



Committee for Asian Women

386/58 Soi Ratchadaphisek 42, Ratchadaphisek Road, Jankasam, Chatujak, Bangkok 10900, Thailand
Tel: +66 (0) 29305634-35, Fax: +66 (0) 29305633 Email: cawinfo@cawinfo.org, Website: www.cawinfo.org

Concept Note
Women Workers Summit 2009
“Women workers at the Frontline of Sustainable Solutions”
9 – 12 December 2009 in Bangkok

Events:

- i. Women Workers’ Summit: “Women Workers at the Frontline of Sustainable Solutions”, 9th – 10th December, 2009**
- ii. Launch of 100 years of International Women’s Day (IWD100) 10th December, 2009**
- iii. CAW Consultation: Strategies towards a Women Workers Labour Movement in 2010 – 2013, 11th and 12th December, 2009**

Background

The economic crisis has a woman’s face

In Asia as early as 2007 – 2008 the global economic crisis hit home with the rise in fuel and food prices felt acutely by workers and the poor. In 2009 the financial crisis and the consequent economic slowdown hit Asia hard as economies reliant on the export market and financial investment collapsed. An estimate 27 million in Asia will be unemployed by 2009 and vulnerable unemployment could grow by 60 million. In the manufacturing sector in Asia, the garment and textile industries where predominantly women are employed has declined as export contracts dwindle and factories especially in the garment, electronic, export oriented and construction industries close.

The hidden aspect of this crisis is the impact on women workers in the formal and especially in the informal sectors, manufacturing sectors and migrant workers which are the mainstays of the export market. This is especially so as the crisis hits women severely and therefore directly, families and communities.

The loss for workers in relation to job security and loss of jobs, severe unemployment, growing poverty, loss of labour rights gained over the years and no social provision cover are felt by women workers acutely. The majority of workers in vulnerable employment are women workers who are unskilled, low paid, overseas migrant workers and workers in unskilled, homebased, casual, temporary and subcontracted work. Their livelihoods have seriously dwindled.

Dwindled also is the global demand for migrant workers as they return home to jobless economies. Economies such as the Philippines, Indonesia and Burma who are reliant on remittances from migrant workers suffer doubly in the face of the internal slow down of the economy with the loss of this revenue. And where migrant workers continue to seek employment overseas it will be for even less income and worse working conditions.

For those retrenched workers who are not able to find new urban employment, whether in the formal or informal economy, seeking rural work opportunities is often the only remaining option. This process of reverse migration has already begun throughout the region. However there is little work available in the rural areas as governments have invested in export processing zones rather than rural/agricultural development.

The immediate struggle for the trade unions and the labour movement in this crisis is employment – the retention of jobs, minimum wages and conditions of work. The struggle to retain the gains they have made in securing better working conditions for the few seem to have receded to the back ground. In the informal

sectors and the unorganised sectors where there is a conspicuous absence of the trade unions the struggle is one of protection and recognition.

The economic system dependent on globalisation, free trade and export markets, foreign investments and poorly regulated banking and financial system needs more than government loans and foreign loans disguised in the name of stimulus packages to banks and financial institutions.

Women Workers Summit

It is timely in 2009 for CAW as an Asian regional organisation to bring all these issues together in a platform, to review and reassess the situation on the ground for women, CAW's work with its member groups, with other women workers groups and with our regional and international networks. The focus of this conference is to build a common vision and strategy in attaining sustainable solutions by building a conscious women labour movement in Asia.

As a network of 46 women workers groups within the labour movement in Asia, the **Committee for Asian Women (CAW)** looks at new alternative ways of organising to develop greater mobilisation, unionisation and stronger labour movements to effect changes in the lives of women workers.

In the Women Workers Summit, CAW while examining the impact and consequences of the crisis on women workers, will look at the various policy orientations that have been offered by Labour movements, feminist economists and other civil society movements.

These include:

a. Women's roles in economic recovery

New ways of thinking on economic and social policies; integrating gender equality as a key principle in any policy response on finance, trade, economic development and labour issues.

b. Investment in physical and social infrastructure

Opportunity for employment that is gender based and has equal gender representation has a foundation for sustainable growth, and alleviation of poverty.

c. FTAs and Role of ASEAN

Prioritising women's productive and social reproductive work, affecting both their paid work in the formal and informal sectors of the economy and their unpaid work in the household, care and community.

d. Reversal for the globalisation process of privatisation, regularisation for public services

Public Services that include state provisions for women, children and the poor: price control of essential goods and social security provisions for women and the unemployed.

e. Role of ILO and UN in mobilising

Towards the ratification and application of international instruments addressing gender discrimination---- Millennium Development Goals, the ILO Decent Work Agenda, Convention on and open door policy on migration

Participants

Estimated 130 participants (CAW member groups, other local and national and regional level women's labour and rights groups, trade unions regional organisations, UN, INGOs, speakers, facilitators, CAW exco and Secretariat)

Organisation Details

Committee for Asian Women

386/58 Soi Ratchadaphisek 42, Ratchadaphisek Road, Jankasam, Chatujak, Bangkok 10900, Thailand

Tel: +66(0) 29305634 Fax: +66(0) 29305633 website: www.cawinfo.org

Contact Persons: Lucia V. Jayaseelan, Executive Coordinator. Email: lucia@cawinfo.org

