



GAATW E-bulletin

14 January, 2005

Dear GAATW Members and Friends,

Welcome to the first GAATW E-bulletin for 2005! It has not been long since we saw many of you at our International Congress in December. We hope that all of you have started 2005 with renewed energy and determination.

Unfortunately the Tsunami disaster at the end of the year and its aftermath have left their mark on many friends all over the world. As if the natural disaster was not tragic enough, we are further saddened by reports of the neglect of migrant workers, increased vulnerability of women and children to trafficking and allegations of rape and other abuse. GAATW Secretariat staff member Jiraporn Saetang and Parada Ngochontanchai spent their Xmas break in the affected areas working with many member organizations on emergency relief. During the Xmas break we received many messages of sympathy and concern to convey to GAATW friends in the affected areas. We've attached a warm letter of support from STV and La Strada, who also wish to know of any initiatives in affected areas which they could assist funding.

Situation of Migrant workers in the Tsunami affected areas of Thailand

The needs of migrant workers have been neglected by many relief agencies and those with undocumented status have become particularly vulnerable. The irony is that most documented workers have lost their papers and are unable prove that they had a work permit. In total, 1.3 million undocumented migrants were identified in the tsunami-affected areas in Thailand. The Bangkok Post reports that migrants from Laos will be granted temporary passports by the Lao government and work visas from the Thai government. We hope that this offer will be extended to migrants from other countries as well and other governments will make the same offer to provide proper documentation and the chance for all affected migrants to rebuild their lives.

A small group of like-minded organizations based in Thailand have come together to address the unfair treatment meted out to migrant workers. We attach with this e-bulletin a short report prepared by Jackie Pollock of MAP Foundation, a GAATW member organization. Some of you might already have received Jackie's report. Our apologies for cross posting. We will have more information to share with you when Jiraporn and Parada are back from the Tsunami affected areas in the South of Thailand.

Reported cases of trafficking in the Tsunami affected areas

At least one confirmed case of child trafficking for adoption has been reported from Banda Aceh, and the Indonesian government has now banned child adoption and the movement of children under 16 outside of affected areas. While other potential trafficking cases have been reported, the lack of official documentation, social instability, and ad hoc reporting prevent us from fully understanding the extent of trafficking in tsunami-affected areas. In response to these reports, GAATW Secretariat will be hosting a meeting of core members from Thailand to discuss the situation and long-term strategies on January 18th.

Reported cases of rape and other violence

In times of crisis, the vulnerabilities of the poor and marginalized become even greater. For those women and children who have lost so much already, some have been further traumatized by experiences of physical abuse and rape in refugee camps or at the hands of “rescuers,” as one 18-year-old girl reported from Sri Lanka.

These revelations are appalling and truly disheartening considering the widespread suffering already experienced. We find hope in the courageous efforts of so many organizations, aid workers, and other individuals who have unified to help re-build the lives and communities of many.

Plans for the GAATW E-Bulletin in 2005

At the international congress in December 2004 many of you requested the GAATW Secretariat to share relevant information and news stories on trafficking and related issues. In fact it was proved during the 4-day meeting that even in this so-called information age there is a huge imbalance in information dissemination. Some people receive the same information several times and there are many who do not get the right information at the right time. During 2005 we will step up our information dissemination system and we need your help in making it more relevant and topical.

Many of you also reminded us that communication does not always have to be between the Secretariat and the membership. You requested us to facilitate communication and sharing among members. In order to be able to do that, we are requesting you now to send us any information that you would like to be shared with fellow members.

The E-bulletin will be mailed to all members each fortnight and when necessary weekly. We encourage all of you to send us updates and stories that can be passed on for everyone to share.

We'd like to thank many of you for your participation in the GAATW International Congress on December 7th-10th of 2004. A report on the Congress Meeting will be made available by the end of January for all of you. We look forward to hearing from GAATW members about their own activities and updates and hope everyone will enjoy and benefit from future bulletins.

Attachments:

A. Letter of support to the victims of Tsunami disaster

January 2004

To GAATW members

Dear Friends,

The Asian tsunami disaster hit us with shock and grief. Even though a lot worldwide attention has been given we still would like to send our condolences to the family and friends of those that lost their lives, to all who are affected by this tragedy. We sincerely hope that none of the GAATW members are affected by this disaster; in case it is so, please share with us how this has changed your lives and your work.

Currently there are a lot of donation actions going on here in the Netherlands, to support those in need and the devastated region. Substantial amounts of money have been collected so far, among private persons, church organisations, politicians and business sector. Please let us know about your initiatives undertaken or to be undertaken in the affected communities so that we can draw the public attention to them here in the Netherlands as well. Please send your message to Lastrada@opvang.nl. Thank you.

We wish you all a lot of strength and faith in overcoming this disastrous situation.

Sincerely,

STV/La Strada Team

The Netherlands

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B. Updates from the Tsunami Action Group

Phone reports from TAG (Tsunami Action Group) in the South of Thailand.

TAG is a group of organisations concerned for the welfare of Burmese migrant workers affected by the tsunami. The group is coordinated by HREIB and MAP Foundation.

January 11th 2005

For the Burmese migrants in the South of Thailand it is as if every day there is another aftershock from the tsunami. Each day they are subjected to another bout of fear and panic, another race against the advancing danger. Only these days, it is not a huge wave advancing on them, but border soldiers, police or immigration. As with everyone else who survived the tsunami, they are dealing with their own nightmares, haunted by the images of the bodies of their dead friends who they did not dare to go and identify for fear of being arrested. Now they dare not go to the food distribution points. There is aid for migrants, the United Nations has funds for affected migrant workers, Burmese communities around the world have made donations, but there is no facilitated way of getting that assistance to the migrant communities. Migrants who have organised themselves into outreach teams are themselves facing harassment and arrest and yet they are the only people who speak the same language, the only people who the other migrants will trust, the only people who could find the migrants to ensure they had food and shelter. But they are not allowed to do that. So the migrants have to live in hiding, continually on the move. If they are scavenging for pieces of broken down homes to make shelters and for food, it is because, having already survived a military dictatorship and a tsunami, they must be able to survive this, one more assault on their right to exist. The authorities say they will only arrest those migrants who do not have work permits. Remember the courageous Thai volunteers sorting through the passports of the tourists?

How many people managed to hold onto their ID in the tsunami? How many of the migrants being held in the Immigration Detention Centre had spent precious time and money registering for a temporary ID card last July and then again for a work permit in August, but lost them to the sea. The employment offices say they will re-issue work permits to migrants who can get to their office and give the correct details of their previous registration. But how will the migrants know that? And if they do know it, how can they get to the employment office without being arrested on the way? All efforts to normalise the situation for the migrants are being hampered by the insistence on deporting them back to Burma. If that would stop, the employment office could set up some system to re-issue work permits to migrants and employment permits to employers, the NGOs could ensure the migrants had access to food, shelter and health care, the migrant groups could support their community to heal and the re-building of the affected provinces of the South could commence.

January 12th

The employment offices have made it easier for migrants to re-register, by requiring as few details as possible for the migrants to be able to prove that they had a work permit. The outreach teams set out in the morning to meet migrant workers and get these details and take them back to the employment office. The system is working well and new cards are being issued to migrant workers. It will be a massive task. There used to be 30,000 migrant workers in the affected provinces but according to government officials there are only 3,000 migrants left now and 1,900 have been "assisted" home by the authorities.

In the afternoon, news came through that three staff from World Vision had been "arrested". The Burmese doctor and two Burmese staff, one a woman, were being held in a cage in direct sunlight. It appears that the local employers were angry with them for assisting women and children affected and traumatised by the Tsunami to return to Burma. They were harassed and humiliated in the cage for seven hours before being taken to a police station. Other staff of World Vision who had gone to find and support their colleagues were later beaten up by a gang. They were lucky that someone came along and they could escape with minor injuries, because it was clear that the intentions of the gang were otherwise. Even so, they are now hospitalised. According to the OCHA Flash Appeal, IOM, UNICEF and UNFPA are partnering World Vision, and the "Thailand Ministry of Social Welfare" [sic] to support 500 families for voluntary return and reintegration to Myanmar. It will be very difficult to implement this program if the field officers who are facilitating the return of migrants are arrested, harassed, beaten and not protected by the authorities from the influence of the employers.

If migrant workers want to stay and work, they are liable to arrest and deportation by the immigration. If they want to go home to recuperate, they are liable to coercion and violence by the employers to make them stay. Each day brings a fresh aftershock.



GAATW E-bulletin

January 21, 2005

Dear GAATW Members and Friends,

Encouraged by the enthusiastic response to the last issue of our E-bulletin, we're bringing you a special issue to share some updates on tsunami relief and some media reports on trafficking, forced labour and exploitative migration. The Action Network for Migrants, (ANM) Thailand, has sent a very insightful account of the status of migrants in tsunami-affected areas in the country. ANM has confirmed that numbers of dead and missing migrants have been severely under reported. Migrants in Thailand have been denied assistance from relief camps and forced to return to their home countries. Other affected migrants have avoided seeking assistance from camps, in fear of repatriation, and rely on already strained personal networks for support. For more extensive information on the assessment, please find two documents attached, a comprehensive report and a short executive summary.

Anti-trafficking, Forced Labor, and Migration News

(The Philippine Star 1/17/05 and 1/18/05)

As part of its new Human Trafficking Action Plan, the Japanese government is introducing new legislation requiring all overseas performing artists (OPAs) to have either two years of work experience outside of Japan or two years of training before receiving an entertainer's visa. OPAs have protested the new law, since the legislation fails to differentiate between illegal workers and legitimate performers, punishing both. An estimated 300,000 Filipinos work in Japan, with roughly 77,000 working illegally. Almost 90% of Filipino OPAs would be disqualified under the law, according to recruitment firms. In the meantime, the Philippines Department of Employment and Labor is looking for alternative destinations for the OPAs. Japan is the third largest source of overseas remittances for the Philippines, with an average of \$283.25 million a year sent home between 1997 and 2003.

* * *

(The Philippine Star 1/18/05)

The government of the Philippines uncovered a mail-order bride syndicate run by six Korean nationals and five Filipino partners, who brought Korean men to the Philippines to choose brides. After two months of marriage and returning to Korea, the men would abandon their Filipino wives. Thirty-two women were prevented from embarking on the arranged marriages at the time of the raid.

* * *

(The Associated Press and UN News Site 1/14/05)

Human Rights Watch has documented the recruitment of over 1,000 child soldiers into the army of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka since 2003. Fears that the guerilla army will now attempt to recruit orphans of the tsunami disaster are materializing with the disappearance of a girl from relief camps located near areas of rebel-controlled jungle. Human rights monitors also documented the recruitment of two 13-year-old boys in Jaffna on January 3rd. The United Nations Children's Fund issued fresh warnings to the LTTE and will work to advocate for the girl's release.

* * *

(Karachi News 1/19/05)

640 Pakistanis were deported from Oman this week, adding to the 35,000 deported in the past four years. A local welfare organization arranged the return in an effort to help those who had been abused and mistreated, some deceived by the recruiting agencies that facilitated their travel. The week before, two members of an organized gang had been arrested for trafficking Pakistanis to Europe.

* * *

(Joon Gang Daily 1/17/05)

While working at a liquid crystal display factory in South Korea, eleven workers from Thailand and China were repeatedly exposed to the toxic chemical Hexane. Hexane, a cleaning product, has caused severe nerve damage to some of the workers, paralyzing eight Thai female workers from the waist down. The employers, recently imprisoned, were forced to work in a closed room with no protective gear for up to 12 hours a day. The Ansan Migrant Shelter sent staff to bring back three Thai workers for a health assessment and treatment, while the others received treatment in Korea. A Korean newspaper first uncovered the case, and now the Korean Ministry of Labor has launched an investigation.

* * *

(The Nation 1/15/04)

In the aftermath of the tsunami, many Burmese migrants have been deported before finding lost loved ones among the 3,700 unidentified bodies. Of the 120,000 Burmese migrants employed in Southern areas of Thailand, roughly 10,000 were directly affected by the tsunami. Police have denied assistance to Burmese migrants after a crackdown in response to alleged looting. In fear of arrest and deportation, many have fled to jungle areas and lack even basic medical care.

* * *

Secretariat Activities

Jiraporn Saetang hosted a second meeting for Thai NGOs on the 18th to discuss the impact of the tsunami on migrants and appropriate responses. The meeting began by sharing updates on the situation of Burmese migrant workers and issues of concern identified from the assessment trip. Some issues identified were the lack of documentation for workers, inaccessibility of migrants in hiding, the lack of long-term strategies, discrimination against women, and the psychological and physical impacts of the disaster.

Bandana Pattanaik from the Secretariat and Nelia Sancho, a founding member of the Alliance will be attending the World Social Forum in Brazil from January 26th to the 31st. They will participate in the workshops on human trafficking organized by TRAMA, IMADR and Caritas International. They will also hold meetings with GAATW's Latin American members present at the WSF to follow up on future plans. Attached is a document with details of the three workshops and Bandana's contact details in Porto Allegro. It would be wonderful to connect with other alliance members and friends participating in the WSF. Regrettably neither Nelia nor Bandana are able to join the Feminist Dialogue sessions organized in Porto Allegro prior to the WSF. We shall depend on friends who are participating in the Dialogue to share the reports with us which we can then disseminate among all members.

* * *

We encourage all of you to send updates on your own activities, so they can be shared in the next bulletin!

Attachments:

A. ANM Situation Assessment of Migrants in Phang Nga



Assessed by:

Action Network for Migrants

Date of Report:

January 19, 2005

Report on the Situation Assessment of Migrants in Tsunami Affected Provinces in Southern Thailand

Summary of Findings

Results of the situation assessment of migrant workers and their families affected by the tsunami in Phang Nga and Ranong collected by the Action Network for Migrants team are as follows:

- *Numbers of dead and missing migrants have been severely under reported.* According to the assessment team, it is estimated that in Takuapa district of Phang Nga Province alone, over 1,000 migrants could be dead and at least 1,000 are missing. The total number of dead could even possibly exceed 2,000. There also numerous unaccounted for, such as those who have survived but have fled to other areas, or have returned to Myanmar (Burma). Because it is believed that many migrants living and working in this area were undocumented, and there is no repository for personal data in Myanmar, the actual number of migrants dead and missing may never be fully known.
- *Migrants who survived have received little public relief or aid assistance.* In the first week there were government camps that provided relief to all who came, however, there were no standards issued and some discrimination was experienced. Within the first week, there were crackdowns and forced repatriation, effectively clearing out all migrants from public relief camps. World Vision Foundation of Thailand is the only NGO that provided direct relief specifically for migrants. Those in hiding or that are remaining at their work place have begun to show minor symptoms of conditions attributable to unclean water, low nutrition, or untreated injuries inflicted by the tsunami. Some employers have been reportedly providing basic foodstuffs and water to migrants at their place of employment, mostly construction sites, as a way to secure their laborers, but these supplies may not fulfill nutritional requirements.
- *Migrants displaced by the tsunami have become highly mobile, relying on personal networks for support.* After being turned out from camps or hearing that migrants were being arrested and repatriated, many migrants fled to hilltops, plantations, constructions sites and communities of migrants for refuge. There they have relied on friends and family to provide food and shelter, burdening these people's already limited resources. Thais living in many of these communities have expressed sympathy for the migrants, although this has not necessarily translated into providing assistance.

