

Highlight Join us at Women Workers Summit 2009, Bangkok, Thailand

Committee for Asian Women (CAW) is organising the first Asian Women Workers Summit, which will bring together over 150 women workers and their supporters from 20 countries in Asia, South America and Europe to discuss their livelihood and working conditions as impacted by the financial crisis and propose sustainable solutions.

The working poor in Asia have suffered great hardship from a chronic economic slowdown that started as early as 1997. The majority of workers impacted have been women, who make up 80% of the work force at the lowest and unskilled level of the economy. Yet the predominant government response to the crisis has been stimulus packages focused on physical infrastructure, creating stop-gap employment and refinancing bad loans. None of these are targeting women. The Women Workers Summit will discuss the various policy orientations including a comprehensive social security system, sustainable agriculture and employment in rural areas, government investments in social infrastructures such as education, health and other public services, trade agreements with labour and gender perspectives, and labour protection for migrant workers. (Please scroll down to the event announcement session for logistic information)



Visit Women Workers Summit website

FORMAL ECONOMY

China: Triumph Workers Strike on Drastic Wage Cut

Women workers at a garment factory in Hainan, southern China, began a strike on 11 November to press their demands on wage raise towards legal minimum standard, overtime pay and vacations after management announced drastic cuts in bonuses. Around 3,000 workers gathered outside the plant, Hainan Youmei Underwear Co., Ltd owned by Triumph International. The factory decided to withdraw the decision of cutting the annual bonuses under the pressure of the strike. However issues on wage, overtime and vacation have remained unsettled.

More Details

Tetley's Tata Tea: Pay Salaries to Workers

Tata, the world's famous Tetley tea maker in India, has withheld salaries of nearly 1,000 tea plantation workers and their families for over three months. Latest reports said workers are beginning to starve in the closed-out plantation. Workers began the protest when a 22-year-old pregnant worker fainted in the plantation due to over work, and was refused of basic medical treatment in August. On 10th September, eight active workers campaigners were dismissed by the factory. Workers at the plant have formed an Action Committee which has called for immediate reopening, the withdrawal of the suspension letters and no re-criminations against workers, back payment of wages and rations since 14 September, immediate payment of the annual festival bonus and an official management apology to the pregnant worker.

More Details

Bangladesh: 1273 Workers Killed in Occupational Incidents since January

1273 workers were killed and 1617 others injured in various work related incidents in Bangladesh since 1 January to 30 September) of 2009. Of the total, highest number of casualties (799) took place in the ready made garment sector, followed by transport sector (751) and construction sector (182). It was found in the survey that, 187 workers were killed and 389 critically injured at workplaces due to fall from height, electrocution and explosion, a group of 297 workers killed and 807 injured at work in relation to different workers rights violations (i.e. physical assault by employers/management, police action etc). Low enforcement of existing labour law at workplaces, weak labour inspections, and lack of decent wage were quoted as key contributors to the accidents.

More Details

Illegal Fire Drill Injures 129 Workers at Triumph Thailand

On 17 November 2009, Triumph International Thailand tested the fire emergency alarm in their factory without notifying any of their workers beforehand, neither relevant government officials, union nor OSH committee. When the alarm thus sounded the workers panicked and scrambled for the exit. During the panic 129 workers were injured, amongst those five were admitted to the hospital, including an eight month pregnant worker. The remaining uninjured workers were in a state of chock and unable to continue working. The company is only willing to compensate workers for the hospital bill and transport home, but refused to pay any compensation for the emotional shock that the workers have experienced.

More Details

ITUC Demands Zimbabwe Union Leaders to be Release

The International Trade Union Confederation in Africa has called on the police of Zimbabwe to immediately release five members of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), who were arrested when they were meeting with ZCTU executive of Victoria Falls area. ITUC-Africa said as the government of Zimbabwe has ratified ILO Convention 87, it is under the obligation to refrain from any acts of interference in trade union affairs.