Ms. Dewi Ratnawulan, Event Organiser. Email: womenworkerssummit@cawinfo.org

Action Plan

Activities	<p>i. Women Workers’ Summit: “Women workers at the front line of sustainable solutions”, 9th -10th December 2009</p> <p>ii. Launch of 100 years of International Women’s Day (IWD100) 10th December 2009</p> <p>iii. CAW Consultation: Strategies towards a Women Workers Labour Movement in 2010 – 2013, 11th and 12th December 2009</p>
Location	Bangkok
Organisations	<p>1. Implementing organisation: Committee for Asian women</p> <p>2. Partners: CAW member groups, other national women workers groups, Asian regional women’s labour and women’s rights groups, trade unions</p>
Time Frame	8- 12 December 2009
Objectives	<p>i. to analyse first hand the impact of crisis on women workers in Asia</p> <p>ii. to learn and share experiences on the strategies of organising</p> <p>iii. to consult and consolidate the next 3 year programme of CAW</p> <p>iv. to launch IWD 100 anniversary Asia-wide</p>
Expected Output and Indicators	<p>i. A framework of strategies for CAW as the women workers labour movement in Asia</p> <p>ii. Documented Report of up to date information and strategies shared by all women workers groups in Asia</p> <p>iii. Raised profile and role of CAW as advocate for women worker issues in Asia.</p>
Expected outcome	<p>i. Consolidation of women workers labour movement towards bringing about sustainable solutions to the global financial crises</p> <p>ii. United strategies for gender empowerment and poverty reduction among women workers, migrants and informal sector workers on national and regional levels</p> <p>iii. Media and campaign strategies to engage governments and other regional structures</p> <p>iv. Addressed gaps in areas of training and education to build leadership and participation among women workers groups</p>
Methodology	<p>i. Regional level consultation of CAW grassroots-based member groups</p> <p>ii. Exchange and exposure on alternative strategies and approaches</p> <p>iii. Training Workshops - focused strategy and planning workshops</p> <p>iv. Media strategy and public action</p> <p>v. Dissemination of promotional materials</p>
Programme	Tentative Programme (see next page)

DAY 1 (9th December) Consolidating experiences and sharing strategies	
8:30-9:00	Registration of participants
9:00-9:15 am	Introduction to the Summit by Ms. Jurgette Honculada, CAW Chairperson
9:15-10:05	SESSION I: Impact of Financial Crises on Women Workers Panel of testimonies - South East Asia -South Asia -Mexico -East Asia -Migrant workers
10:05-10:45	SESSION II: Organising in the FTZs Panel discussion: Overview on the FTZs/EPZs in Asia Experiences in organising in FTZs - Sri Lanka - Bangladesh - Philippines
10:45-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00-11:20	Continuation of Session II Indonesia Mexico
11:20-11:45	Open Forum
11:45-12:00	Summary
12:00-1:30 pm	Lunch
1:30- 3:30 pm	SESSION III: Group Workshops (by country) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying similarities in experience and impact • Identifying relevant and significant strategies and approaches to organising and advocacy
3:30-3:40	Coffee Break
3:40-4:10	Session IV: Feedback - Sub-regional group presentation from workshops
4:10-4:20	Open Forum
4:20-5:00	Summary for the day
7:00	Reception Dinner
DAY 2 (10th December) Women workers: the driving force of sustainable solutions	
8:30-9:30 am	Session V: Panel Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feminist Economics • New initiative of trade unionism • Sustainable agriculture towards food Protection and Recognition of Migrant Workers • Democratisation towards sustainable peace • Global workers charter
9:30-9:45	Open Forum
9:45-10:30	Discussion on draft Workers' Summit statement (facilitated by the drafting committee)
10:30-10:45	Coffee break
10:45-11:30	Feedback and Summary
11:30-11:45	Closing Address
11:45	End of Workers' Summit Finalising of the draft workers summit statement
12:00-1:30 pm	Lunch

	Preparation to join December 10 mobilisation
2:00-7:00	International Human Rights Day Launch of IWD 2011 anniversary International Domestic Workers Day
DAY 3 (11th December) CAW Consultation: "Strengthening strategies, strengthening ourselves"	
8:30-8:45	Welcome Address Introduction of delegates
8:45-9:15	A review of CAW secretariat the work 2007-2009
9:15-9:30	Feedback from internal evaluation
9:30-9:45	Open Forum
9:45-10:45	Workshop sessions: Perspectives from member groups- CAW's programmes, how they have involved, how they will involve, likes and dislikes
10:45-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00-12:00	Plenary: strategies for the next 2 years
12:00-1:30	Lunch
1:30-3:30	Workshop Sessions - Grouping members according to their involvements/interests in CAW's programmes (formal, informal, ICM) - How member groups want to involve in different programmes of CAW
3:30-3:45	Coffee Break
3:45-4:30	Reporting from workshops
4:30-5:30	Building a strong internal structure in CAW
5:30-6:00	Summary and Closing Address
DAY 4 (12th December) CAW Consultation/ election of EXCO/new EXCO Meeting Cultural Night start from 7.00 pm	
DAY 5 (13th December) Exposure trip (Optional)	

THANK YOU