- *Migrants have been returned to Myanmar (Burma) without a proper screening process to check for those who were registered. At least 1,400 and up to more than 2,000 migrants have been officially repatriated, possibly more have been sent back without going through official channels. It is unclear how many of these persons left against their will. Reports that migrants were looting and stealing were circulated, resulting in the order to crackdown on migrants, putting pressure on police to unceremoniously arrest all migrants without valid ID and deport them. There was no official screening process to allow those who were registered to be identified if they had lost their ID or only had a photocopy. Although there were efforts to find those who wished to return willfully, such as what World Vision has done, the repercussions of leaving the country were not clearly explained in some cases, and in other cases, there are reports of migrants seeking aid simply being put on buses and sent off, including the deportation of those at relief camps. An informal account estimates that 2,500 Burmese migrants have returned voluntarily as well.*
- *Migrants and employers want work permits and temporary ID's that were lost in the tsunami to be re-issued. Without proper identification, migrants are susceptible to arrest and forced deportations. As the threat of being arrested and repatriated is of major concern for many migrants from Myanmar, migrants have expressed that they want these cards re-issued. Accordingly, many migrants are in hiding, but still in contact with their employer, simply waiting for their employer to say that they are ready to hire them again. Many other have lost contact with their employers. Employers have also expressed the desire to have cards re-issued. The Department of Employment has said it is possible and that as part of their responsibility they are willing, but that it may be difficult and timely to sort through records. They are willing to receive assistance in this process from NGOs. The government says it has ruled out a supplementary registration before August though.*
- *The atmosphere among employers is strained and unpredictable, and migrants are vulnerable to exploitative and coercive circumstances. As many employers have lost their livelihood, rebuilding and starting their business is uncertain. In many cases this translates to stress that may be taken out on migrants, who are unable to protect themselves from organized violence. Coercion has been reported in a couple of cases, where migrants have not been allowed to return home. One incident that illustrates the danger of this type of situation is the beating of World Vision staff and volunteers by a mafia like gang at Tablamu. In other cases, it has been reported that migrants who have lost their employers or who have already returned after being deported are being forced to pay protection money to organized gangs and brokers to avoid being arrested or worse.*

Recommendations

In light of the results of the ANM team's assessment, we provide the following recommendations as steps to bring about security for migrants, which will allow them to more freely access aid, and will foster the actualization of their basic human rights.

- Call an immediate halt to arrests of all migrants and stop all deportations.

- Immediately initiate a process for re-issuing temporary ID's and work permits that incorporates NGOs, CBOs and volunteers from the migrant community.
- Conduct a public information campaign in the affected and surrounding provinces that publicizes and explains the re-issuing process in both Thai and Burmese languages.
- Notify relief centers that migrants should have equal access to humanitarian relief and should not be discriminated against.

Methodology

The Action Network for Migrants (ANM) organized a rapid situation assessment team to survey the needs and situation of migrants in tsunami affected provinces in southern Thailand from January 9 – 15, 2005. The Rockefeller Foundation provided funding for the assessment.

MAP Foundation, Raks Thai Foundation, TACDB, Pattanarak Foundation, GAATW, and Yang Chi Oo Workers Association (YCOWA) were among the team members, numbering up to fourteen members at one point. There was an organizational meeting in Bangkok to identify the objectives of the assessment:

- The ANM team originally expected to collect personal information of survivors and assist in reissuing work permits, temporary ID and identification of dead or missing, however, the scale of the task, circumstances and the short duration of the assessment restricted the ability to accomplish these tasks.
- The other primary objective was to assess vulnerabilities of migrant workers and their families affected by the tsunami. This task was accomplished and the results are presented in this report.

The assessment group met up with The Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB) in Takuapa to share information and coordinate; the HREIB had been in the area conducting their own assessment for over a week already. The coordination meeting was briefly attended by World Vision Foundation of Thailand (WVFT), which has PHAMIT project sites working with migrants in Phang Nga, Ranong and Phuket. WVFT provided direct relief for migrants as well as Thais in a number of sites, including a camp in Ranong that was run in collaboration with government, military and health officials.

The original scope of the assessment was intended to include Pangnga, Phuket, Ranong and Krabi, however, the geographic region was too much for the short period of time. The team decided to focus on Phang Nga, as this was the hardest hit province, and had one of the highest numbers of registered migrants out of the four proposed provinces. A decision was made that the results of the assessment in Phang Nga could represent a model of the situation in all provinces.

At the sites, the group divided into two teams. One team, primarily Thai speakers, focused on advocacy by contacting provincial and district level authorities, the other

group, primarily Burmese speakers, went into the field to conduct interviews and provide outreach. On the 15th, one team provided emergency food assistance.

The member from Pattanarak separated from the main group and went to meet with local Muslim fishing villages in Krabi, and Empower conducted their own assessment in Phuket, Phang Nga and Ranong, meeting up with the ANM team. Two supplementary members met in Ranong for a briefing on their way to Phang Nga; one team member stayed behind to initiate providing relief; and a member from GAATW conducted an assessment in Phuket and met the team in Ranong.

Situation Prior to Tsunami

For all of Phang Nga Province, 31,353 migrants were registered for temporary ID cards, including dependents; out of this total, 22,668 had registered for work permits. Categories of registered migrants most immediately affected by the tsunami were fishermen with 1,928 registered, and seafood processing with 462 registered. Another 1,755 were registered under construction, much of which was being done in resort areas along the beach; the job categories *least* likely to be registered include fishermen and construction workers, and thus the actual numbers could be up to twice as high as the numbers documented. Under the last registration, there were also 41 officially working in ice factories, many of which provide ice for the seafood industry, 483 registered as domestic workers, which may include cleaning personnel for bungalows, and 1,224 registered under miscellaneous, a category where sex-workers, manual laborers and those working in small shops or in restaurants have been included.

District (Coastal areas)	Temporary ID (Includes Dependents)	Work Permit	Estimated Actual Total Population <i>Prior Tsunami</i>
Koraburi	4,206	3,063	Possibly over 6,000 migrants including children
Takuapa	7,000	5,139	Possibly over 10,000 migrants including children
Thai Mueang	N/A	4,739	N/A
Ko Yao	<i>N/A</i>	583	<i>N/A</i>

N/A = Not Assessed

The hardest hit location was Baan Nam Khem in Takuapa District. It is estimated that there were 7,000 migrants working in the area, with up to one thousand on boats, around one thousand on the island of Ko Koh Khao working in bungalows, as well as thousands working in the community of Ban Nam Khem. In the resort areas of Takuapa, migrants worked in construction, seafood processing and in the service industry in restaurants and hotel bungalows, cooking, cleaning and landscaping. There were forty construction sites counted, some had 400-1,200 workers. There were also many families present in these communities, with some having up to three children.

Situation After Tsunami

After the tsunami struck, migrants received very little coverage in the media. While numbers of Thais and foreign tourists made the headlines, migrants quietly suffered. As the press loudly praised Thailand and Thai's for the assistance to foreign tourists affected by the tsunami, Burmese migrants were feeling the brunt of Thai prejudice. Migrants' plight has been two-fold: loss of life among migrants has been significant without any way to verify or confirm dead and missing leaving survivors uncertain and unable to provide closure to their grief, and those who have survived find themselves either hiding like refugees or relying on the caprice of their employer.

Dead and Missing

It is possible that the numbers of Burmese migrants dead and missing would increase the official numbers by the thousands, however, neither the Thai nor the Burmese governments have made mention of migrant workers or have attempted to gather this data in any meaningful way. In Takuapa district of Phang Nga Province, the ANM team estimated that up to 2,000 migrants might be dead and thousands are missing. The numbers missing include unaccounted for dead, such as bodies that have not been recovered or that have been recovered but have not been identified, and those who have survived but have fled to other areas. Other estimates for migrant dead and missing include the figure of 700-1,000 dead and 1,000 missing by the HREIB.

On the island of Ko Koh Khao in Baan Nam Khem, out of the estimated one thousand previously residing there, only one hundred are left. At one construction site, out of 1,000 laborers, they estimate that only seven were rescued. In Baan Nam Khem, out of an estimated 7,000 workers who had been there previously, it is estimated that a little over 200 remain. Perhaps the bright spot in tales of survival and death is that when the tsunami struck, it was "Duean Ngy", which is when boats dock and fishermen go around visiting friends and family. This means that the dock area wasn't as busy as it could have been and it is believed that many fishermen were not on their boats at the time the tsunami struck.

As with many survivors, closure is important, regardless of whether they actually are certain their loved ones are dead. Many of the Burmese migrants have requested Buddhist ceremonies to commemorate the dead, however, there are no Burmese monks in the area. Through contacts in the ANM group with HREIB, a Burmese monk was found, and at

least three ceremonies have been provided to different groups. (One ceremony was covered by an international news agency)

Survivors, Relief and Repatriation

Currently reports indicate that surviving migrants are hiding in small groups throughout Phanganga, others have gone in search of work in nearby provinces, and many others have returned to Myanmar (Burma), both willfully and through repatriation.

In Phang Nga Province, WVFT has provided assistance to well over 540 migrants in the area, the largest groups being in Koraburi and Nong Thong areas. They have provided food assistance, medical attention, and, on Dec 31, assisted 55 women with 50 children from the Tablamu area to return to Myanmar in coordination with the Immigration Department and the Sub-District Administrative Office. The ANM group also provided food relief for ten days to 60 families on Jan 15th and another 40 families on the 16th and 17th.

As of January 10th, seventy-nine Burmese migrants were registered in the Phang Nga hospital for tsunami related injuries. Many others have suffered minor trauma that without proper treatment have become infected. Other common ailments reported by WVFT include respiratory tract infections and gastritis. Diarrhea has, until now, been reported as occurring on a relatively minor scale. At some locations, such as large construction sites, in the jungle or in plantations, clean water sources are becoming a concern.

Many migrants lost their documentation in the waves. Many others have photocopies of their temporary ID or work permit, but very few have the actual cards. This is partly attributable to owners keeping cards and only providing copies in the first place. Regardless, all migrants seem to have expressed that security is their main concern, and that fear of police arrest has been the main barrier in seeking relief. It is unclear whether migrants with photocopies of their ID's were being arrested, however, it is certain that those who were registered and lost their ID's in the waves have been arrested and even repatriated. A main request of migrants has been to have missing ID's and work permits re-issued.

At Wat Pasan in Koraburi, twenty migrant families received food for ten days. The monks didn't register them because they were afraid the Burmese would be deported. These families were helped in the first week and were provided with shelter and food, however they were soon told to leave for their own safety by the monks. Currently, no migrants are in the camp. There were also reports of migrants being refused aid at some camps. Although this wasn't the norm, it illustrates that there were no standards established in the provision of aid, which allowed for individual's to discriminate according to their own personal biases.

At Baan Nam Khem, it was reported that the police drove up with two large flat-bed trucks and asked if anyone wanted relief. Those who said yes were put on the trucks and driven away; it is estimated that there were 500 people in all. They may have been sent to

the relief center in Takuapa, however this is uncertain. In Takuapa relief center, as of Dec 26, there were approximately 800 migrants seeking shelter and relief. All of these migrants were later put on buses and sent away. It is reported that 200 were simply left at Koraburi, whereas it is uncertain where the other 600 were sent. Most likely they were deported, but this has not been confirmed. There was also a camp in Ranong that was run in collaboration between Department of Immigration, the Army, Department of Employment, World Vision Foundation of Thailand, and the Ministry of Health. The camp received people from the other provinces, mostly from Phang Nga; in all the camp provided relief to 692 people (506 men; 139 women; and 47 children) who were all purportedly repatriated.

There is concern about reports that the Disease Control Center was giving medicine for elephantiasis to migrants before being repatriated without screening for the disease. The medicine has serious side effects, such as drowsiness, making travel difficult, and possibly even induces abortion. Upon citing the side effects, doctors eventually stopped giving this medicine to migrants.

The Phang Nga Ministry of Labor reported that 1,400 migrants from the six affected provinces had been deported. This number is confusing though, as the Department of Immigration in Phang Nga also reported deporting 496 migrants from Phang Nga through Ranong. According to these reports, the total number of migrants officially deported through Ranong is currently estimated between 1,500 - 2,000 people. This number needs to be confirmed and made official. A boat driver, who ferries people back and forth between the Burmese border and Ranong on the Thai side, estimated that 2,500 had also returned on their own volition.

It should be noted that the UNHCR's request to assist the repatriation center was denied. Also, the IOM refused to work in the center because they only work as a liaison between governments (ie. Thailand to Myanmar), which requires official invitation. As no invitation was issued, the IOM remained absent. Further confusing the repatriation picture, as of Jan 1st Malaysia started a sweep of undocumented migrants and began sending them home. It is suspected that some Burmese migrants may have been sent to Thailand's southern border, however this has not been verified.

Employers and Exploitation

The tsunami disrupted the lives of migrants along the Andaman coast. Many have lost family members, their livelihood, their identification cards and work permits, leaving them susceptible to police arrest and exploitation by their employers and opportunists. Survivors don't have any money. Employers owed many migrants back pay (up to 10,000 Baht in some reports), but those employers have also lost everything and are unable (or unwilling) to pay their laborers, or worse, the employer perished in the tsunami. Some migrants are trying to make ends meet by working odd jobs in their community, making fifty to two hundred Baht a day.

There were reports of employers assisting their migrant laborers by providing minimal food supplies, especially on construction sites. Whether this is for humanitarian reasons

or simply to secure their labor force is to be considered, however, at these sites most people had not received medical care, and there were complaints of dizziness, which could be a result of fatigue or possibly dehydration. Many employers expressed that they are receptive to receiving assistance in re-issuing work permits and ID cards for their migrant workers.

On the other hand, there were reports of workers being forced to remain in their workplace by employers. Tablamu village had the worst case. Here the village headman is a dark influential figure with a mafia-style of working. There had been reports of migrants routinely being killed prior to the tsunami as a form of threat. After the tsunami, migrants were also threatened not to leave. (See Incident at Tablamu)

There have also been reports that migrants whose place of employment was devastated are moving to find refuge and work in construction sites. In some cases, employers have taken advantage of this, and have told police that all their migrants are registered and lost their ID in the water, when in fact, there are those who were never registered in the first place.

Migrants who have been repatriated are already starting to return to Thailand. Because they don't have an employer or ID, these people are vulnerable to exploitation by local gangs. In Ranong, one group reported that they had to pay protection fees, in addition to repayment to brokers for transit back into the country at 30% interest every ten days.

It is also reported that some employers have utilized their migrant workers to steal things during the chaos of cleanup. Migrants have provided an easy scapegoat to cover those responsible for stealing, and the Thai media has been quick to accuse migrants for stealing. Granted, some migrants have probably stolen or simply taken money or jewelry that they found amongst the rubble (partly out of desperation), but the more systematic stealing of items such as TV's and other large merchandise would have to be attributed more to Thai gangs. (Out of 27 people arrested for stealing, 20 were Thai - HREIB)

Moreover, the law provides little protection for migrants. This was illustrated by two incidents, one in Phuket, where two migrants who had been caught stealing things under the order of their employer were killed by their employer, and in Tablamu, where the headman took the law into his own hands, having World Vision's volunteers and staff incarcerated and beaten by his gang of thugs.

There have also been reports of police confiscating personal possessions from migrants, such as gold chains, and money. In one instance, the military negotiated with police to return money that they had confiscated from migrants, however they were only able to recover 10,000 out of 50,000 Baht that had been taken. It should be noted that reports indicate that the military were better trained to deal with migrants in a humane fashion, whereas there were numerous reports of police illegally confiscating possessions, harassing and arresting migrants with impunity.

Mobility and Refuge

Many migrants are utilizing their personal networks to seek refuge. Overall though, migrants displaced by the tsunami have become highly mobile. There were reports by WVFT of hundreds of migrants hiding in nearby plantations, only to have a handful remaining a day later. Many have sought refuge in nearby communities where friends or families live, relying on their hospitality. Unfortunately, many of these migrants are already living on the bare minimum, and supporting extra people has become a burden. Many people from Baan Nam Khem have sought refuge in Koraburi area.

Of survivors identified as taking refuge in Koraburi, health problems are becoming more obvious, such as stomach problems and diarrhea. Another concern is mother and child health, as there are a number of women with young children. One mother had recently gave birth and needed better nutrition to breastfeed, and another new mother wasn't lactating and needed powdered milk for her child. On the island of Koh Khao, a man whose wife had perished in the waves was taking care of his three children (a 3 and 7 year old and an eight month infant), and the children were sick.

