

e-Bulletin



Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

March 2016

Dear Friends,

March is the month for women! You may ask - which month isn't? We would of course agree; every month is a women's month and every day is a women's day!

We joined many women and men around the world in celebrating International Women's Day on 8 March and remembered the link this day has with the history and struggle of women workers. GAATW-IS sent out [a statement](#) critiquing the bans and restrictions on women's migration, especially in South Asia.

March is also when the UN Commission of Status of Women meets every year. GAATW-IS was not physically present at the 60<sup>th</sup> session of CSW, but many of our members and partners were. The priority theme at this session was women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development. We followed the sessions online and hoped (like everyone else) that the outcome document would be strong. This year's CSW is the first since world leaders [pledged](#) in their SDG agreement last year, to end extreme poverty, address inequality and avoid environmental devastation over the next 15 years. We were especially hopeful that the CSW would come up with concrete plans, including financing plans on goal five, which commits governments to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls, with specific targets to end violence and harmful practices, recognise the unpaid care work that falls disproportionately on women, get more women into leadership positions, and ensure women can uphold their reproductive rights.

As the two-week gathering progressed, we started to hear that states were having 'second thoughts' on the 17 goals and 169 targets they signed up to last year. Colleagues sounded disappointed that countries coming to the negotiations were not willing to negotiate. The negotiations were difficult on recognising rights of indigenous women, women human rights defenders, sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), financing for gender-responsive implementation of the SDGs and on commitments to fund women's rights and feminist organisations. It was also difficult to get any agreement to change current macro-economic systems to reduce inequalities between and within countries through progressive taxation, debt restructuring and closing tax havens. The [final outcome document](#), in the words of our colleagues at Women's Major Group has 'avoided the worst damage', but falls far short of expectations.

March also saw [Berta Cáceres, the feminist activist from Honduras](#) who had won the Goldman environmental prize last year, brutally murdered. Even as we applaud the UN Human Rights

Council's latest [landmark resolution on the protection of human rights defenders](#) working to promote economic, social and cultural rights, we protest the threats, harassments and brutality faced by human rights defenders in many parts of the world. And as though to remind us yet again of the violent world we live in, March brought us the tragedies of Istanbul, Brussels and Lahore.

As the devastating war in Syria entered into its sixth year this month, EU governments and Turkey signed a 'deal' that will effectively deny refugees their rights under international law. Amnesty International called the deal 'a historic blow to rights', while UNHCR [protested](#) by suspending some of its activities in Greece.

Difficult as it is, we would not like to end this note with fear and hopelessness. We would like to congratulate our Nepali Member Organisation WOREC on their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and praise them for their tireless efforts in advancing human rights and supporting the voices of women migrant workers.

We would also not want to forget that in the tropics, March is that magical time before harsh summer sets in. It is the time when forests burst into fiery red and yellow flowers. March is also the month of the colourful festival of Holi in Nepal and India. And as March ends, we are just two weeks away from celebrating the New Year as per the Solar Calendar. Marked as Songkran Water Festival in Thailand, this also marks the start of the traditional New Year in many other countries of Asia.

So GAATW-IS wishes a Sanook Songkran to our friends across the world and hope that the New Year brings peace and joy to all.

As always we welcome your feedback and contributions to future issues at [borislav@gaatw.org](mailto:borislav@gaatw.org).



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## News from the GAATW International Secretariat

### **Migration bans do not protect the rights of women, only push them into taking more risky options**

On International Women's Day GAATW-IS issued a [statement](#) calling for an end to restrictions on the migration of women domestic workers, particularly in South Asia. Such bans have been justified as a way to prevent trafficking, exploitation and abuse but have, in fact, often made women more vulnerable to abuse.

The statement is based on a 2015 [joint study](#) by GAATW and the ILO, exploring the effects of bans on women's migration for domestic work in Nepal. The study found that the bans limit women's economic opportunities in their most productive years and prevent them from supporting themselves and their families. They also placed women at greater risk of abuse during their journey, and gave them less control over their migration experience. These bans do not address the motives that prompt women to migrate, such as lack of income-generating opportunities at home, the social pressure to migrate or the desire to explore the world. Second, they push women to seek irregular migration channels through the help of smugglers and traffickers, thus making them more vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and debt bondage. Third, a ban on migration means that women miss out on the same skills training, pre-departure training and awareness training on their human and labour rights, compared to migrants who travel

through state-approved recruitment agencies.

Based on these findings GAATW-IS makes several recommendations to the governments of both countries of origin and countries of destination for women migrant domestic workers.

Read the full statement [here](#).

### **More news from the GAATW-IS:**

#### **Monitoring of anti-trafficking policies in Latin America**

In February GAATW-IS organised a meeting in Lima with LAC members ECPAT Guatemala, Corporación Espacios de Mujer (Colombia) and CHS Alternativo (Peru), and a new ally from Bolivia, Fundación La Paz. The aim of the meeting was to lay the foundations of a new project to monitor anti-trafficking measures in Latin America...

