subsequent

UN related activities. HERA is also tracking and monitoring UNFPA, putting out fact sheets and conducting public education programmes.

In terms of positions and alliances, it’s likely that states will laud the outcomes of ICPD but argue that implementation is too complicated, not on financial grounds but on the basis that efforts have been made for five years and it does not work. New and problematic alliances can also be expected—for example, one can predict that the Vatican will renew its alliance with the population control sector (which will be arguing for a return to the “old, simple and cost-effective” system of population control) and attack abortion and all individualist notions of reproductive rights.

Sections of the women’s movement are likely to take more cynical positions, for instance, that the ICPD outcome was mere rhetoric and governments are doing the same old thing; or that developments such as the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), globalization and the World Trade Organization (WTO) will make any significant transformation impossible.

Essentially, DAWN remains supportive of ICPD, acknowledging that efforts are being made to move policies in the right direction, while recognizing that in keeping with the nature of policy change, this is not being done fast enough. But while bottlenecks are inevitable given the complexities of implementation and of resource constraints ways can be found to overcome the sticking points.

NOTE: Sonia is collaborating on the case studies for Brazil, India, Uganda and Mexico. ♡

CAIRO+5 EVENTS CALENDAR

September 1998

Technical Meeting: “Reproductive Health Services in Crisis Situations” (The Hague, Netherlands)

October 6-9, 1998

Technical Meeting: “Population and Aging” (Brussels, Belgium)

November 15-18, 1998 -

HERA: ICPD+5 International NGO Conference (Cocoyoc, Mexico)

February 5-6, 1999 (tentative)

Youth Forum (The Hague, Netherlands)

February 6-7, 1999

Dutch NGO ICPD+5 Forum (The Hague, Netherlands)

February 8-12, 1999

UNFPA: ICPD+5 Open Forum (The Hague, Netherlands)
Review of national and international experiences

March 22-29, 1999 (tentative)

Commission on Population and Development (New York)
CPD serves as the PrepCom for governments to negotiate the draft report of the Secretary General.

June 30-July 2, 1999

UN General Assembly Special Session (New York)
Review/Approve report of the Secretary General

[Source:

<http://www.unfpa.org/ICPD/ICPD.HTM>]

MAKING GLOBAL-REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

The main thrust in DAWN's current work cycle is on building capacity in the regions of the South. This was reflected in the reports from regional coordinators at the Steering Committee meeting in Manila. DAWN's research programme and platforms have been largely based in the experiences of south women, as reported by the regional coordinators or as garnered from DAWN regional meetings. It has been an on-going, two way exchange from which both sides have benefited: the regional inputs, insights and specificities infused and enriched DAWN's global analysis, while the global analysis helped to broaden regional perspectives. In order for this exchange to take place, DAWN regional coordinators have had to be connected into their national and regional movements. Now, they are going one step further to formalise their links with established regional networks which share DAWN's concerns. The relationship between the regional and research coordinators is another aspect of the global-regional connection. For instance, local level governance in India is a national concern that coincides with DAWN's current research theme, Political Restructuring and Social Transformation. While these global/local concerns were reflected in the reports, approaches vary depending on national and regional realities. Following are extracts from the reports:

AFRICA: Some Networks Thrive, Others Flounder *by Patricia McFadden (Zimbabwe)*

In the current period, women are advocating for change either through active networks and organizations, or from within state-associated initiatives, with some positive results. Environment networks have been thriving, although several others have floundered, in part due to global trends. Emerging networks are engaged with motherhood, the girl-child, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. Some established networks, such as FEMNET which is active around empowerment, micro-credit and small business, are becoming more involved with IMF and World Bank issues.

In the repressive state of Zimbabwe, there has been little development of human rights networks. South Africa, on the other hand, has been a catalyst for the regional work on the issues. Northern based networks such as the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) and Women in Development-Europe (WIDE) are seeking to develop regional networks from bases in South Africa. DAWN-Africa is seeking to institutionalize its linkages with the network, and to strengthen its ties with the African Association of Political Scientists in Harare.

The general crisis in the region is reflected in DAWN-Africa's operations. Members who participated in Beijing, either as part of an official delegation or as representatives of NGOs, have been occupied by national processes for implementing the Beijing platform. Several have relocated, some to different countries or regions. Staying in touch has been difficult, but everyone now has e-mail, and with communications systems in Africa getting better, some improvement is expected. A DAWN-Africa regional

meeting was being planned as *DAWN Informs* went to press. The items up for discussion: the tenure of regional coordinators and focal points; the relationship between regional meetings and DAWN's global research and platforms; links between the regional programmes and the global research programme; and training. DAWN-Africa will also be seeking to extend the distribution of *DAWN Informs* and other DAWN publications such as *Markers on the Way*, which are used extensively in the region.