Outputs and Outcomes

The assessment trip was successful in many ways. Although the team was unable to re-issue ID's or work permits, advocacy was pursued that has initiated this process. The numbers of dead and missing are still unclear, and estimates range from at least 800 to up to 2,500 in Phang Nga Province. As most migrants have become highly mobile, are hiding, or have crossed the border either willfully or under duress, these numbers may never be confirmed.

Outcomes and Outputs of the Assessment:

- The ANM team provided food relief for ten days to 60 families on Jan 15th and another 40 families on the 16th and 17th.
- There was direct contact with provincial and district level government offices to negotiate for reissuing of work permits and possibly temporary ID for migrants. It has been confirmed that it is possible to re-issue work permits with incomplete information, although a minimum of information is necessary. Those who have proper ID can then return home and come back without suffering legal consequences. Those who want to change employer, or whose employer died must pay registration fees again.
- Department of Employment and the District office have agreed to accept assistance from NGOs in any reissuing process.
- Access to migrants in detention at Phang Nga was also initiated, however, due to bureaucracy, has been delayed, and the team is still awaiting the central government's approval.

- Senator Krisak is supportive of migrant rights, and wants to set up centers at Khoa Lak and Baan Nam Khem. However, his idealism is rebutted by the actual situation on the ground. The problem is that the central government issued an order to crackdown on Burmese migrants, even though many employers disagree. Senator Krisak is an ally, and may be able to help influence decision makers in favor of migrants.
- The Human Rights Commission and Law Society met with the Ministry of Labor, Police, and the Human Security and Social Development Office to call for an immediate halt to arrests, to set up a process for re-issuing ID and work permits, and to set up a working committee on migrant issues in the four most affected provinces.
- Media Coverage
 - Interview by BBC
 - Three news articles on migrants: *Villagers assault Health Workers* (Nation 13th and Bangkok Post); *Burmese caught in Vicious Circle* (Nation 15th); *NGOs say thousands of Burmese died in Phang Nga* (Nation 17th)
 - Coverage of Buddhist ceremony for migrants by Inter News Agency
 - Photographer John Hulme, who has been following migrant issues in Thailand and has won human rights awards for his photography was also present at the ceremony and has freely offered images for our use from his website www.johnhulme.net

Strategies for Continuing to Work in Provinces Affected by Tsunami

The ANM team has identified a couple of key strategies to initiate working in tsunami affected areas, specifically in Phang Nga province.

- Assess security issues of specific locales, such as employer relations and willingness to work with NGOs and Thai community attitudes towards migrants, prior to providing services.
- Approach employers as a way of accessing migrants at work places. Identify willing employers, and initiate work permit re-issuing process with these employers matched with migrants who at least have a photocopy of their permits.
- Conduct a rapid mapping to identify where migrants are currently seeking refuge, and coordinate with WVFT, as they are established in the areas, and have been the main provider of relief and aid for migrants. Initiate relief efforts for locales assessed to have migrants either being harbored by friends and family or hiding outdoors. Eventually attempt to provide supplementary food supplies to migrants being cared for by employers.
- Incorporate sensitivity to women and children's health needs as part of aid and relief efforts, including special nutritional needs.

- Address migrants' rights as labor rights, and advocate for equal compensation as enumerated by the law.
- Develop a coalition of NGOs and CBOs working in the area to mitigate potential conflicts between Thai public and migrants, and to better coordinate efforts. It has been proposed the name of the team is "TAG" (Tsunami Action Group)
- Develop an advocacy team to focus on approaching the central government to provide official approval of activities at the provincial level, such as calling for an amnesty on arrests, okaying the re-issuing of work permits and ID's, and allowing access to those in detention.
- Develop a brief set of best-practices for working in the area as identified by the assessment team, for use by ANM members and partners.
- Maintain on-going direct contact with the Law Society and the Human Rights Commission as part of an advocacy strategy.
- ANM and MAP Foundation are requesting funds for a three-month period from NOVID. However, all support is welcome and can be utilized.

B. WSF 2005 – GAATW Participation

Workshops and Panels on trafficking which Bandana and Nelia will be participating in at the WSF 2005

- 1. The Struggle Against Exploitative Migration especially Trafficking in Women and Children: The Globalization of Gender Insecurity**

Panel Organized by The International Movement Against all forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)

Venue : Room F204, 7-9 PM, Saturday, 29 January 2005

- 2. Trafficking in human beings: Regional aspects and concerns. Possible solutions
Seminar and workshop organized by Caritas Internationalis**

Conference Hall: Sala J- 202, 9 AM to 4 PM

WORLD SOCIAL FORUM

Porto Alegre, Brazil

January 30th, 2005

For further details of this workshop please contact Martina Liebsch (mobile: + 49 179 462 31 68) or Natalia Bandera (mobile: +38 050 443 06 26) at

HOTEL MASTER PALACE

Rua Senhor dos Passos, 221

Porto Alegre

- 3. The workshop organized by TRAMA, Brazil is on 30 January. Place and time will be confirmed soon.**

Bandana's contact details in Porto Allegro from 27 to 31 January, 2005 are

HOTEL RISHON BRAGANÇA

Rua Marechal Floriano, 108 - Centro]

Phones: 55 51 3286 4209 - 3286 4225

e-mail: rishonhoteis@ibest.com.br



GAATW E-bulletin

February, 8 2005

Dear Members and Friends:

Hello from Bangkok. In response to the query from some of you, in this issue of the e-bulletin we have a short section on the Secretariat. We also share with you the process of planning the activities for 2005 and beyond. Further we have some information about two upcoming meetings and a training workshop; the CSW sessions in New York in Feb-March 2005, the International Women and Health Meeting scheduled to be held in New Delhi in September this year and a feminist advocacy training to be organized by DAWN. As an attachment we have yet another Tsunami story, from a different region, written by Amitav Ghosh, a writer whose work many of you may be familiar with. The attached three part article was originally published in *The Hindu*, an English language daily in India.

Current Staff at the GAATW Secretariat

The Secretariat currently has a very small team; we are 6 at the moment. When Amy finishes her internship later this month, we will be 5. The team will remain small until mid- 2005 when new colleagues are likely to join us for the new projects. Here are some details of our present team and our group photo with board member, Khun Rangsima,(second from the right in the photo) is attached.

Alfie Gordo, (first on the left in the picture) who many of you may remember from the December Congress (she was the anchor person for the plenary sessions), has just joined us as the Communications Officer. From now on she is the person responsible for all general communications with all of you. She is also going to work on the website and in the next couple of months she plans to create a multi-lingual, easily updatable site for all of us. Alfie was a trainee in GAATW's research methodology workshop in 1999. She has worked in the Manila office of Asian Women's Human Rights Council (AWHRC) and also with the government of the Philippines. Alfie can be contacted at alfie@gaatw.org

You may also remember Shyamali (second from the left in the picture) who was at the reimbursement desk during the December meeting. She is our new Finance and Administrative Manager. Originally from India, Shyamali has been a resident of Australia for over 30 years now. In addition to finance management work, she has also taught biology and maths at the higher secondary level for many years. Shyamali's e-mail address is shyamali@gaatw.org

Nong (Apivart) (in the centre in the photo) is the Office Manager-cum-book keeper. Having started work with GAATW since 1998, she is now the senior most staff member. In addition to other work, Nong also handles all publication orders so if you are ordering a book you need to write to her at bookorder@gaatw.org

June (Jiraporn) (first on the right) is a senior programme officer at the Secretariat. Starting out as a researcher in the Action Research Project of Foundation for Women in the early 90s, June has worked on the issue of trafficking and migration for over 10 years now. She has been part of several international research projects and is currently coordinating GAATW's work with the health issues of women migrant workers in Thailand. June can be contacted at jiraporn@gaatw.org

Bandana (third from the right in the photo) is the Coordinator now and is responsible for the overall coordination of the Secretariat's personnel and programmes. She has been with the Secretariat since 1999 working in the area of research and training. She can be contacted at bandana@gaatw.org

Amy Penfold (third from the left in the photo) has been an intern at the Secretariat since September 2004. She is working towards her Masters in Sustainable International Development through Brandeis University, with a focus on gender and migration. She has been conducting research on participation and self-organized groups and is currently writing a corresponding report for GAATW. She can be reached at apenfold@brandeis.edu

A reminder about contacting the secretariat via email

As we had informed you a couple of times last year the old email address of GAATW is going to be defunct from this week onwards. So kindly DO NOT use the gaatw@mozart.inet.co.th anymore. For specific communication with staff use the above addresses and for general matters please write to gaatw@gaatw.org

Making Plans for the Alliance for 2005 and Beyond

During the regional consultations and at the December meeting many of you had given us extremely valuable suggestions regarding the activities which the Alliance could take up in the coming years. The Secretariat staff and the GAATW International Board of Directors remain committed to those suggestions and are working to formulate a 3 year plan. Those of you who had expressed an interest in working on specific issues will be consulted to flesh out the ideas further.

As advised by all of you the Secretariat's primary role will be to facilitate information dissemination among member organizations. While part of the information will come from various media sources, we will also rely on you to send us any information which you would like to share with other members.

We hope that this Alliance will grow in future and members will take initiative to carry discussions and activities with each other. The recent experience at the WSF in Porto Alegre was very encouraging. The emerging Latin American network took the initiative to meet up and carry the plans made during Dec 2004 a few steps ahead.

Upcoming Meetings and Training Workshops

From February 28 to March 11, 2005, the UN Commission on the Status of Women will conduct the ten-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing + 10) and, commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the First UN World Conference on Women held in Mexico in 1975. This significant occasion gives the global women's movement the opportunity to assess the governments' implementation of the Beijing platform; to discuss issues detrimental women's lives; to set new feminist agendas and to push for women's full equality at the UN and the local, national, regional and global course.

Those of you who have been working on women's issues must have taken note of this already. The registration process has been completed. We are sending this message to you now to find out who among you is going to the sessions. If you are going to be in New York, please send us an email ASAP so that we can put you in touch with each other and explore the possibilities of doing a workshop there.

The Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL), Development Alternatives With Women For A New Era (DAWN) and Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO) have also jointly initiated a project to invite women's rights activists across the globe to take part on-line in the Global Week of Action for Women's Rights from March 1-8, 2005. For more information on what you can do from your own location go to www.beijingandbeyond.org

10th International Women and Health Meeting

On 21-25 September 2005, the 10th International Women and Health Meeting (IWHM) will be held in New Delhi, India. IWHM includes a wide range of organizations, networks and grassroots women's group that has worked for the past two and a half decade to promote global feminist solidarity on issues that impose on the health and well being of women. Previous activities such as debates and agenda setting around issues of development, women's reproductive rights and empowerment have opened opportunities for women's perspectives to be heard and incorporated into policymaking and program implementation.

The 2005 meeting aims to focus on the issues of women's health as a fundamental right as presented in five focal themes. One of the focal themes will discuss on violence (of state, militarism, family and 'development) and women's health addressing questions on the impact of development policies, the effect of the growing armed conflicts to women's health, and the struggles and strategies against all forms of violence.

GAATW would like to encourage members who are working closely with women's health issues to participate in this meeting.

For further information about the event, you may visit www.10iwhmindia.org or email the IWHM Secretariat at participate@10iwhmindia.org

Feminist Training Programme

The Development Alternatives for a New Era (DAWN) will be conducting a second feminist training programme to be held in Montevideo, Uruguay from November 7-29, 2005. DAWN, a network of feminist scholars and activists, which began in 1984 has actively engaged in the global society movement against corporate globalisation, joining forces with other NGOs and civil society organizations to resist the inequitable trade rules and economic injustice and working in partners with the World Social Forum.

The DAWN Training Institute was inaugurated in Bangalore, India in 2003. It is for young feminist activists who are engaged in advocacy work for gender justice and who wish to sharpen their analytical capabilities and advocacy skills. The training program will illustrate the DAWN's feminist analysis based on four themes of political economy of Globalisation, Sustainable Livelihoods, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Political Restructuring and Social Transformation. The course intends to encourage capacity-building among young feminist activists, strengthen feminist advocacy work at the global level and deepen understanding on global trade and sustainable development.

Deadline for submission of application is on 31 March 2005. For further information and for copies of the application forms, please check the DAWN web-site at www.dawn.org.fj

We look forward to hearing back from you. Look out for the next issue for a report on the WSF from Bandana, Nelia and the Latin American friends. The much-awaited report of the Dec meeting will also be sent with the next issue, as well as the contact email list of all participants.



Attachments:

A. Amitav Gosh 1

Overlapping Faults

Amitav Ghosh, the internationally renowned novelist, visited the Andaman and Nicobar Islands recently to see for himself how the system and ordinary people have coped with the devastation caused by the tsunami of December 26. This is the first in a three-part series of special articles for The Hindu. The second and third articles will be published on Wednesday and Thursday.

THE ANDAMAN and Nicobar Islands are one of those quadrants of the globe where political and geological fault lines run on parallel courses. Politically the islands are Union Territories, ruled directly from New Delhi, but geologically they stand just beyond the edge of the Indian tectonic plate. Stretching through

700 kilometres of the Bay of Bengal, they are held aloft by a range of undersea mountains that stands guard over the abyssal deep of the Sunda trench. Of the 572 islands, only 36 are inhabited: 'the Andamans' is the name given to the northern part of the archipelago while 'the Nicobars' lie to the south. At their uppermost point, the Andamans are just a few dozen miles from Burma's Coco Islands, infamous for their prisons, while the southernmost edge of the Nicobars is only a couple of hundred kilometres from the ever-restless region of Aceh. This part of the chain is so positioned that the tsunami of December 26, 2004 hit it just minutes after the coastline of northern Sumatra.

Despite the hundreds of kilometres of water that separate the Andamans from the Indian mainland, many of the relief camps in Port Blair, the islands' capital city, have the appearance of miniaturised portraits of the nation. Only a small percentage of their inmates are indigenous to the islands; the others are settlers from different parts of the mainland: Bengal, Orissa, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. If this comes as a surprise, it is only because the identity of the islands and indeed the alibi for the present form of their rule lies in an administrative conception of the 'primitive' that dates back to the British Raj. The idea that these islands are somehow synonymous with backwardness is energetically promoted in today's Port Blair. Hoardings depicting naked 'primitives' line the streets, and I heard of a sign that instructs onlookers to 'Love Your Primitive Tribe.'

In most parts of the mainland, these images would long since have been defaced or torn down, for the sheer offensiveness of their depictions: not so on these islands which are more a projection of India than a part of its body politic; as with many colonies, they represent a distended and compressed version of the mother country, in its weaknesses and strengths, its aspirations and failings. Over the last two weeks, both the fault lines that underlie the islands seem suddenly to have been set in motion: it is as if the hurried history of an emergent nation had collided here with the deep time of geology.

The mainland settlers in the camps are almost unanimous in describing themselves as having come to the islands in search of land and opportunity. Listening to their stories it is easy to believe that most of them found what they were looking for: here, in this far-flung chain of islands, tens of thousands of settlers were able to make their way out of poverty, into the ranks of the country's expanding middle class. But on the morning of December 26, this hard-won betterment became a potent source of vulnerability. For to be middle-class, in India or anywhere else, is to be kept afloat on a life-raft of paper: identity cards, licences, ration cards, school certificates, cheque books, certificates of life insurance and receipts for fixed deposits.

It was the particular nature of this disaster that it targeted not just the physical being of the victims but also the proof of the survivors' identities. An earthquake would have left remnants to rummage through; floods and hurricanes would have allowed time for survivors to safeguard their essential documents on their person. The tsunami, in the suddenness of its onslaught allowed for no preparations: not only did it destroy the survivors' homes and decimate their families; it also robbed them of all the evidentiary traces of their place in the world.

On January 1, 2005, I went to visit the Nirmala School Camp in Port Blair. The camp, like the school in which it is housed, is run by the Catholic Church and it is presided over by a mild-mannered young priest by the name of Father Johnson. On the morning of my visit Father Johnson was at the centre of an angry altercation. The refugees had spent the last three days waiting anxiously in the camp, and in that time no one had asked them where they wanted to go or when; none of them had any idea of what was to become of them and the sense of being adrift had brought them to the end of their tether. The issue was neither deprivation nor hardship; there was enough food and they had all the clothes they needed; it was the uncertainty that was intolerable. In the absence of any other figure of authority they had laid siege to Father Johnson: when would they be allowed to move on? Where would they be going?