#### **Migrant Workers' Experience of Accessing Justice: A Workshop to Discuss Conceptual Issues and Researcher Methodologies**

On 9-11 March, GAATW-IS organised a research methodology workshop to kick off the participatory action research (PAR) project by GAATW and the Legal Support for Children and Women (LSCW), Cambodia...

#### **Anti-Trafficking Review Call for Papers**

The *Anti-Trafficking Review* calls for papers for a themed issue entitled 'Where's the Evidence?', to be published in April 2017...

#### **Review Meeting with partners for the Work in Freedom Project**

In collaboration with the ILO, GAATW-IS organised a review meeting for the Work in Freedom (WIF) project to discuss the learning process and the experience of project partners. The meeting brought together representatives from the ILO South Asia country programs and WIF partner organisations from Bangladesh, India and Nepal...

#### **Screening of the films *Ticket to Paradise* and *Becky's Journey***

On 18 February GAATW-IS organised the screening of two films about migration, sex work and human trafficking - [Ticket to Paradise](#) and [Becky's Journey](#) at JAM Bar and Café in Bangkok...

[Read all news from the GAATW-IS.](#)

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## **From our Member Organisations...**

### **New video showcases the work of Brigada Callejera**

The National Institute of Social Development has produced a [video](#) documenting the work of GAATW member in Mexico Brigada Callejera.

Brigada Callejera de Apoyo a la Mujer, "Elisa Martínez", A. C., is a non-profit organisation specialised in defending human, civil and labour rights of sex workers and trans\* people.

The organisation began its work focusing on the prevention of HIV, AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections. However it realised quickly that it was necessary to work holistically within a framework of respect for human rights in order to better address the needs of its beneficiaries.

Brigada Callejera currently promotes community mobilisation against human trafficking and sexual exploitation, manages a medical centre and supports sex workers and their children to resume or continue their education.

### **More updates from Member organisations:**

#### **The Hidden Harms of Anti-Trafficking**

In October 2015, SWAN Vancouver hosted an evening of critical dialogue and research, with the aim of dismantling the hidden harms of the anti-trafficking industry in Canada (see [GAATW e-Bulletin from January 2016](#)).

#### **AFRO encourages women to seek help if harassed at work**

AFRO, a GAATW member and a support network for women working in the commercial sex industry in Hong Kong, [urges](#) sex workers to contact them or report to police any incidents of harassment and 'protection fees' imposed by organised criminal gangs.

#### **Freedom Collaborative launched**

In February Liberty Asia and Chab Dai launched [The Freedom Collaborative](#)-an online service platform to facilitate connectivity, knowledge-sharing and cross-border cooperation among anti-trafficking stakeholders.

#### **GPI Media Academy**

Early this year, Girl Power Initiative (GPI), a GAATW member in Nigeria, announced the opening of their GPI Media Academy.

[Read all updates from members...](#)

*If you would like to contribute your news to our members' section of the ebulletin, please email [borislav@gaatw.org](mailto:borislav@gaatw.org)*

[www.gaatw.org](http://www.gaatw.org)

## **Resources**

### **[ILO Women at Work trends 2016](#)**

The Women at Work report provides the latest ILO data on women's position in labour markets, examines the factors behind these trends and explores the policy drivers for transformative change. Over the last two decades, women's significant progress in educational achievements has not translated into a comparable improvement in their position at work. In many regions in the world, in comparison to men, women are more likely to become and remain unemployed, have fewer chances to participate in the labour force and - when they do - often have to accept lower quality jobs. Progress in surmounting these obstacles has been slow and is limited to a few regions across the world. Even in many of those countries where gaps in labour force participation and employment have narrowed and where women are shifting away from contributing family work and moving to the services sector, the quality of women's jobs remains a matter of concern.

### **[Social protection for domestic workers: Key policy trends and statistics](#)**

Due to the nature of domestic work, it is estimated that 90% of domestic workers, or around 60

million people worldwide, are legally excluded from social security systems. Given that it is predominantly a female workforce subject to conditions of discrimination and social and economic vulnerability, policies to extend social protection to domestic workers are a key component of efforts to fight poverty and promote gender equality. Migrant domestic workers face even greater discrimination than that experienced by domestic workers in general. This report compiles and analyses social security coverage of domestic workers worldwide and provides useful inputs for policy making.

### **Trafficking in Domestic Work: Looking at the Demand-Side**

Domestic work is a sector of the economy particularly vulnerable to abusive and exploitative practices and is an area thought to be at high risk of hidden trafficking in human beings. Yet trafficking in domestic work remains poorly defined and the multiple drivers of demand in this context are difficult to differentiate. This fifth DemandAT working paper aims to provide a framework for research that captures some of the specificities of work in a domestic setting. It will serve as a common ground for the series of country studies that are to follow.