SOUTH ASIA: Emphasizing Training *by Vanita Mukherjee (India)*

DAWN in South Asia is emphasizing its training programmes on globalization for women's networks and NGOs in general. The second and third modules of the programme were held in August. A Reproductive Rights workshop is planned for November. DAWN-South Asia is also working on improving distribution of *DAWN Informs*, and on producing regular regional reports. The most active networks in South Asia focus on environment, migration and trafficking in women, and adult education.

In India post-Cairo, sexual health has become more of an important issue. Most of the attention is on homosexuality and AIDS prevention. Promoting the gendered aspects of reproductive health remains a real challenge. In terms of political restructuring and social transformation, since the 33 percent quota for women in the *panchayats* was introduced by the last government three years ago, an estimated one million women leaders have come to power. This monumental change is occurring even in the most backward regions and districts. While ambiguous images prevail—women representatives attending meetings in veils, or being shown token defer-

ence, or being manipulated by their husbands (who are called *panche patthis*)—women representatives are proving to be very effective leaders. Women in the *panchayats* are actually getting things done—they have the funds and are the decision makers when it comes to laying water pipes; fixing roads, and providing services—which is having an interesting effect on women's status and standing. Furthermore, with the transfer of power to *panchayats*, representatives are now an effective link between the state and the people. With women representatives offering effective leadership at local level, some women's NGOs and autonomous organizations have been left feeling displaced or unable to switch their role toward human rights education.

Hindu fundamentalists are now in power in India, which poses something of a dilemma for the women's movement and NGOs generally. Certain positions adopted by the ruling BJP are supportive of women—for example the party backs the bill seeking to reserve 33 percent of parliamentary seats for women, and takes a positive stance in respect to issues of globalization and the environment. The dilemma for the women's movement and NGOs: If they work with the government on these issues, they also legitimize the Hindu right wing party. On reproductive rights the agenda is unclear since ethnic politics abound—slogans like, "We are four we have 10" are Hindu jibes at Muslims having four wives, and the issues of polygamy and inheritance rights were highlighted during a campaign for a single civil code giving the same rights to all men irrespective of religion. The women's movement in India does have a clear position on the civil code: "Yes" to a uniform code; "No" to a Hindu code.

SOUTH EAST ASIA: Strong National/ Regional Linkages by Gigi Francisco (Philippines)

In terms of work on the research themes, there has been some regional work on trade and macro/micro linking, and security with the network Focus on the Global South; on democracy and development alternatives with HBF; on women and politics with Centre for Legislative Development (CLD); on financial crisis, transitional societies and post-Beijing monitoring with GAD-APDC; and on gender equity and macroeconomics with Oxfam-UK.

On the political restructuring and social transformation theme, there has been involvement in two small research projects—one on women in local governance and the other on how women's groups participated in the first national party list elections. DAWN-SEA works closely with SIDA—Society for International Development (Gigi is a member of the Governing Council and Gita is a vice president), and collaborates with the Alternative

Resource Network for Asia (ARENA). Networks focusing on reproductive rights/health issues include ARROW, a regional research and advocacy organization, and the INDRA-HAIN (Health Alert Information Network), which leads action on women's health in South and South East Asia. On the sustainable livelihoods theme, DAWN-SEA has been involved with APDC, Focus and IDRC activities around conflicts over natural resources, and with Focus' preparations for a food security conference.

A national DAWN-SEA project funded by Oxfam-UK has involved the organization of three roundtable discussions—on gender equity and macroeconomic policies, social policies, and trade—and research work and a publication. DAWN-SEA also conducted the evaluation of Oxfam-UK's national programme on community-based coastal resources management, and reviewed the organization's 10 years of gender mainstreaming work in the Philippines. Two publications are planned from the DAWN/APDC roundtable in Manila in April (see page 1). DAWN-SEA monitors SAPRIN's progress in the region (Cambodia was dropped after protest from NGOs leaving Bangladesh as the only participating Asian country), and is following up the CASA initiative in the Philippines. DAWN-SEA facilitated the development of Isis International Manila's current five year plan, while Isis featured DAWN's dialogue with young feminists in its magazine, *Women in Action*, and volunteered to document the regional roundtable meeting.

LATIN AMERICA: REPEM is New DAWN Focal Point by Celita Eccher (Uruguay)

As the new Latin America focal point, REPEM seeks to broaden DAWN's activities through its strong sub-regional and national linkages, and established capacity for information dissemination. REPEM'S network comprises 160 national NGOs that organize low income women without formal education who work in bad conditions or are unemployed, or who have little or no access to technology. The network began forming in 1981, and now has coordinators covering Central America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, the Andean Countries, Brazil and the Southern Cone Countries. The General Assembly of affiliated organizations meets every three years to select the Board of Directors. REPEM strategizes for implementation of the Beijing platform and recommendations from the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education through links with Educational Watch, a regional monitoring initiative, and has a specific focus on gender and popular economy. It seeks to improve the capacity of NGOs to monitor gender related public poli-

Continued overleaf.

cies and educational programmes and is developing a regional campaign for gender oriented and non-sexist education. These strategies are supported by data collection, information dissemination, gender training, and international networking.