Father Johnson could give them no answers for he was, in his own way, just as helpless as they were. The officials in charge of the relief effort had told him nothing about their plans for the refugees. Now time was running out: the schools in which the camps were located were to re-open on January 3. With the date almost at hand, Father Johnson had no idea how he was going to manage his students with more than 1600 refugees camping on the grounds.

Reclaiming identity

Realising at last that Father Johnson knew no more than they did, the inmates reduced their demands to a single, modest query: could they be provided with some paper and a few pens? No sooner had this request been met than another uproar broke out: those who'd been given possession of pens and paper now became the centre of the siege. Crowding together, people began to push and jostle, clamouring to have their names written down. Identity was now no more than a matter of assertion and nothing seemed to matter more than to create a trail of paper. On this depended the eventual reclamation of a life.

IDENTITY LOST

Standing on the edges of the crowd was a stocky, thirty-year-old man by the name of Obed Tara. He was, he told me, from the island of Car Nicobar, a member of an indigenous group whose affiliations, in language and ethnicity, lie with the Malay peoples to the east. But he himself was a Naik in the 10th Madras regiment of the Indian army and was fluent in Hindi. On December 10 he had set off from Calcutta, where his unit was currently stationed, in order to travel to Car Nicobar. Like most Nicobarese people, he was a Christian, a member of the Anglican Church of North India, and he'd been looking forward to celebrating Christmas at home. But this year there was something else to look forward to as well: he was to be married on the first day of the New Year (the very day of our conversation).

On December 26, despite the celebrations and merry-making of the night before, Obed Tara, like most members of his extended family, rose early in order to attend a Boxing Day service at their church. Their house was in the seafront settlement of Malacca, just a few hundred metres from the water. Their neighbourhood was the commercial heart of the township, and their house was surrounded by shops and godowns. They were themselves a part of the market's bustle; they owned a Maruti Omni and operated a long-distance phone booth in their house. In other words, theirs' was a family that had been swept into the middle-class by the commercial opportunities of the last decade.

Day of Tsunami

That morning, as the family was gathering outside the house, the ground began to heave with a violence that none of them had ever experienced before; it shook so hard that it was impossible to stand still and they were forced to throw themselves on the ground. Then the ground cracked and fountains of mud-brown water came geysering out of these fissures. Like all the islanders, Obed Tara was accustomed to tremors in the earth, but neither he nor anyone else there had ever seen anything like this before. It took a while before the ground was still enough to regain a footing and no sooner had he risen to his feet than he heard a wild, roaring sound. Looking seawards he saw a wall of water advancing towards his house. Gathering his relatives, he began to run.

By the time he looked back, his house, and the neighbourhood in which it stood, had vanished under the waves: two elderly members of the family were lost and everything they possessed was gone, the car, the phone booth, the house. The family spent a couple of nights in the island's interior and afterwards the elders deputed him to go to Port Blair to see what he could secure for them by way of relief and supplies.

By the time Obed Tara finished telling me this story, there was a catch in his voice, and he was swallowing convulsively to keep from sobbing. I asked him: "Why don't you go to the army offices and tell them who you are? I am sure they will do what they can to help you."

He shook his head, as if to indicate that he had considered and dismissed this thought many times over. "The sea took my uniform, my ration card, my service card, my tribal papers; it took everything," he said. "I can't prove who I am. Why should they believe me?"

He led me to the far side of the camp, where another group of islanders was sitting patiently under a tent. They too had lost everything; their entire village had disappeared under the sea; salt water had invaded their fields and taken away their orchards. They could not contemplate going back, they said; the stench of death was everywhere, the water sources had been contaminated and would not be usable for years.

The leader of the group was a man by the name of Sylvester Solomon. A one-time serviceman in the Navy, he had retired some years ago. He too had lost all his papers: he had no idea how he would claim his pension again. Worse still the bank that had the custody of his family's money had also been swept away, along with all its records.

I told him that by law the bank was obliged to return his money and he smiled, as if at a child. I wanted to persuade him of the truth of what I'd said but when I looked into his eyes, I knew that in his place, I too would not have the energy or the courage to take on the struggles that would be required to reclaim my life's savings from that bank.

Paramjeet's story

In the same camp I encountered a Sikh woman by the name of Paramjeet Kaur. Noticing my notebook, she said: "Are you taking names too? Here, write mine down..." She was a woman of determined aspect, dressed in a dun-coloured salwaar-kameez. She had come to the islands some thirty years before, by dint of marriage. Her husband was a Sikh from Campbell Bay, a settlement on the southernmost tip of the Nicobar island chain, less than a couple of hundred kilometres from northern Sumatra. Like many others in the

settlement, her husband belonged to a family that had been given a grant of land in recognition of service to the army (to distribute land in this way is a tradition that goes back to the British Indian Army and its efforts to engage the loyalties of Indian 'sepoys'). But Paramjeet Kaur's in-laws came to the Nicobar islands well after Independence, in 1969, at a time when agricultural land had become scarce on the mainland. They were given 15 bighas of land and a plot to build a residence. The settlement that grew up around them was as varied as the regiments of the Indian army: there were Marathis, Malayalis, Jharkhandis and people from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

"There was nothing there but jungle then," said Paramjeet Kaur. "We cleared it with our own hands and we laid out orchards of areca and coconut. With God's blessing we prospered, and built a cement house with three rooms and a veranda."

Questions of location

The strip of land that was zoned for residential plots lay right on the sea front, providing the settlers with fine, beachfront views. It was no mere accident then that placed Paramjeet Kaur's house in the path of the tsunami of December 26: its location was determined by an ordering of space that owed more to Europe than to its immediate surroundings. The sea poses little danger to the smiling corniches of the French Riviera or the coastline of Italy: the land-encircled Mediterranean is not subject to the play of tides and it does not give birth to tropical storms. The Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal, on the other hand, are fecund in the breeding of cyclones, especially the latter.

This may be the reason why a certain wariness of the sea can be seen in the lineaments of the ancient harbour cities of southern Asia. They are often situated in upriver locations, at a cautious distance from open water. In recent times the pattern seems to have been reversed so that it could almost be stated as a rule that the more modern and prosperous a settlement, the more likely it is to hug the water. On the island of Car Nicobar, for example, the Indian Air Force base was built a few dozen metres from the water's edge and it was so laid out that the more senior the servicemen, the closer they were to the sea. Although it is true that no one could have anticipated the tsunami, the choice of location is still surprising. Cyclones, frequent in this region, are also associated with surges of water that rise to heights of 10 or 15 metres and their effect would have been similar. Surely the planners were not unaware of this? But of course, it is all too easy to be wise after the event: given the choice between a view of the beach and a plot in the mosquito-infested interior what would anyone have chosen before December 26, 2004?

On the morning of that day Paramjeet Kaur and her family were inside their sea-facing house when the earthquake struck. The ground unfurled under their feet like a sheet waving in the wind and no sooner had the shaking stopped than they heard a noise 'like the sound of a helicopter'. Paramjeet Kaur's husband, Pavitter Singh, looked outside and saw a wall of water speeding towards them. 'The sea has split apart' (samundar phat gaya), he shouted, 'run, run.' There was no time to pick up documents or jewellery; everyone who stopped to do so was killed. Paramjeet Kaur and her family ran for two kilometres, without looking back and were just able to save themselves.

"But for what?"

Thirty years of labour had been washed away in an instant; everything they had accumulated was gone, their land was sown with salt. "When we were young we had the energy to cut the jungle and reclaim the land. We laid out fields and orchards and we did well. But at my age, how can I start again? Where will I begin?"

"What will you do then?" I asked.

"We will go back to Punjab, where we have family. The government must give us land there; that is our demand."

"What will you do then?" I asked.

"We will go back to Punjab, where we have family. The government must give us land there; that is our demand."

In other camps I met office workers from Uttar Pradesh, fishermen from coastal Andhra Pradesh and construction labourers from Bengal. They had all built good lives for themselves in the islands; but now, having lost their homes, their relatives and even their identities they were intent on returning to the mainland, no matter what.

"If nothing else," one of them said to me, "we will live in slums beside the rail tracks. But never again by the sea."

How to quantify?

How do we quantify the help needed to rebuild these ruined lives? The question is answered easily enough if we pose it not in the abstract, but in relation to ourselves. To put ourselves in the place of these victims is to know that all the help in the world would not be enough. Sufficiency is not a concept that is applicable here: potentially there is no limit to the amount of relief that can be used. This is the assumption that motivates ordinary people to open their purses, even though they know that governments and big companies have already contributed a great deal: this is why no disaster assistance group has ever been known to say 'we have to raise exactly this much and no more.' But when it comes to the disbursement of these funds the assumptions seem to undergo a drastic change, and nowhere more than in out-of-the-way places.

In the Andaman and Nicobar islands, although the manpower and machinery for the relief effort are supplied largely by the armed forces, overall authority is concentrated in the hands of a small clutch of senior civil servants in Port Blair. No matter the sense of crisis elsewhere: the attitude of the officialdom of Port Blair is one of disdainful self-sufficiency. On more than one occasion I heard them dismissing offers of help as unnecessary and misdirected. Supplies were available aplenty, they said; in fact they had more on their hands than could be distributed and there was a danger that perishable materials would rot on the airstrips.

This argument is of course, entirely circular: logically speaking, bottlenecks of distribution imply a need for more help, not less. But for the mandarins of Port Blair, the relief effort is a zero sum game in which they are the referees. What conceivable help could their subjects need other than the amount which they, the providers, the mai-baap, decide is appropriate to their various stations?
Amitav Ghosh

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Date:12/01/2005 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2005/01/12/stories/2005011205841100.htm>

No Aid Needed

Amitav Ghosh, renowned novelist, discovers the difference between the diligent and open attitude of the armed forces, and the bureaucratic insensitivity and inertia of the civilian administration in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Finding an unexpected seat on a flight to Car Nicobar, he encounters the Director and his extraordinary story. This is the second in a three-part series of special articles for The Hindu. The final article in the series will be published on Thursday.

ARE SUPPLIES really available aplenty, throughout the Andaman and Nicobar Islands? The tale told in the relief camps is of course exactly the opposite of that which echoes out of the lairs of officialdom. Most of the refugees had to wait several days before they were evacuated. Forgotten in their far-flung islands, they listened to radio broadcasts that told them their nation was rushing aid to Sri Lanka and had refused all outside help as unnecessary: for the thirsty and hungry there was little consolation in the thought that these measures might help their country establish itself as a superpower. In Campbell Bay, according to several reports, refugees were moved to such fury by the indifference of the local officials that that they assaulted an officer who was found ushering in the New Year with a feast. Accounts of this incident, confirmed by several sources in the Coast Guard and the police, were characteristically denied by the civil authorities.

In Port Blair, relief camps are the main sources of aid and sustenance for the refugees. These are all sustained by private initiatives: they are staffed by volunteers from local youth groups, religious foundations and so on, and their supplies are provided by local shopkeepers, businessmen and citizens' organisations. I met with the organisers of several relief camps and they were unanimous in stating that they had received no aid whatsoever from the government, apart from some water. They knew that people on the mainland were eager to help and that a great deal of money had been raised. None of these funds had reached them; presumably they had met the same bottlenecks of distribution as the supplies that were lying piled on the runways. That it should be possible for the people of a small town like Port Blair to provide relief to so many refugees is the bright side of this dismal story: it is proof, if any were needed, that the development of civil society in India has far outpaced the institutions of state and the personnel who staff them.

Armed forces' attitude

The attitude of the armed forces is not the same as that of the civilian authorities. At all levels of the chain of command, from Lt. Gen. B.S. Thakur, the commanding officer in Port Blair, to the jawans who are combing through the ruins of Car Nicobar, there is an urgency, a diligence and an openness that is in striking contrast to the stance of the civilian personnel. Indeed, the feats performed by some units speak of an exemplary dedication to duty. Consider for example the case of Wing Commander B.S.K. Kumar, a helicopter pilot at the Car Nicobar air base. On December 26, he was asleep when the earthquake first made itself felt: his quarters were a mere 30 metres from the sea. Not only did he manage to outrun the tsunami, with his wife and child, he was airborne within 10 minutes of the first wave. In the course of the day he winched up some 60 stranded people and evacuated another 240.

His colleague, Wing Commander Maheshwari, woke too late to escape the wave. As the waters rose, he was forced to retreat to the roof of his building with his wife and daughter. Along with 29 other people, he fought for his footing on the roof until all were swept off. He managed to make his way to land, but was separated from his wife and child: two hours passed before they were found, clinging to the trunk of a tree. Of the 29 people on that roof, only six survived. And yet, despite the ordeal, Wing Commander Maheshwari flew several sorties that day.

Bureaucratic insensitivity

Considering the diligence of the armed forces and the enthusiasm and generosity of ordinary citizens, how is the attitude of the island's civilian administration to be accounted for? The answer is simple: a lack of democracy and popular empowerment. As a Union Territory, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands have no legislature and thus no elected representatives with any clout apart from a single Member of Parliament. Elsewhere in India, in any situation of crisis, officials have to answer to legislators at every level: a failure to act would result in their being hounded by legislators and harried by trade unions, student groups and the like. As Amartya Sen has shown in his work on famines, these mechanisms are essential to the proper distribution of resources in any situation of extreme scarcity: in effect, the political system serves as a means by which demands are articulated. The media similarly serve to create flows of information.

These are precisely the mechanisms that are absent in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands: there are no elected representatives to speak for the people and the media have been excluded from large swathes of territory. It is not for no reason that on the mainland, where these mechanisms do exist, the attitude of administrators in the affected districts has been more sensitive to the needs of the victims and substantially more open to the oversight of the press and to offers of help from other parts of the country.

It is common for civil servants to complain of the perils of political interference: the situation on the islands is proof that in the absence of vigorous oversight many (although certainly not all) officials will revert to the indifference and inertia that are the natural condition of any bureaucracy.

Clearly the Central Government is aware that there is a problem, for the relief operation was restructured on January 2, reportedly at the personal intervention of Sonia Gandhi. What is more, several senior members of the ruling party have been dispatched to the outlying islands, not just for token visits, but to make sure that the supplies are properly distributed. These are welcome first steps, but it is essential that the Central Government moves quickly to create a more responsive and efficient disaster relief operation in this region not just for the management of this disaster, but for the long term. For if anything can be said with any certainty, it is that the tsunami will not be the last seismic upheaval to shake the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

In 1991, after lying dormant for 200 years, the volcano of Barren Island, off the coast of the Andamans, became active again: there are reports that it erupted again around the time of the earthquake of December 26. On September 14, 2002, there was a 6.5 magnitude earthquake near Diglipur in North Andaman Island: now there are unconfirmed reports of a minor eruption in the same area. The signs are clear: no one can say the Earth has not provided warnings of its intent.

In Port Blair I found that the tsunami's effects on the outlying islands could only be guessed at. The refugees in the camps spoke of apocalyptic devastation and tens of thousands dead; the authorities' estimates were much more modest. There were few, if any, reliable independent assessments, for the civil authorities had decided that no journalists or other 'outsiders' were to be allowed to travel to the outlying islands. The reasons given were those of the battlefield: too many resources would be spent on their protection. But there was no battle under way in the islands and the dangers of the tsunami were long past. Public ferry and steamer services linking Port Blair to the outer islands were in operation and had plenty of room for paying passengers. And yet journalists, Indian and foreign, who attempted to board these ships were forcibly dragged off.

Off to Car Nicobar

On January 1, 2005, there was an unexpected parting in this curtain of exclusion. The reason was that a couple of senior members of the ruling party had come to Port Blair with the intent of travelling farther afield. It was quickly made known that an Air Force plane would be provided to take the Ministers, and a retinue of journalists, to the island of Car Nicobar the next day. This island, which is positioned halfway between the Andaman and Nicobar chains, is home to some 30,000 people: it also houses an air base, which makes it something of a hub in relation to the more southerly islands.