### **Feminism Needs Sex Workers, Sex Workers Need Feminism: Towards a Sex-Worker Inclusive Women's Rights Movement**

Sex workers in Europe and Central Asia often live and work in precarious and dangerous contexts. The reasons for this are the criminalisation of sex work, precarisation of labour, feminisation of poverty and structural, institutional and interpersonal violence against women and LGBT people. This briefing paper explores the intersection of feminist ideologies, women's rights and sex workers' rights, and the feminist ideals which are included and supported in sex work activism. It calls upon the feminist movement to consider the growing evidence in support of sex work decriminalisation, build an alliance with sex workers and their organisations, and actively support sex workers' rights and the decriminalisation of sex work.

### **Sex Workers Speak: Who Listens?**

In March Beyond Trafficking and Slavery launched a series on sex work activism. The series gives a platform to sex workers and their organisations across the globe to speak out against the violence, exploitation, abuse, and trafficking present in the sex industry. These are the women, men, and transgender people who are directly touched by the abuse, exploitation, and trafficking under discussion, and who actively and collectively resist all forms of violence against them. By publishing their voices directly BTS hopes to help readers resist indifference, on the one hand, and to become more critical of states' interventions, which are widely regarded and legitimated as necessary to combat 'trafficking', on the other.

### **Sex/Work/Lust/Illusions**

Sex work is an area full of clichés and prejudices. Everybody has an opinion about it, but nobody really knows about it. Sex workers are often stigmatised, victimised and discriminated. The public debate is usually held without involving sex workers themselves and recognising their wishes, opinions and expertise. This campaign provides a forum, where sex workers, academics, members of NGOs, activists, but also clients and brothel owners can respond to raised questions and open new perspectives on sex work. In Austria, like in several other European countries, movements aiming to ban sex work are becoming stronger. Therefore, it is even more necessary to oppose their arguments with a vehement counter-campaign and loud voices claiming rights for sex workers in Austria and internationally.

The campaign started on 11 March with a public event of a former sex worker and activist from Switzerland and will end with several events around 2 June, the International Day of Sex Workers.

### [Unfree and Unfair](#)

This paper gives evidence of appalling living conditions and restricted freedom of movement of young migrant garment workers in the Indian city of Bangalore. An increasing number of young migrant women workers are staying in factory-owned hostels with poor living conditions while their movement is severely restricted. The wages of the workers do not add up to a decent living wage. The hostels are run by garment factories in Bangalore that produce for leading multinational brands like C&A, H&M, Tommy Hilfiger, Inditex and GAP. These companies promised a number of specific actions to provide migrant garment workers with better living conditions.

### [Unacceptable Forms of Work: A global and comparative study](#)

The purpose of the report is to identify unacceptable forms of work (UFW) and devise targeted social and economic policies that aim to eliminate or transform jobs that are entirely unacceptable. The aim is therefore to construct a robust conception of UFW that can be operationalised for research and policy intervention. Further, the study has a particular focus on renditions of unacceptability in legal and regulatory spheres and therefore regulatory concepts, mechanisms, and outcomes.

### [Beyond Trafficking and Slavery Short Course](#)

Activists, academics, trade unions, governments and NGOs around the world are trying to both understand and address forced labour, human trafficking, and modern slavery. However, the frequently poor track record of past efforts in this area means that there is an urgent need for both additional research and further conversations regarding the best pathways forward. The *BTS Short Course* contains all publications from the past 18 months and is the world's first open access 'e-syllabus' on forced labour, trafficking, and slavery. With 167 contributions from 150 top academics and practitioners, the set is packed with insights from some of the best and most progressive scholarship and activism and is freely available for download.

### [Know the Chain: A pilot benchmark](#)

This report presents the outcome of a pilot benchmark conducted in 2015. It examined the transparency and disclosure statements of a small subset of companies with regards to human trafficking and forced labour.

In 2016, KnowTheChain will publish sector-specific benchmarks that will scale up the methodology used in this pilot and will compare companies' disclosure and practices with respect to forced labour in their supply chains. Benchmarks can play a powerful role in encouraging companies to uphold labour standards and protect workers' rights.

### [Identification and Support of Victims of Trafficking for Labour Exploitation in the Netherlands, the UK and Romania](#)

This new report by FLEX focuses on seven key areas: identification; access to support; housing; psychosocial support; work; legal counselling; and long-term support. One important finding on identification relates to the key role of labour inspection in preventing labour exploitation in all countries. Whilst labour inspection was found to be critical, it was also shown to suffer when combined with immigration control, meaning that victims do not come forward and that trust with workers is damaged. Findings on support included the strong correlation between access to safe housing and recovery and the low take up of psychological support by male victims of trafficking. In general support was found to be very short term with limited consideration of the long-term outcome for the victims.

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