In the region, the main concerns are unemployment, poverty and social integration. Unemployment is a main issue in Argentina, Peru, Uruguay and Mexico. 1997 was characterized by increased industrial action by all working sectors. The demands are better salaries and working conditions, but trade unions have also expressed discontent with economic policies. Peasants and rural people have also been marching for justice under the banner of *Movimiento Sem Terra*. The most important challenge to Latin-American Governments in the next 10 years is creating programmes that will effectively benefit the needy. According to regional surveys, there are also concerns about the widening gap between rich and poor, the health and education sectors, unequal access to social services, lack of accountability in the political system, drugs and crime. Urban violence, lack of social security, domestic violence and physical abuse of children are coming more to the forefront.

CARIBBEAN: NGOs Lose the Initiative

by Peggy Antrobus

The Caribbean is suffering from post-Beijing inertia with much of the initiative gone from NGOs following a vacuum left by leadership changes at WAND and the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA). Beijing follow-up activities are being initiated mainly by regional programmes such as the Women's Desk at the CARICOM Secretariat and UNIFEM, which recently organized a regional meeting to plan a campaign on violence against women. Efforts to raise funds for a DAWN-Caribbean regional meeting have so far failed but various strategies are being pursued for revitalizing the network.

Apart from violence, the other major issues in the Caribbean are economic poverty, globalization and trade liberalization. Sustainable development became a big issue when the World Trade Organization ended the preferential access of Caribbean bananas to the European market. This industry is the lifeblood of many of the smaller states and the move will jeopardize the livelihoods of a significant number of people, as well as national revenue. However, the governments and regional and international institutions have done little beyond undertaking a number of poverty studies. The issue of environment has been lagging for want of leadership. In

terms of reproductive rights/health, the passage of a law in Guyana making abortion legal was a major breakthrough which was overshadowed by the reintroduction of racial politics at the time of that country's recent general elections.

PACIFIC: Strong Networks Emerging

by Claire Slatter (Fiji)

Existing and effective networks in the region include a strong violence against women network spearheaded by the Women's Crisis Centre in Suva. Human rights are becoming a focus of concern in this region with the emergence of groups like the Citizens Constitutional Forum and the NGO Coalition on Human Rights in Fiji, and ICRAF in Papua New Guinea, which has been working for several years now to protect individual and community rights within PNG. There are also strong environment organizations in existence—Pacific Concerns Resource Centre, with which DAWN has had links, Greenpeace Pacific, Solomon Islands Development Trust, Melanesian Environment Fund, and Siosiomanga in Samoa. Beijing implementation is primarily being undertaken by regional institutions and national women's ministries with some NGOs working in close liaison with them. A regional meeting is proposed for later this year to bring together women working on the themes with which DAWN is involved.

Following the introduction of economic restructuring programmes, there has developed strong interest in economic and trade policy issues. The regional reform agenda and the region's priorities are being set in annual meetings of finance ministers. The main agency facilitating restructuring is the Forum Secretariat, a coalition of Pacific governments largely financed by Australia, New Zealand, and various intergovernmental agencies. In response to concerns raised about the negative social impacts of restructuring, the Forum Secretariat is conducting a social impact study in three countries. UNIFEM's Fiji-based Pacific office, which coordinated NGO preparations for the Beijing Conference, is working on trade issues. There is an emerging interest in reproductive rights issues, especially sexuality, following Fiji's constitutional review exercise and the new constitution which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sexuality, and through the women's rights movement.

The region is also increasingly concerned with political corruption and accountability, although women's organizations haven't yet taken up these issues preferring to stick with women in politics projects and programmes that are preparing women leaders to contest local and national elections



CAMPAIGN

CLADEM (the Latin American and Caribbean Association for the Defence of Women's Rights) is spearheading a global campaign to get a gender perspective incorporated into the human rights discourse when states meet in December 1998 at the UN for the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The campaign began at a CLADEM-sponsored regional seminar in Panama in April which focused on Citizenship and Identity, Violence and Peace, Sexual and Reproductive Rights, and Development and Environment. At the meeting, CLADEM presented a proposal for a universal declaration of human rights from a gender perspective. REPEM/DAWN has agreed to disseminate campaign materials including the proposal, a petition and a sample letter of institutional support. **Contact: REPEM/DAWN, Colonia 2069, 11200 Montevideo - Uruguay; Tel: 598 2 403 0599 / 408 9158 / 400 6894; Fax: 598 2 409 2343; Email: <repem@chasque.apc.org>**