Hoping to get on this plane, I duly presented myself at the airport only to find that a great many others had arrived with the same expectation. As always in such situations, there was considerable confusion about who would get on. After the Ministers had boarded, a minor melee ensued at the foot of the ramp that led to the plane's capacious belly. Knowing that I stood little chance of prevailing in this contest, I had almost resigned myself to being left behind when a young man in a blue uniform tapped my elbow and pointed across the airfield. "You want to go to Car Nicobar? That plane over there is carrying relief supplies. Just go and sit down. No one will say anything."

I sought no explanation for this unsolicited act of consideration: it seemed typical of the general goodwill of the military personnel I had encountered on the islands. As if on tiptoe I walked across the tarmac and up the ramp. The plane was a twin-engined Soviet-era AN 26, rusty but dependable, and its capacious fuselage was lined with folding benches. The round portholes that pierced its sides were like eyes that had grown rheumy with age; time had sandpapered the panes of glass so that they were almost opaque. The cargo area was packed with mattresses, folding beds, cases of mineral water and sacks of food, all covered with a net of webbing. There were some half dozen men inside, sitting on the benches with their feet planted askew beside the mass of supplies.

Angry and irascible

I seated myself in the only available space, beside a short, portly man with thick glasses and well-oiled, curly hair. He was dressed in a stiffly ironed brown safari suit and he had an air of irascibility that spoke of a surfeit of time spent in filing papers and running offices. He was muttering angrily when I came aboard: "What do those people care? What have they ever done to help anyone...?" Of all the people on that plane he was perhaps the last I would have chosen to sit beside: I was keen to make myself as inconspicuous as possible while he seemed determined to draw attention to himself. It could only be a matter of minutes I thought, before the airmen evicted him. Inexplicably, they did not.

When the engines started up, my neighbour turned his attention to me. "These big people think they are so great, but what help have they given?" I assumed this to be a general expression of disgust, of the kind that is to be heard on every train and bus in the country. But then he added suddenly: "Let them go through what I have gone through. Let them suffer, then they would see..."

This hit me with the force of a shock: his well-laundered safari suit, his air of almost-comical self-importance, his irascibility - there was nothing about him that bespoke the victim. But I understood now why the airmen had ignored his rants: they knew something about him that I did not and this was their way of showing compassion.

In the meanwhile the tirade continued: "If those politicians had suffered as I have, what would they do? This is the question I want to ask."

I winced to think of my first response to his mutterings. "What exactly has happened?" I asked. "Tell me."

The Director's Story

He did not want his name, so I shall call him 'The Director'. This indeed was his official title: he had been posted to the island of Car Nicobar in 1991, as the Director of the island's Malaria Research Centre and had lived there ever since. He was originally from Puri, in Orissa, and had been trained at the University of Berhampore. During his tenure in Car Nicobar he had married and had two children: a son who was now 13, and a 10-year-old daughter. His home was in Malacca - the seafront township I'd heard about in the camps - and his office was just a few minutes' walk from where he lived. In this office he had accumulated a great wealth of epidemiological knowledge. Car Nicobar had once been rife with malaria, he told me. In an island with a population of just 30,000, the annual incidence had been as high as 3810, even as recently as 1989. But during his tenure he had succeeded in bringing the rate down to a fraction of this number. It was clear, from the readiness with which he quoted the figures, that he was immensely - and justly - proud of what he had achieved during his stay on the island.

On December 25, 2004, the Director was in Port Blair, on his way to New Delhi. Since he was travelling for official reasons, he had left his family in Malacca. He spent the night of December 25 in the Haddo Circuit House, which stands close to the water. On the morning of the 26th he was woken by the shaking of his bed. He stepped off to find the floor heaving and realised that an earthquake had hit the town. As he was running out of the building, his mobile phone rang. Glancing quickly at the screen, he saw that his wife was calling from Malacca. He guessed that the earthquake had struck Car Nicobar too but he was not unduly alarmed. Tremors were frequently felt on the island and he thought his wife would be able to cope. The Guest House in the meanwhile was still shaking and there was no time to talk.

He cut off the call and ran outside; he would phone back later, he decided, once the tremors stopped. He waited out the earthquake outside and when the ground was still at last, he hit the call button on his phone. There was no answer and he wondered if the network was down. But he had little time to think about the matter because a strange phenomenon had suddenly begun to manifest itself before him: the water in the harbour had begun to rise, very rapidly, and the anchored ships seemed to be swirling about in the grip of an unseen hand. Along with everyone else he ran to higher ground.

Surge of water

The islands of the Andaman chain rise steeply out of the sea and the harbour and waterfront of Port Blair are sheltered by a network of winding fjords and inlets. Such is the lay of the land that the turbulence that radiated outwards from the earthquake's epicentre, manifested itself here not as an onrushing wall of water, but as a surge in the water level. Although this caused a good deal of alarm, the damage was not severe.

It was not long, however, before it occurred to the Director that the incoming swell in Port Blair's harbour might have taken a different form elsewhere. The Nicobar islands do not have the high elevations of their northern neighbours, the Andamans. They are low-lying islands for the most part, and some like Car Nicobar stand no more than a few metres above sea level at their highest point. Already anxious, the Director became frantic when word of the tsunami trickled down to the waterfront, from the naval offices further up the slope.

Malacca hit

The Director knew of a government office in Car Nicobar that had a satellite phone. He dialled the number again and again: it was either busy or there was no answer. When at last he got through, the voice at the other end told him, with some reluctance, that Malacca had been badly hit. It was known that there were some survivors, but as for his family, there was no word.

The Director kept calling, and in the afternoon he learnt that his 13-year-old son had been found clinging to the rafters of a church, some 200 metres behind their house. Arrangements were made to bring the boy to the phone and the Director was able to speak to him directly later that night. He learnt from his son that the family had been in the bedroom when the earthquake started. A short while later, a terrifying sound from the direction of the sea had driven the three of them into the drawing room. The boy had kept running, right into the kitchen. The house was built of wood, on a cement foundation. When the wave hit, the house dissolved into splinters and the boy was carried away as if on a wind. Flailing his arms, he managed to take hold of something that seemed to be fixed to the earth. Through wave after wave he managed to keep his grip. When the water receded he saw that he was holding on to the only upright structure within a radius of several hundred metres: of the township there was nothing left but a deep crust of wreckage.

"And your mother and sister?" the Director had asked.

"Baba they just disappeared..." And now for the first time, the boy began to cry, and the Director's heart broke because he knew his son was crying because he thought he would be scolded and blamed for what had happened.

Timid, brave boy

"I was strict with him sir," the Director said, his voice trailing off. "I am a strict man; that is my nature. But I must say he is a brave boy; a very brave boy."

Having spent 13 years on the island, the Director was well acquainted with the local administration and the officers on the air base. Through their intervention he was able to get on a flight the very next day. He spent the day searching through the rubble; he found many possessions, but no trace of his daughter or his wife. He came back to Port Blair with his son the same evening and the two of them moved in with some friends. Every day since then he'd been trying to go back, to find out what had become of his wife and daughter but the flights had been closed - until this one.

"Tell me," he said, his voice becoming uncharacteristically soft. "What do you think: is there any hope?"

It took me a moment to collect my wits. "Of course there is hope," I said. "There is always hope. They could have been swept ashore on another part of the island."

He nodded. "We will see. I hope I will find out today, in Malacca."

With some hesitation I asked if it would be all right if I came with him. He answered with a prompt nod. "You can come."

I had the impression that he had been dreading the lonely search that lay ahead and would be glad of some company. "All right then," I said. "I will."

Amitav Ghosh

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Date:13/01/2005 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2005/01/13/stories/2005011309081100.htm>

The Town by the Sea

Amitav Ghosh, renowned novelist, accompanies the Director on a search through the island of Car Nicobar towards the seafront where the town of Malacca once stood. Discovering in stages how little he had understood the power of the tsunami, the writer finds himself completely unprepared for the experience. This is the concluding part of a special three-article series for The Hindu.

AT THE airfield in Car Nicobar, the Director arranged a ride for us on a yellow construction truck that had been set to the task of distributing relief supplies. The truck went bouncing down the runway before turning off into a narrow road that led into a forest. Once the airstrip was behind us, it was as though we had been transported to some long-ago land, unspoiled and untouched. The road wound through a dense tropical jungle, dotted, at intervals, with groves of slender areca-palms and huts mounted on stilts. Some of these had metamorphosed into makeshift camps, sprouting awnings of plastic and tarpaulin. It was clear that the island's interior was sparsely inhabited, with the population being concentrated along the seafront.

Earlier, while the plane was making its descent, I had had a panoramic, if blurred, view of the island, in the crisp morning sunlight. No more than a few kilometres across, it was flat and low, and its interior was covered by a dense canopy of greenery. A turquoise halo surrounded its shores, where a fringe of sand had once formed an almost-continuous length of beach: this was now still mainly underwater. I saw to my surprise that many thick stands of coconut palms were still standing, even on the edge of the water. Relatively few palms had been flattened; most remained upright and in full possession of their greenery. As for the forest, the canopy seemed almost undisturbed. All trace of habitation on the other hand, had been obliterated: the foundations of many buildings could be clearly seen, on the ground. But of the structures they had once supported, nothing remained.

Selective destruction

It was evident from above that the tsunami had been peculiarly selective in the manner of its destruction. Had the island been hit by a major cyclone, not a frond would have survived on the coconut palms and the forest canopy would have been denuded. Most human dwellings, on the other hand, would have retained their walls even if they lost their roofs. Not so in this instance: the villages along the shore were not merely damaged; they were erased. It was as if the island had been hit by a weapon devised to cause the maximum possible damage to life and property, while leaving nature largely unharmed.

We came to an intersection that was flanked by low, whitewashed buildings. This was the administrative centre of the island, the Director explained; the settlement of Malacca lay a good distance away and we would have to walk. After getting off the truck, we came to the District Library, a building of surprising size and solidity: like the surrounding offices, it was unharmed, but a medical camp, manned by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, had sprung up on its grounds, under the shade of a spreading, moss-twined padauk tree. The Director spotted a doctor, sitting in a tent. He darted away and slipped under the tent's blue flap. "Doctor, have you heard anything about my family?" he said. "I've come because I heard some survivors had been

found... "

The doctor's face froze and after a moment's silence, in a tone that was non-committal and yet not discouraging, he said: "No news has reached me - I've not heard anything... "

Salvaged goods

We continued on our way, walking past the airy bungalows of the island's top officials, with their well-tended gardens. Soon we came upon two men who were sitting by the roadside, beside an odd assortment of salvaged goods. "That's mine," said the Director, pointing to a lampstand of turned wood. "I paid a lot for it; it's made of padauk wood." There was no rancour in his voice and nor did he seem to want to reclaim the object. We walked on.

A few steps ahead the road dipped towards a large clearing fringed by thick stands of coconut palm: as with many small town maidans, there was a plaster bust of Mahatma Gandhi standing in its centre. So far on our journey from the airport we had seen no outward sign of the damage caused by the tsunami, but now we had arrived at the outer periphery of the band of destruction. Mounds of splintered planks and other building materials lay scattered across the clearing, and the red-white-and-green fence that surrounded the bust of Mahatma Gandhi was swathed in refuse and dead coconut fronds. Everywhere, evidence of the tsunami's reach could be seen in pools of water that had turned rank over the last few days.

At the far end of the maidan, a fire was blazing among the coconut palms. The warehouse that supplied the island with cooking gas had stood at that spot. The tsunami had swept the warehouse away, leaving the canisters exposed to the sun and a fire had ensued. Every few minutes the ground shook to the blast of exploding canisters.

Encountering Michael

Oblivious to the fire, the Director stepped away to accost a passer-by who was wheeling a loaded bicycle. Over his shoulder, he said to me: "This is Michael; he worked in my office." Michael was a sturdy, grizzled Nicobarese, dressed in green shorts and a grey shirt. Laying his hands on the bicycle's handlebars, the Director said, in Hindi: "Michael, listen - has there been any news of Madam? You know what she looks like: have you seen any trace of her?"

Michael dropped his eyes, as if in embarrassment, and answered with a tiny shake of his head. Lowering his voice, the Director continued: "And have you heard anyone speak of a girl, roaming in the jungle?" When this too failed to elicit an answer, he went on: "Michael, I need your help. Bring some men and come. I need to dig through the rubble to see if I can find anything." Even as he was speaking, his attention shifted to the contents of the plastic bags that were hanging from Michael's handlebars. Flinching, he let go of the handlebar. "Michael!" he cried, "What is all this stuff you've picked up? You should know better than to take things from over there - they may be contaminated."

Michael hung his head and wheeled his bicycle silently away.

"They're all looting," said the director, shaking his head. "I've heard the bazaar in Port Blair has received three sackfuls of gold from the islands... "

The author in front of Malacca's Murugan temple. — Photo: By Special Arrangement

In the clump of burning palm-trees, yet another gas canister exploded. It was close enough that we could feel the rattle of the blast in the debris under our feet; a shard of metal struck an onlooker, fortunately without injury. Oblivious to the flames, the Director hurried towards a spot where a mound of mangled household objects lay piled, having been pushed through the screen of coconut palms like dough through a sieve.

Mangled objects

"Look, that's mine," said the Director, pointing to a blue Aristocrat suitcase made of moulded plastic. It had been hacked open with a sharp-bladed instrument and its contents were gone. The Director picked it up and shook it. "I saw it the last time I was here," he said. "It was already empty. Everything had been looted." His eyes moved over to a steel trunk, lying nearby. "That's mine too. Go and look." Stepping over I saw that the trunk's lock had been forced open. On the side, written in large black letters, was the Director's name and designation.

"You see," the Director said, as if in vindication. "Everything I've been telling you is true. These things were all mine."

Research lost

A short distance away a wooden cabinet lay overturned, and heaps of paper could be seen spilling out of its belly. The Director beckoned to me. "See - there are all the records from my office. Thirteen years of research: all gone." We went to kneel beside the cabinet and I saw that the papers were mimeographed data sheets, with the letterhead of the Malaria Research Centre imprinted on top.

Somewhere among the papers I spotted some old photographs. Somehow it was a matter of great relief to me to come upon some retrievable memento and I was quick to draw the Director's attention to the pictures. On examination it turned out that most of the pictures had been defaced by the water, but I found one where he, the Director, could clearly be seen, standing among a group of people. I held it out to him and he took it with an indifferent shrug. "That photo was taken at the air base, I remember." He let go and it fluttered into a puddle of stinking water.

"Don't you want to keep it?" I said, in astonishment.

"No," he said simply. "It means nothing. These are just work pictures."

Slides!

Then suddenly his eyes lit up. "Look," he said, "my slides..." A drawer had come open, shaking loose several decks of white-rimmed photographic slides. Most were sodden with water, but some were dry and had preserved their images. To my untrained eyes, the pictures appeared to be of bacteria, hugely magnified by the lens of a microscope. The Director sorted quickly through the slides and chose a dozen or so. Close at hand there lay a roll of unused plastic bags that had been washed out of a shop and dried by the sun. Peeling off one of these bags, he placed the slides carefully inside before fastening his fingers on them.

The rafters of the church (in the background) saved the Director's son. — Photo: Amitav Ghosh

"Your home must have been nearby?" I said.

"No," came the answer. "The wave carried these things right out of the

town. My house is still a kilometre away, over there."

Power of tsunami

I had imagined that his possessions had ended up in the same place because his house was nearby: this was an indication of how little I understood of the power of the surge. Its strength was such that it had tossed the Director's house aside, picked up his household goods, bundled them together and punched them through a kilometre-wide expanse of dense habitation.