More Details

INFORMAL ECONOMY

Malaysian: Plantation Workers are Not Above Poverty Line

Oil palm plantation and rubber estate workers gathered at the Parliament of Malaysia protested against the statement of Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister Bernard Dompok's that the workers were above the poverty line. The statement would provide a reason for depriving the access to government allocated benefits to plantation workers. Dompok said the net income of an oil palm harvester was about RM 1,700 and a rubber tapper earned around RM 870, which were far higher than the rural poverty line of RM 720 a month. However, the immediate study conducted by workers showed that the average wage of these labourers is lower than RM 700. The workers demanded that the minister visit the estates and to gather evidence of their wealth and the availability of the said facilities.

More Details

Poor Women 'Bear Climate Burden'

Women in developing countries will be the most vulnerable to climate change, a report from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has warned. They do most of the agricultural work, and are therefore affected by weather-related natural disasters impacting on food, energy and water. The report suggested family planning, reproductive healthcare and "gender relations" could influence how the world adapts to rising seas, worsening storms and severe droughts.

More Details

Women Workers Summit 2009: Women Workers at the Frontline of Sustainable Solutions



The Women Workers Summit 2009 consists of three events, they are: Press conference - 8th December : FCCT, Thailand The Summit - 9th December to 10th December morning : Palazzo Hotel, Thailand Launch of 100 Years of International Women's Day - 10th December afternoon: Palazzo Hotel, Thailand

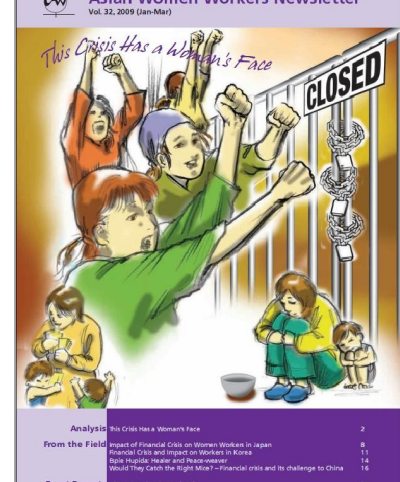
You can participate in the Summit conference on the 9th to 10th December by livestream up on this website www.womenworkerssummit.org. You may see the livestream from this page. We will use live streaming to show activities in the conference. There would be also regular updates of what has been discussed in the conference to be published in the website.

Download the programme here.

For more information see www.womenworkerssummit.org

To remove your name from our mailing list, please email us at awwn@cawinfo.org. Questions or comments? E-mail us at awwn@cawinfo.org

NEW CAW PUBLICATIONS



Asian Women Workers Newsletter (Vol. 32) Theme: This Crisis Has a Woman's Face

In this issue:

Analysis:

This Crisis Has a Woman's Face

From the File:

Impact of Financial Crisis on Women Workers in Japan

Financial Crisis and Impact on Workers in Korea

Espie Hupida: Healer and Peace-weaver

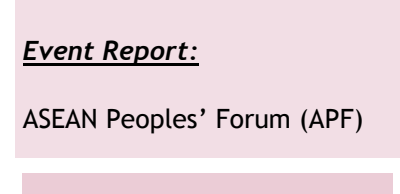
Would They Catch the Right Mice? - Financial crisis and its challenge to China

Event Report:

ASEAN Peoples' Forum (APF)

Download the newsletter here

BOOK RELEASE



How Globalisation Creates Migration and Criminalises Migration

By David Bacon

Displacement and migration are two perennially necessary ingredients of capitalist growth. According to the author, the same system produces migration needs and uses that labour, while the vulnerable undocumented or guest-worker status keeps that labour controllable and cheap. The author examines the economic and social forces in both countries that lure workers to a market where they can earn higher wages but are vulnerable to exploitation. He goes on to analyse guest-worker programmes and other developments meant to balance the needs of U.S. employers and workers.

You can watch the author talking about this book at CAW website

Purchase the book here

ABOUT CAW

Committee for Asian Women (CAW) is a regional network of 46 women workers groups in 14 Asian countries that aims to empower women workers to protect, advocate, and advance their rights. CAW is part of the global movement advocating workers' rights for over 30 years.

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