WANTED: LOCAL-TO-GLOBAL INFORMATION

• Social Watch National Reports

The next issue of *Social Watch* will be published in February 1999 in time to influence the annual meeting of the UN Commission for Social Development and the Copenhagen+5 PrepCom. The Social Watch report aims to exert a positive influence by presenting an alternative view to that of governments. Social Watch seeks national reports of 2000 words which should be submitted by September 30, 1998. **For further information and guidelines for drafting national reports based on the 10 commitments of the Social Summit, contact: REPEM/DAWN (see above).**

• Financing for Development Questionnaire

Financing for Development is the theme of an event being planned by the UN General Assembly—whether this will be a summit, international conference or a special session of the General Assembly hasn't yet been decided, but it's to be held no later than 2001. In this start-up phase the UN Secretariat is gathering government and other stakeholder reports on related issues which will be used as background material for the 53rd General Assembly this year and later for an index report. The material is being sought through a questionnaire issued by the Secretariat. **For a copy, contact: UN/NGLS, Room FF-346, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, USA; Tel: 212 963-3125; Fax: 212 963-8712; Website: www.un.org/esa/analysis/ffd.htm; Email: ngls@undp.org, ngls@un.org, ngls@igc.apc.org**

PUBLICATION

World Resources 1998-99 [Eighth edition]

(385pp; \$24.95; Oxford university Press)
A collaboration of World Resources Institute, UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank, this report on the global environment highlights environmental change and human health, and features regional and global environmental trends. It includes more than 150 tables, charts, maps and figures showing up-to-date economic, social, and natural resource data for nearly every country. A valuable resource for activists, policymakers, researchers and the media. **Contact: World Resources Institute, 1709 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20006, USA; Tel: 202 638-6300; Fax: 201 638-0036; Website: www.wri.org/wri/**

REPORT

IMF Study Group Report: Transparency and

Evaluation (prepared by Jacques J. Polak, April 1998)
Report and recommendations from a special study group of academics, activists, Congressional staffers and IMF management, past and present, which is convened by the Center of Concern, an NGO dedicated to global justice and peace, and to making the IMF a more effective institution in the global economy. **Contact: Center of Concern, 3700 13th Street NE, Washington, DC 20017, USA; Tel: 202 635-2757; Fax: 202 832-9494; Website: www.coc.org/coc**

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

• MAI Websites Worldwide

A list of websites worldwide that will keep you up to date with developments related to the Multilateral Agreement on Investment has been compiled by Janet Eaton for the Nova Scotia Network for Creative Change Website and for the general use of citizens and groups everywhere. **For a copy, contact: jeaton@fox.nstn.ca**

• OneWorld Online Training

Is your organization concerned with human rights or sustainable development? Does it have a website? Are you based in the South? If you've answered yes to these questions, your organization could benefit from a training and partnership programme run by OneWorld Online, an international Internet collective of development and human rights NGOs. OneWorld can also help you increase your website audience, share expertise, strengthen your audience and keep you in touch with the latest technical developments through its supersite which is accessed more than 3 million times a month from more than 100 countries. **Contact: Miriam Fine, Partnership Manager, OneWorld Online, Hedgerley Wood, Red Lane, Chinnor, Oxfordshire, OX9 4BW, UK; Tel: 44 1494 481751; Email: <miriam@oneworld.org>**

the household managers for food, health and daily survival, they are bearing the burden of the combined effects of inflation, recession and cost-cutting measures in the public sector. Increased prices of basic commodities, high interest credit, loss of jobs for men and women, and privatization of social services and utilities, mean that poor families are surviving in extremely difficult conditions.

Secondly, hundreds of thousands of women engaged in manufacturing, service and migrant work in industries spawned during the heyday of the "Asian miracle", are losing their jobs or being downsized. In companies that employ women and men, women workers are the first to be laid off in cost-cutting measures. Companies in which the

majority of the rank and file are women, such as those in the beleaguered banking sector, are now employing workers on a rotation basis. Migrant women in domestic work and the service sectors in the economies of the once formidable Asian Tigers, are being sent home or used as scapegoats in more recent racist policy announcements. Asian governments are busy finding ways to assist cash-strapped companies but they are not talking about workers' rights, much less the discriminatory firing and retrenchment practices that companies are leveling against women employees.

Finally, everywhere in South East Asia patriarchal notions of women's loyalty, subservience and servitude are being widely invoked by governments, businesses, and

some conservative sectors of the public. Korean and Indonesian women are urged by state officials to "stand by their unemployed husbands". Women in Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines and Korea are prodded to "donate their gold and other jewelry" to government coffers. The image of the Asian woman as loyal wife, suffering mother, and patriotic citizen provides the psycho-social and cultural dimension to the current male-defined approach not only to the financial crisis but to economic development in the region and in the world.

Source: DAWN/APDC-GAD News Release.



Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)

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