The location the Director had pointed to was on the far side of the burning coconut palms; it was evident that to get there we would have to pass quite close to the fire, which was now spreading rapidly. We set off almost at a run, and soon came to a point where our path was blocked by a fallen tree. He clambered over, hanging on to his slides and I followed. The fire was now less than a hundred metres to our right and as I was climbing over there was another detonation, followed by a crackling, whooshing sound. I fell quickly to the ground and shut my eyes. When next I looked up, the Director was still standing, looking down at me with puzzled impatience. "Come on, come on - that's where we have to go: over there."

When I rose to my feet I had my first glimpse of the seafront where the town of Malacca had once stood: till now it had been largely screened off from view by the coconut palms. On a stretch of land a couple of kilometres long, there were now only five structures still standing: the staring, skull-like shell of a school that had lost all its doors and windows; a neatly whitewashed bungalow; an arched gateway that had the words 'Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Park' painted on it; a small, miraculously unharmed Murugan temple, right beside the sea; and lastly the skeleton of a church, with a row of parallel arches rising from the rubble like the bleached ribs of a dead animal.

Life-saver

This was the structure that had saved the life of the Director's son. The palms along the seafront were undamaged and upright, their fronds intact, but the other trees on the site had lost all their leaves and a couple had buses, cars and sheets of corrugated iron wrapped around their trunks. If not for the tree-trunks and the waving palms, the first visual analogy to suggest itself would have been Hiroshima after the bomb: the resemblance lay not just in the destruction but also in the discernible directionality of the blast. But there the parallel ended for the sky here was a cloudless blue and there were no wisps of smoke rising from the ruins.

The Director led the way across the debris as if he were following a route imprinted in memory, a familiar map of streets and lanes. Despite a stiff breeze, blowing in from the sea, an odour of death flowed over the site, not evenly, but in whirls and eddies, sometimes growing so powerful as to indicate the presence of a yet-undiscovered body. Stray dogs, rooting in the ruins, looked up as though to express their surprise at the sight of human beings who were still ambient and on their feet.

Home that was

We came to a point where a rectangular platform of cement shone brightly under the sun. The Director stepped up to it and placed his feet in the middle. "This was my house," he said. "Only the foundation was concrete. The rest was wood. My wife used to say that she had moved from a white house to a log cabin. You see, she was from an affluent family; she grew up in a bungalow with an air-conditioner. She used to teach English in a school here, but she always wanted to leave. I applied many times, but the transfer never came." He paused, thinking back. For much of the time that we had been together, his

voice had carried a note of sharp but undirected annoyance; now it softened. "There was so much she could have achieved," he said. "I was never able to give her the opportunity."

I reached out to touch his arm but he shook my hand brusquely away; he was not the kind of man who takes kindly to expressions of sympathy; I could tell from his demeanour that he was accustomed to adversity and had invented many rules for dealing with it. The emotion he felt for his family he had rarely expressed; he had hoarded it inside himself, in the way a squirrel gathers food for the winter: loathe to spend it in his hectic middle years, he had put it away to be savoured when there was a greater sense of ease in his life, at a time when his battles were past and he could give his hoarded love his full attention. He had never dreamt - and who could? - that one bright December day, soon after dawn, it would be stolen, unsavoured, by the sea.

I began to walk towards the gently lapping waves, no more than a hundred metres away. The Director took fright at this and called me back: "Don't go that way, the tide is coming in. It's time to leave."

Yellow paint box

I turned to follow him and we were heading back towards the blazing palms, when he stopped to point to a yellow paint box, peeping out of the rubble. "That belonged to Vineeta, my daughter," he said, and the flatness of his voice was harder to listen to than an outburst would have been. "She loved to paint; she was very good at it. She was even given a prize, from Hyderabad."

I had expected that he would stoop to pick up the box, but instead he turned away and walked on, gripping his bag of slides. "Wait!" I cried. "Don't you want to take the box?"

"No," he said vehemently, shaking his head. "What good will it do? What will it give back?" He stopped to look at me over the rim of his glasses. "Do you know what happened the last time I was here? Someone had found my daughter's schoolbag and saved it for me. It was handed to me, like a card. It was the worst thing I could have seen. It was unbearable."

He started to walk off again. Unable to restrain myself, I called out after him: "Are you sure you don't want it - the paint box?"

Without looking around he said: "Yes, I am sure."

I stood amazed as he walked off towards the blazing fire, with his slides still folded in his grip: how was it possible that the only memento he had chosen to retrieve were those magnified images? As a husband, a father, a human being, it was impossible not to wonder: what would I have done? what would I have felt? what would I have chosen to keep of the past? The truth is that nobody can know, except in the extremity of that moment, and then the choice is not a choice at all, but an expression of the innermost sovereignty of the self, which decides because nothing now remains to cloud its vision.

In the manner of his choosing there was not a particle of hesitation, not the faintest glimmer of a doubt. Was it perhaps that in this moment of utter desolation there was some comfort in the knowledge of an impersonal effort? Could it be that he was seeking refuge in the one aspect of his existence that could not be erased by an act of nature? Or was there some consolation in the very lack of immediacy - did the value of those slides lie precisely in their exclusion from the unendurable pain of his loss? Whatever the reason, his mind had fixed upon a set of objects that derived their meaning from the part of his life that was lived in thought and contemplation.

There are times when words seem futile, and to no one more so than a

writer. At these moments it seems that nothing is of value other than to act and to intervene in the course of events: to think, to reflect, to write seem trivial and wasteful. But the life of the mind takes many forms and after the day had passed I understood that in the manner of his choosing, the Director had mounted the most singular, the most powerful defence of it that I would ever witness.

Amitav Ghosh

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GAATW E-Bulletin

Mach 14, 2005

Dear Members and Friends,

Greetings from the GAATW International Secretariat.

We are writing to you at the end of a fortnight which has brought mixed news from various quarters. Colleagues working with migrant workers have sent concerned messages and appealed to all to protest against the massive crackdown on undocumented migrants in Malaysia. Reportedly almost a hundred thousand undocumented Indonesians have not been paid their salaries since the start of the crackdown. The undocumented migrant workers who are caught are placed in inhumane detention centers with lack of access to food and medical facilities. Colleagues from Korea informed us that the issue of undocumented migrant workers is also becoming more serious in Korea. The government has set up task forces to check work places for undocumented workers and is considering various approaches to the problem even as migrant's rights groups are lobbying for human rights based provisions. Discussions are on-going in Japan to impose strict limits on the entertainment visa in an effort to curb trafficking. Colleagues report that no corresponding provision to provide assistance to women who are in a situation of debt bondage in Japan is being discussed and without that this bill may only create humiliation for women from certain countries in the hands of immigration officials. Human rights groups in the country have been seeking stronger support from the government for assistance to victims of trafficking but the available help is still not adequate.

Earlier this week women around the world celebrated International Women's day and messages of hope and courage reached us from many colleagues from around the world. Organised sex workers in India who have been celebrating Sex Workers Rights Day on 3 March every year chose the theme "Rehabilitation is Redundant, Recognise Rights" as the theme of this year's meeting. This fortnight also saw the conclusion of the 49th session of the Committee of the Status of Women in New York.

In this issue of the e-bulletin we bring you a short report on the CSW primarily based on input provided by colleagues who were present at the session.

At this year's CSW session in New York around 6,000 women gathered to collectively review the Beijing Platform for Action, (BPFA) a document to which many of them had contributed a decade ago. In addition to doing a review of the BPFA, the CSW session this year also aimed to review 'Women 2000: Gender, Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century'

another important document for women's rights activists. Also on the agenda were a discussion of current challenges and forward looking strategies for empowerment and an analysis of the Millennium Development Goals from a gender perspective.

A Reaffirmation of the BPFA

Two important global review documents were extremely helpful in tracking the progress in the empowerment of women. Beijing Betrayed, a review put together by WEDO with input from NGOs worldwide concludes that despite well meaning statements from so many governments many women in all regions of the world are actually worse off than they were ten years ago. (To read the Report go to <http://www.wedo.org/files/gmr2005.html>). These sentiments are also echoed in Ten Years After Beijing: Still More Promises than Progress, a report issued by the CSW also based on reports made by NGOs worldwide. Although in some regions there have been improvement in education, poverty reduction, women's health, social and legal status and participation in public life and greater visibility of women's issues the actual gains are nominal.

In the preparatory process held in various regions last year women's rights groups had decided that this session of the CSW would strongly reaffirm the goals put forth in the BPFA and by highlighting the dismal record of actual delivery demand greater accountability from states. Accordingly a declaration had been drafted to which no opposition was foreseen. However, in typical fashion the United States wanted to insert a clause in the declaration specifying that the BPFA does not create any new rights and that it does not include the right to abortion. With the Vatican as it's only ally the US kept pushing for this and plunged the entire gathering into turmoil. At the end of the first week, in the face of solid international consensus on the reaffirmation of the BPFA, the US withdrew its proposed amendment it succeeded in wasting precious time which could have been used for review of the BPFA. (See the text of the declaration of the CSW at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/documents/Declaration%20issued%20by%20the%20CSW%20as%20revised.pdf>). Are we to assume that the US was not aware of the legal status of the BPFA? Or are we to look at this as an effort to send messages to women around the world about the US domestic political agenda? What will follow? A conditional grant making policy that groups who are working on women's health and are advocating for safe abortion are not eligible for support? It is worth pointing out here that the United States is one of the few countries in the world that hasn't ratified the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, (CEDAW) which was adopted by the UN in 1979 and enjoys a high number of ratification. CEDAW doesn't even mention anything as controversial as abortion.

A Resolution on Trafficking

At this CSW session the US also proposed a resolution on trafficking and tried to open up old debates by bringing in language that conflict with the rights of affected people. By focusing exclusively on prostitution, the original language of the resolution was in effect ignoring the Palermo Protocol. Further, by looking at 'demand' in an extremely narrow way, it was potentially closing doors for those who are lobbying for change in immigration laws and recognition of demand for migrant work as a way of preventing trafficking. Finally, by taking an exclusively criminal justice approach it was ignoring the complex reality around us and paving ways for abuse of affected people by the state.

After rigorous negotiations the language of the resolution was changed to some extent and included other forms of exploitation and not just commercial sexual exploitation. The two-part resolution on reducing demand for trafficking women and girls, sponsored by the United States calls on governments to adopt or strengthen legislative or other measures to deter exploiters and discourage the demand that fostered trafficking of women and girls for all forms of exploitation. The resolution calls on governments and civil society to take appropriate measures to raise public awareness of the issue; implement educational programmes; undertake research on best practices, methods and strategies, information and mass media campaigns, and social and economic initiatives to prevent and combat trafficking in women and girls, particularly to eliminate demand; and encourage the business sector, in particular, the tourism industry and Internet providers, to develop or adhere to codes of conduct, with a view to preventing trafficking in persons.

After adoption the resolution on trafficking, as orally revised, without a vote many countries expressed their reservation to the language and commented that reference to the Palermo protocol should have been consistent. At the concluding session many countries also pointed out that tabling numerous resolutions diluted the main purpose of this CSW session and turned the meeting into a giant drafting committee and lobbying team. Representatives from many countries also expressed concern over the fact that negotiations on some resolutions were not transparent enough.

So how do we look at this new resolution or more importantly at this new buzz word from the US; 'demand'? Perhaps we can say that a resolution is just a resolution and not binding on anyone? But as we know the NGO community is not immune to trendy and catch phrases. So it will not be long before working on 'demand' will become the flavour of the month. How do we avoid over simplification and how do we ensure that this sudden enthusiasm to address demand will not harm the very people it seeks to help? Once again, we will do well to remember that criminal justice is a double edged weapon. Empowered by the governments and some NGOs who would like to reduce demand, the scale of brothel raids will escalate. Half hearted rehabilitation programmes will be launched. While the rich and famous who are involved in the scene will walk away, the women, their families and other poor people will bear the brunt of state action. And some well meaning NGOs will be party to this exploitation. (Visit the website of the sex workers project to (www.sexworkersproject.org) read their statement on demand. Also see GAATW's research report to the study coordinated by Bridget Anderson and Julia O'Connell Davidson The Demand Side of Trafficking, Part 1 Review of Evidence and Debates on "The Demand Side of Trafficking" , 2002 on our website.)

Adhering to the 'do no harm' principle, we will need to remind ourselves that the process of ending exploitation must start with participation of those who are being exploited. Among the available strategies to work with women in prostitution harm reduction has proved better as a strategy than criminalization. Facilitating organization of sex workers some of whom have gone on to work to stop trafficking has also worked in many developing countries. Exploitation is a complex web in which women are caught due to a number of factors, many of which are structural. The work to end all forms of exploitation is long term and can be very slow and certainly requires more commitment and dedication than entrusting the work to the state led criminal justice system.

PS: We are grateful to Nelia Sancho, Melissa Ditmore and Juhu Thukral who provided their input from New York to this e-bulletin. We are also thankful to all the womens' media groups who were providing regular updates via various on-line forums.

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GAATW E-bulletin

Mach 28, 2005

Dear Members and Friends,

Greetings from GAATW International Secretariat.

This issue of the e-bulletin comes to you with an invitation. We are inviting you to take a tiny break from your work and share a story with your fellow members and friends. The story should focus on an experience of 'border crossing'. For many of us border crossings have been anything but easy, even when we have all the legal papers to prove our legitimacy. Working with migrant workers, sex workers, domestic workers and trafficked women we also know that border crossings are far more traumatic for those who have much less formal education and other social privileges than us.

In meetings, seminars and conferences we have heard women narrate their experiences with unhelpful, rude and arrogant officials who interrogate them about completely irrelevant things. Sadly, sometimes we are told that those 'rude remarks and interrogations' are part of the anti-trafficking measures which the airlines and immigration officials might be taking. And once in a way, we have heard of incidents where either the officials or the people around have been very helpful assisting the person with the language and explaining why certain questions are being asked.

We are inviting you to share your own experience or an incident which you have observed at a border crossing point. It could also be a true story you have heard from someone else. These would be valuable for all us in getting a sense of the treatment that people, especially women of a certain social class, or from certain countries, or even of certain religious affiliations are currently facing. We can find out whether such treatments are one off incidents or really wide spread. And if indeed these 'treatments' are part of anti-trafficking initiatives we will need to raise awareness about humane and human rights based treatment. The happy experiences will serve as examples that border crossings do not really need to be so stressful.

Here is a story from the GAATW Secretariat:

This happened in 2001, at the Bangkok International airport while 5 of us were on our way to Venice for an event organized by Comitato, Italy. Our team had one GAATW Secretariat staff, two colleagues from EMPOWER, Bangkok, one colleague from Cambodia Prostitutes Union and one colleague from Cambodia Women's Development Agency.

All of us had our valid travel documents and confirmed tickets. We were all excited to be on this trip to one of the most beautiful cities in the world. It was a late night flight on Alitalia. We reached the airport two hours before the flight time, went to the check-in counter, presented the travel documents and tickets and waited. It seemed the process was taking much longer than it should. After nearly 20 minutes of going through all our papers, the man at the desk looked perplexed and made a telephone call. We did not understand what was going on and asked him if anything was wrong. He told us that he had asked an immigration person on duty to come and help him. It was not clear whether the person he had called was from any particular embassy and what his/her role would be.

A few minutes later a European woman came to the desk and started examining our papers. She flipped through every page of our passports and looked at them through a magnifying glass muttering under her breath all along. We were waiting, confused, worried and quite irritated. It felt as if they did not owe us any explanation or as if we did not exist for them. When this process of examination did not seem to end, finally one of us asked what the matter was and if there was any problem. The woman put down the magnifying glasses and looked surprised by the question.

'The problem,' she said rather severely, 'is that the airlines would not be able to let people travel without adequate documentation.' 'But then whose documentation is inadequate', we asked her. She sounded frustrated now, 'Oh, I am not sure why all of you are traveling. What you would be doing there.' 'But then the visa and passport will not give you all the details, will they? Why didn't you ask us directly and politely?', we said angrily and quickly rummaged through our bags for various papers that would prove our 'authenticity'. We told her about the organisations we work in and what we do. We gave her as many details as we could. She had more questions for the Thai women than for others and we told her to talk to the coordinator of EMPOWER on the mobile phone if she wanted. Finally, she decided that we could go. There were people looking at us from the other check-in counters. Before the woman left she looked at the GAATW IS staff said, 'madam, you work in an anti-trafficking organisation, so I am sure you will appreciate what I was doing.' 'I am sorry, I don't appreciate bad manners and harassment,' the GAATW staff replied. She did not bother to respond and walked out.

We now turned to the Thai desk clerk who was looking rather sheepish by that time. "So what made you suspicious about us," we asked him. He talked about a training he had undergone to stop trafficking, and added that he knew many poor women from Thailand go abroad for prostitution. While he did not think that it mattered, his boss had asked him to alert the immigration if anyone looked suspicious. He would lose his job if anything went wrong.

We took our boarding passes and left him to do his job. We had many questions and not as many answers. Yes, he might lose his job if the airlines detects a forged passport or visa at the destination point. Yes, airlines and immigration officials do

need to check documents properly—but how would he know if someone was really being trafficked but did not ‘look’ suspicious to him? He will be suspicious of women from his own country or from other poorer countries but will not worry about others who he does think of as ‘poor’. And the lady immigration officer, would she have talked to others who ‘looked like they are born to travel the world’? As for anti-trafficking trainings, we wondered, what ‘techniques of interception’ the resource persons had discussed in it.

So that was our story. We would like to hear from you.

Send your comments and stories to gaatw@gaatw.org

Until the next issue, good bye.

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GAATW E-bulletin

April 11, 2005

Dear Members and Friends,

Warm greetings from Bangkok! This bulletin is going out a few days in advance as our office will be closed from 13 to 17 April on the occasion of Thai traditional New Year celebrations.

'Songkran' or the 'water festival' as it is popularly known has a deep significance in Thai culture. "Songkran" is a word from the Sanskrit language which in this case refers to the orbit of the sun moving into Aries. It marks the end of a 12-month cycle and the beginning of a new solar year. The underlying significance of Songkran is the process of cleansing and purification - the purging of all ills, misfortune and evil and starting the New Year afresh with all that is good and pure. Water is symbolic of the cleaning process and signifies purity. This is also an occasion for thanks giving and family reunion. This festival is also celebrated in different ways in many parts of India, known there by different names such as Pana Sankranti, Vishubha Sankranti, Pahela Baishakh and Pongal.

In this issue of the e-bulletin we have attached for you the GAATW membership form and the basic principles of this Alliance. We hope that you will find time to read these documents carefully, complete the membership form and send it back to us as soon as possible. These documents are also posted on the GAATW website.

During 2004, Janice Fong from this office had carried out a membership revamp. At the moment our member's database has the details of only those who had responded to Janice's emails. Some of you had also sent in your profiles to her which are now on the GAATW website. We are requesting those members also to complete this form as this will enable us to learn more about your work and share it with other members. Kindly send us the completed forms by 27 April, 2005.

After the revamp process in mid-2004 we had stopped accepting any new membership applications. The issue of membership was discussed in the

various regional consultations and some formal decisions were taken. (Please visit the GAATW Membership page of our website for further details.) This was again discussed at the International Congress in December 2004 and many of you had commented that regional networking among members should be stronger and there should be sub-sites within the main GAATW site for various regions. Again this was discussed among some members last month.

We should not delay this any further and start working towards realization of our plans. The GAATW website now has the potential to have regional pages which can be coordinated by the members themselves. Please let us know who would like to volunteer from various regions to coordinate the regional sub-sites. Alternately, you can send us information to get the sub-sites started and afterwards some of you can take over.

New projects/activities which we have discussed with you via email are going to start now. Many of you have already sent in your expressions of interest. Attached is a summary activity plan for 2005. We will be sending you more specific details about some of the proposed activities early next week.

A word about membership might be in order here since this e-bulletin is going to many non-members as well. As all of you have pointed out on several occasions, membership is only one of the many ways to structure and organize the work of an alliance. People can be allies of GAATW without being members. Some organizations may not have the formal mandate to become the member of any Alliance but may be able to do collaborative work if it is along the lines of their organizational goal. We will be interested to hear from those groups as well. To those individuals who have been part of GAATW, please note that the Alliance will always rely on you for many important things and the secretariat is ever so grateful to you for your on-going support.

In the next issue we will share some of the border crossing stories which we have received.

Looking forward to your response.

GAATW International Secretariat

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Please note that we have not inserted the advertisements that may appear on this message. GAATW International Secretariat is not associated in any of these ads, over which we have no control of.

Attachments:

- A. GAATW Basic Principles (www.gaatw.org)
- B. GAATW Membership Forms (www.gaatw.org)
- C. Activity Plan 2005

ACTIVITY PLAN 2005

(Note: Some dates may change a little.)

1. Participation of Member Organizations in Relevant Regional & International Fora

(Note: Important events/forums will be identified every year. Ideas/suggestions for 2006 are welcome.)

The following events have been identified as important for 2005 and efforts will be made for participation of members from all regions in these events.

The WSF in Porto Allegre	January- 2005
The CSW sessions on Beijing+10 in New York	Feb-March-2005
The 7 th ICAAP in Kobe, Japan	July 2005
The International Women's Health Meeting in New Delhi, India	September 2005
The AWID Conference in Bangkok, Thailand	October 2005
The WTO meeting in Hong Kong, SAR	December 2005

Output: Briefings, reports etc

2. Staff Exchange Programme among Member Organizations

(Note: Will be held every year) (Details will be sent soon to all members. Focuses on the groups who are providing direct assistance.)

Preparatory communication	January-May 2005
Orientation workshop	June 2005 (5 days)
Internship	July to mid-August 2005
Debriefing workshop	October 2005 (3 days)
Publication of collated report	February 2006

Output: Reports and a publication

3. Workshop on Legal Assistance to victims of trafficking

(Also focuses on groups who are providing legal assistance to victims.)

Preparatory work	May -October 2005
Workshop	November 2005
Documentation	Nov 2005-February 2006
Dissemination	February 2006
Possible advocacy	In foras in 2006

Output: Documentation on good legal practices

4. Annual Consultation with self-organized groups

(Trafficking survivors, migrant women's groups, sex workers groups, etc)

Preparation	May-August 2005
Consultation	Late September 2005
Documentation	Oct-November 2005
Dissemination	Dec 2005 onwards

Output: A report/publication/video CD

5. First Meeting of the working group on Emerging Issues

(Jyoti Sanghera will make the first contact with people.)

A 3 year Schedule

Identify issues, persons, contact them etc	January-May 2005
Is does the background work, commissions concept paper, prepares for the first meeting of the WG	May-October 2005
The WG sets up a work plan for collaborative research, identifying researchers among the MOs and the first briefing of the researchers and the WG to design the research plan/s	Nov 2005-January 2006
First meeting/s after preliminary data collection	Mid to late-2006
Final meeting/s to analyze data	Beginning of 2007
launching of the reports	Late 2007
Dissemination	2008 onwards

Output: Conceptual Research papers

6. Networking Among members in various regions and regional chapters

(Based on the discussions which the groups had in the last month with each other)

Europe	Translation of material	2005-7
	e-group,	June 2005 onwards
	webpage	June 2005 onwards
	Annual regional report	2005 report by March 2006
LAC	Identifying tasks	May 2005
	Mapping of the region	June-Dec
	e-group	June onwards
	Translation of material	June onwards
	Annual report	March 2006
South and Central Asia	Identify more women's rights groups	On-going
	Cooperation on information production	
	Annual report	March 2006
Southeast and East Asia	Use ICAAP to network in Japan	July 2005
	Identify groups in new countries	June onwards
	Annual report	March 2006

Output: Members page managed by the members, annual regional reports, possible publications and translations

7. Completion of the research project with women migrant workers in Thailand

Completion of the bi-lingual report	Jan-September 2005
Paper presentation in ICAAP	July 2005
Sharing meeting in Bangkok	September 2005
Dissemination of result	September 2005 onwards

8. **Special Project** (Supporting the self-organized women's drop-in centre in Maesot, Thailand)

Activity Plan with time line

On-going work with women on health and other issues, preparation and dissemination of information in Burmese	Jan-Dec 2005
Monthly meeting of IS staff and the group	Jan-Dec 2005
Preparation for ICAAP	May- June 2005
Recap of last training, Revision of last module	June 2005
Participation in sharing meeting and IWHM	September 2005

Output: Information material in Burmese

9. **Research, Documentation and Information Services of the IS**

(This activity plan also includes the documentation schedule of other planned activities)

Revamp of Website	Step one is completed by mid-March 2005 --- on-going development and update
Regular bi-monthly e-bulletins Sending special information via email	January-Dec 2005 and beyond
Production of Thematic Newsletters	July and December each year
Working towards a digital library Start by putting up as many relevant documents on the website and set up links with free access library databases	April 2005 onwards
Sending out updated information on membership criteria etc and updating the database	April 2005
Creating new non-member databases such as 'allies of GAATW', 'resource persons', 'medial contacts' and regular update	May-June 2005
Preparing dossiers on demand side of trafficking, forced migration, forced labour	June-October 2005

Completion of the report of the Dec 2004 congress	Jan-Feb 2005
Completion of the video report of the Dec 2004 congress	Jan-March 2005
Preparation of flyers, briefing materials, presentations etc as per the event	Jan-Dec 2005 and onwards

10. Other Matters (Organizational Activities of the IS)

Staff Developments/ Meetings	Jan-Dec 2005 onwards
Financial and Administrative Work	Jan-Dec 2005 onwards
Communication Work	Jan-Dec 2005 onwards
Maintenance of the Resource Centre	Jan-Dec 2005 onwards
Visits/ Study Tours	-- (upon request) --
Annual Board Meeting	October 2005



GAATW E-bulletin

April 28, 2005

Dear Members and Friends

Greetings from Bangkok. We are writing at the end of a fortnight which witnessed several important international meetings that have implications for our work. Here are some details of those meetings and other news:

61st session of the UN Commission on Human Rights

- The 61st session of the UN Commission on Human Rights ended on 22 April, 2005 in Geneva. The Commission adopted texts on Civil and Political Rights, Rights of Women, Rights of the Child and Special Groups. Lalaina Rakotoarisoa was appointed Special Rapporteur and entrusted with preparing a detailed study on the difficulties of establishing guilt and/or responsibilities with regard to crimes of sexual violence. Yozo Yokota and Chin-Sung Chung were also appointed Special Rapporteurs entrusted with the task of preparing a comprehensive study on discrimination based on work and descent. The terms of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants were extended by three years. Details of the resolutions adopted at this year's session are available at the UNHCHR website: <http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/815D1986B09771EAC1256FE9002C61C6?opendocument>

One the most important issues discussed at this year's session was the revitalization of the Commission itself. The UN Secretary General in his address on 7 April, underscored the need to strengthen this body. Acknowledging the valuable work which the Commission has done on 'articulating, codifying and enshrining rights' and noting that the 'era of declarations' is giving way to the 'era of implementation,' Mr. Kofi Annan called for a dramatic change in the status of the Commission and recommended that there should be a Human Rights Council similar to the ones on Security and Development. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights will present a plan of action for change on 20 May and has invited input from concerned parties including members of the civil society. A joint NGO statement on overall UN human rights reform is available at the file sharing section of the IWRAP Asia Pacific site at <http://list.iwraw->

ap.org/lists/info/cedaw4change To read the full speech of Mr. Kofi Annan, go to <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/chr/docs/61chr/sgchr.doc>

Asia-Africa Summit

- The last fortnight also brought over 50 heads of states and many media people from Asia and Africa to Jakarta, Indonesia. This summit commemorated the Golden Jubilee of the Asian-African conference held in 1955 in Bandung, Indonesia. The theme of the present summit, "Reinvigorating the Bandung Spirit: Working Towards a New Asian-African Strategic Partnership", aimed to mark the dawn of a new era of cooperation among countries of the two regions. While many commentators remained skeptical about the real outcome of this summit and dismissed it as mere rhetoric, this gathering also brought in a wave of nostalgia for the visionary leaders of the past when the newly independent states in Asia and Africa had joined hands to fight colonialism, imperialism, racism, discrimination, and to claim equal rights for all other colonized nations in order to bring forth a just and peaceful world. The recently concluded summit reaffirmed the basic principles of the 1955 Bandung summit and leaders promised each other to join forces to resist the emerging unilateral world order. For more details on the Asia-Africa summit go to <http://www.asianafricansummit2005.org>

11th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

- The government of Thailand hosted the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on 18-25 April, 2005 in Bangkok. The Congress unanimously adopted the "Bangkok Declaration" which addressed issues such as trafficking in human beings, money-laundering, corruption, "cyber crime", and restorative justice. Entitled "Synergies and Responses: Strategic Alliances in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice", the declaration was a reaffirmation of commitment by member states to combat human trafficking and assist victims of the crime. For the full text of the Bangkok declaration go to <http://www.un.org/webcast/crime2005/statements/25draftbkkdeclaration.pdf>

Launch of Platform for the Migrant Workers' Convention

- An International NGO Platform on the Migrant Workers' Convention (IPMWC) has been formed to facilitate the promotion, implementation and monitoring of the United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. It is a civil society initiative to encourage NGO involvement in the monitoring and the implementation of this core international human rights treaty. The Platform will also engage with the other UN treaty supervisory bodies from a migrants' rights perspective. The Platform has received the support of the newly established UN Committee of independent experts set up to monitor the implementation of the Convention. A flyer for the platform including its NGO member organisations is available at: <http://www.december18.net/web/docpapers/doc2623.doc>

Any non-governmental organisation working or planning to work on the protection of the human rights of migrant workers is welcome to join the IPMWC as a member. For more information about the Platform and how to become a member go to: <http://www.december18.net/web/general/page.php?pageID=530&menuID=36&lang=EN>

(Source: Anti-Slavery International's Trafficking Network Update, May 2005)

Concerns over the closure of dance bars in Mumbai, India

- Over the last fortnight we have received several messages from colleagues in India who have expressed concern over the sudden decision of the Maharashtra state government to ban 'dancing clubs' in Mumbai and other cities in the state. Women's rights groups are worried that this decision would just be a measure to 'show' to the US that some action was being taken to stop trafficking. Varsha Kale, president of the Bharatiya Bar Girls Union, said, "A large number of the city's 75,000 bar girls will now have to resort to sex-work as this is the only alternate source of income for them." For the US State Department's interim trafficking in persons report on various countries visit <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2004/>

Our Alliance

- We at the GAATW IS would like to thank all those who have sent us the completed membership forms. We are grateful that you have made time for this additional paper work. The information you are sending will help us in learning more about you and sharing it with other members. We have attached the membership form again with this bulletin. Kindly send in the completed forms at your earliest. May we also remind those members who had wanted to create regional web pages to get started with the work. Alfie from the IS will be able to help you with the web pages.
- The response to the proposed staff exchange programme has been great. Early next week we will get back to you with a summary of the responses so that planning for the orientation meeting in June, 2005 can start. The details of the staff exchange programme is attached again, as some of you do not seem to have received it.
- The call for contributions to the July 2005 issue of Alliance News has been sent to many of you and also posted on GAATW website. We have attached it with this bulletin too. We are looking forward to your input to the newsletter. Please note that activity updates from member organisations are most welcome. You could also share details regarding your recent publications and training modules.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards from the IS.

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 - We strongly encourage members and friends to send us their input to the e-bulletin at gaatw@gaatw.org
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Attachments:

A. Call for contributions to the Alliance News, July 2005

Alliance News is the bi-annual thematic newsletter of the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW). It has a global readership that includes NGOs, academia and interested individuals. Relevant articles are also translated into other languages. We are inviting colleagues to share their work with the readership by contributing a piece to the next issue of Alliance News.

Theme: *Migration, Trafficking and Health*

The health of women migrant workers and trafficked women has been the topic of many research projects. There are also several organisations whose work focuses on this specific area of work. Further, many organisations that provide assistance to migrant workers and trafficked persons address the issue of health.

The last few years have seen a rapid trend in many developing countries towards privatization of the health care system. Instead of exploring ways to ensure health services for all, some developing countries are making a strong bid to promote health tourism which essentially aims to attract wealthy people from other developing countries and offers services at comparatively lower costs to tourists from developed countries.

What happens in the present context to the health care of migrants in nominally paid, unprotected workplaces? What are the specific health problems that trafficked persons face and what is being done about it? How do undocumented migrants deal with their health problems where high costs and lack of legal status make the situation extremely difficult? How do young persons, especially girls and women, who are away from home and may lack social support systems, begin to understand the changes that happen to their bodies? Who do they talk to? Where do they get the much needed emotional support from? What steps are the women's and people's health movements taking to address the situation of migrants and trafficked persons?

We invite contributions that are grounded in action-research, human rights and empowerment work, as well as policy advocacy. We welcome submissions from colleagues who are providing assistance to migrant workers and trafficked persons in countries of origin and destination at detention centres, drop-in centres and shelter homes and from health activists and advocacy groups who are lobbying for policy changes. We are particularly interested in the accounts by migrant women and trafficked women who have organised themselves to address the issue of health along with other issues. We look forward to learning about innovative experiments, training modules and rights based actions that are currently being undertaken in different countries.

Contributions can be between 1500-3000 words and should be written in clear, simple English. It would also be possible to carry out on-line interviews with groups who have important experiences to share but do not have time to write a piece.

Deadlines:

May 5, 2005: Let us know if you would be contributing a piece. Send a short description of your piece and some details of your/ your organisation's work. Let us know if you would like to be interviewed on-line instead of writing a piece.

May 31, 2005: Send us the article

Please reply to: Alfie Gordo, Communications Officer, GAATW
<alfie@gaatw.org>

Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women
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Email: gaatw@gaatw.org
Website: www.gaatw.org

B. Staff Exchange Programme

Dear Colleagues,

As discussed earlier we are now ready to start the preparations for the staff exchange programme for 2005. This programme is open to organizations who provide direct assistance to victims of human trafficking, to migrant workers in difficult circumstances, to sex workers, domestic workers and other women in the informal economy. Member organizations of GAATW will have priority to participate.

Interested groups are requested to send in an expression of interest by 20 April after which we can set up an e-group of the interested groups to discuss the details further. A form has been attached with this email. Kindly fill it in and send to this address.

Following are the details of the programme:

Background:

This idea has come up several times in consultations with member organizations. The general feeling among many member groups who provide direct assistance to victims of trafficking is that often the staff who work at different ends of the same spectrum do not really know what the situation is like at the other end. For example, a staff providing assistance to a repatriated trafficking victim in Nigeria may not actually know what the situation is in Italy and vice versa. Even between the countries within the same region there is very little exchange at this level. People who attend conferences may not be the ones who are working on a day to day basis in shelter homes, detention centres and in counselling. For example, DMSC which works in Calcutta does not have much contact in Bangladesh and Nepal even though the distances are nominal.

It has also been suggested that this programme should include groups providing assistance to undocumented migrants, to sex workers, domestic workers and other occupational groups and not focus exclusively on groups providing assistance to victims of trafficking. Discussions with colleagues in various meetings and most recently at the Dec 2004 International congress of GAATW, has made it clear that the reality of 'trafficking' is far more complex than the 'rescue, repatriation and rehabilitation' paradigm makes it appear. Organizations who work on the ground experience first hand the nexus between trafficking, migration and unprotected work within the informal work and try to provide the most feasible support to the persons. An exchange programme among these colleagues will help us see the strengths and limitations of the anti-trafficking measures. It will also create better cooperation among groups working in different countries.

Objectives

The objectives as such are

- To obtain a clear picture of the issues around direct assistance including legal in both the origin and destination countries
- To share this information with relevant personnel so that lacunae can be addressed

Role of the GAATW International Secretariat

The IS will

- Discuss this in detail with interested groups
- Set up an e- group who will prepare a check list of issues to observe during the exchange/internship period
- Organize an orientation meeting of the colleagues who will do the internship to make a clear plan
- Communicate with the interns through an e-group
- Organize a debriefing at the end of internship period to decide on issues which need collective addressing
- Collate the reports of the interns and publish a document to be shared with others

Projected Outcome

- Better cross border understanding and cooperation on direct assistance
- Possibility of advocacy for better provisions for trafficked persons and undocumented migrant workers

Activity Plan with Time Line

This has been discussed via email with member organizations and some have already shown interest. Many others have strongly recommended that this should be a regular activity with at least one in take per year and indicated that they would like to join next year. This email is the formal invitation to join the programme.

During April and May 2005 discussions will be held with the participants to share preliminary information and identify specific issues which the interns will need to focus on. An orientation workshop for the interns will be held in June 2005. The 6 weeks internship period will commence in July after which a debriefing workshop will be held. If all participants feel that the debriefing workshop should be held immediately after the internship the dates can be advanced.

Preparatory communication

January-May 2005

Orientation workshop

June 2005 (5 days)

Internship

July to mid-August 2005

Debriefing workshop

October 2005 (3 days)

Publication of collated report

February 2006

Looking forward to hear back from you.

Warmest regards.

Bandana

Bandana Pattanaik
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Expression of Interest to join the Staff Exchange Programme among Member Organizations of GAATW

1. Name and contact details of your organisation: _____
2. Details of your work highlighting your direct assistance activities (attach relevant reports or publications)
3. Would you like to: _____
 - Send a staff to a sister organisation
(Specify to which country and if you already know the name of the organisation, give their details)
 - Receive a colleague from a sister organisation
(Specify from which country and if you already know them, give their details.)

- Both send and receive
(Give details if possible)

4. What kind of hospitality can you offer to the guest colleague? E.g. Accommodation, a small allowance etc.

5. Would you be able to contribute towards the travel cost of the intern?

If you would like the GAATW International Secretariat to match you up with organizations in a certain country, please indicate.

Responsibilities of participating organizations:

While we are trying our best to raise funds for the airfare of all interns and the costs of the two meetings we would welcome any contribution from the member organizations towards that.

All host organizations are requested to make some kind of a hospitality gesture for the colleague from the sister organisation such as providing accommodation etc. Of course other support and guidance during the internship period is also crucial.

We request all organizations who are interested to send a colleague to a sister organisation in another country, to keep the person on her full pay and other remunerations. It will also be important to make a careful selection by choosing a person who has some experience in providing assistance.



GAATW E-bulletin

May 17, 2005

Dear Members and Friends,

Greetings from the GAATW International Secretariat.

Two important e-mail messages were sent to all of you last week and we would like to start this e-bulletin with a recap on those.

The first message was on the recent ILO report on forced labour. We had forwarded the links to the report to you. We hope that by now some of you have had time to read the report. A few colleagues have gotten back to us with a request to check out with all of you whether GAATW could provide an input on the report to the upcoming ILO annual conference on 31 May-16 June 2005. Details of the conference are available at:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/>

The discussion at the upcoming ILO conference next month may provide us with an opportunity to try and influence what the ILO team working on forced labour and trafficking does over the next 4 years. We have been informed by colleagues that the comments made on the last report in 2001 were very influential. There are two ways of doing this and indeed both can be done if some of you take a proactive role and act fast:

- Based on your input we can prepare a statement and send it in to ILO directly. The statement would have comments on the report and suggestions on what ILO should be doing on the issue of human trafficking and forced labour. We hope that some of you can help us in preparing a draft input.
- You can also send the same statement, adding country specific examples, to your government delegates and trade union delegates who are attending the conference. We understand that some of you do have good contacts with national trade unions or with NGOs who have been working with trade unions. So this is the time to put those contacts to good use.

Remember, we need to act fast on this one.

The second message was a forwarded sign-on letter which we had received from colleagues working on the issue of human rights, health and trafficking. The letter invited you to join a protest against the narrow minded, conditional grant making policies of the US which will ultimately harm the very people who we are seeking to help. We would like to emphasize that joining the protest against the US grant making policy is not about 'promoting prostitution' it is about saying no to neo-imperialistic, unilateral policies that aim to silence debates, participation and engagement and pretend that one country has answers to everyone's problems. The government of Brazil has just shown all of us that it is possible not to give in to such unfair policies and reject the grants.

We hope that many of you have sent in your letters to the address given in the letter. If you haven't yet, please send the letter today.

Update from the Secretariat

- We are happy to report that the staff exchange programme now has participation of member organisations from all regions of the world. This year's staff exchange programme focuses on direct assistance and most groups have chosen to spend some time with a sister organisation in a country with which they have cross border link with regard to trafficking. Alfie from the Secretariat is setting up an e-group for the participants.
- The comprehensive membership form has proved very helpful as we now have more information about the work and areas of interest of the groups.
- We are also glad that many colleagues are now being able to use the publications by just downloading it from the GAATW website. Translations of some publications into Japanese, Portuguese and Chinese are underway. Part of the website is now available in Spanish.
- Member organisations who had expressed an interest in being part of the GAATW facilitated workshop at the International Women's Health Meeting scheduled to be held in New Delhi in September will be happy to know that our proposal has been accepted.
- Of the two proposals submitted to the AWID conference one has been accepted as they are able to accept only one entry per organisation. We hope that many of you have also submitted entries from your organisation and we hope to see some of you here in Bangkok at the AWID conference in October.

And finally, we have a request to Organisations who Provide Legal Assistance to Victims of Human Trafficking:

At the December International Congress many of you pointed out that even though there has been a lot of focus on prosecution of traffickers since the formulation of the Palermo Protocol, the number of prosecution globally is not very high. More important than that, as many of you pointed out, we do not have enough information on cases where the victims of trafficking have received adequate protection and compensation. A request was made to the GAATW Secretariat to find out from members and colleagues in different parts of the world details on successful legal interventions which also resulted in adequate protection and compensation for the victims. Everyone felt that sharing such information may result in replication of good practices. In fact, there was also a request to hold an intensive workshop involving all parties—the NGOs, the legal professionals and the victims and share the various factors which helped in getting adequate protection measures.

So if your organisation has handled any trafficking cases or if you know of an organisation that has handled any trafficking cases in the last three years and has been able to get adequate victim protection, we request you to share the cases with us. A simple questionnaire has been attached to this e-bulletin requesting you to share some information. We look forward to hearing back from you on this.

GAATW International Secretariat

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Attachment:

Request to colleagues who provide legal assistance to victims of human trafficking

Dear Friends,

This is to request you to share some information with us which will be shared with the member organisations of GAATW who would like learn from the experiences of colleagues in various parts of the world.

We thank you for your cooperation in filling in this questionnaire and sending it back to gaatw@gaatw.org by 25 May, 2005.

Sincerely,

Alfie Gordo
Communications Officer
GAATW International Secretariat

Questions

1. How many cases of human trafficking have you taken to the law courts in the last 3 years?
2. How many involve children and how many involve adults?
3. How many cases involve trafficking for prostitution, how many for other forms such as forced marriage, domestic work, factory work etc?
4. How many cases have resulted in prosecution of the traffickers and also adequate compensation for the victim/s? Could you give some details of those cases? Which factors helped?
5. If the number of 'successful' cases were not many, how would you describe the difficulties?
6. What are your recommendations for better legal assistance to victims of trafficking?
7. Would you like to have more discussions with colleagues who are also providing legal assistance to victims of trafficking in other parts of the world? If yes how do you propose we facilitate a discussion:
 - Via an e-group
 - Via an intensive workshop involving various parties in the case (such as the legal professional, the trafficked person and the case initiating NGO)
 - By using the above two modes, documenting the information and sharing with all members and colleagues



GAATW E-bulletin

May 27, 2005

Dear Members and Friends,

Greetings from Bangkok! Tomorrow (28 May) is International Day of Action for Women's Health. The decision to commemorate the day was taken by the participants of a meeting in 1987 organised by the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR). In 1999, it was officially acknowledged by the government of South Africa and since then, many calls for action have been initiated globally. With this bulletin we have attached in PDF file a copy of the call for action initiated by WGNRR this year.

Health issues of migrant workers and trafficked persons have been of great concern to many of our member organisations. We are aware that many of you have been providing the much needed services to take care of the physical and mental health of migrants in difficult situations and trafficked persons in destination countries as well as in countries of origin upon their return. Special mention must be made of the groups who are providing assistance to undocumented migrants (who often do not receive any assistance from other sources). Also noteworthy are the attempts of groups who have started self-help health initiatives in various parts of the world. The upcoming issue of the Alliance News in July 2005 will feature some of those initiatives.

Legal Initiatives to Address Human Trafficking

Many of you must be aware of the recently completed Council of Europe Convention on Trafficking. To date, 14 European countries have signed the Convention; Armenia, Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Iceland, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Sweden. Anti-Slavery International, Amnesty International and other organisations are calling on all European countries to ratify the Convention. For a joint press release, the full text of the Convention and other information go to: <http://www.antislavery.org/archive/press/latestpressrelease.htm>

Sex Workers in Bangladesh Protest against US Policy

A large number sex workers in Bangladesh have raised their strong voice in protest of the policy of Bush administration of USA that prohibit US global AIDS fund from going to any group or organization that does not pledge opposition to prostitution. In a gathering organized by Sex Workers Network of Bangladesh and supported by Sanghati, an alliance of more than 86 organizations, the women presented termed the decision of Bush administration as undemocratic, inhuman and against individual freedom. They emphasized that the US policy will seriously undermine the HIV/AIDS prevention and care activities worldwide and increase the stigma and discrimination against sex workers worldwide.

GAATW Website

Some parts of our website are now available in two new languages - in Spanish and in Russian. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our friends from Proyecto Esperanza, Spain and the Center Against Violence and Human Trafficking, Russia for making this possible. We hope that the Japanese section will be ready by the time the next e-bulletin goes out.

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GAATW E- boletín

14 Junio 2006

Queridos miembros y amigos,

Este es un momento especial para estar en Tailandia ya que se celebran los 60 años de reinado del rey Bhumibol Aduljadej. La gente viste camisetas amarillas en señal de patriotismo y lucen pulseras con el mensaje "Larga Vida al Rey"; el Río Chao Phraya renace para la Ceremonia de las Barge Reales y dignatarios de todo el mundo vienen para unirse a unas celebraciones que nos recuerdan que celebrar es una parte maravillosa del hecho de ser humanos. Esto es especialmente importante para todos nosotros, que luchamos diariamente contra la parte oscura de la naturaleza humana.

El vertiginoso ritmo de eventos organizados por el Secretariado Internacional se va calmando poco a poco. Nuestro reto ahora consiste en hacer realidad todos aquellos planes y proyectos que han resultado de las diferentes conversaciones que han tenido lugar.

LO MAS DESTACADO A NIVEL GLOBAL

Liberada en Birmania activista contra los trabajos forzados.

Su Su Nway, una activista Birmana clave por su lucha contra los trabajos forzados en su país fue liberada de la prisión donde cumplía condena el 6 de Junio. Su Su Nway es la primera persona en Birmania que logró demandar a las autoridades locales de su área por prácticas de trabajos forzados. Sin embargo, Su Su Nway fue demandada a su vez por difamación y sentenciada a 18 meses de cárcel. *"Estoy bien pero no me siento ni feliz ni triste por mi liberación porque los trabajos forzados aún existen en Birmania. Continuaré luchando contra ésta y otras formas de abusos contra los derechos humanos"*, comentó Su Su Nway a La Voz Democrática de Birmania. Para más información consultar: <http://english.dvb.no/news.php?id=7213>

Suecia anuncia el nombramiento de un embajador especial sobre la trata de seres humanos.

Este embajador, cuyo nombre se anunciará próximamente, trabajará con organizaciones internacionales y multinacionales, otros países y con agencias de desarrollo. Suecia ha nombrado anteriormente embajadores similares sobre terrorismo, derechos humanos y asistencia humanitaria.

Cooperación Transnacional.

Aunque la cooperación transnacional es fundamental a la hora de trabajar sobre la trata y las migraciones, y aunque es alentador ver que se firman acuerdos entre países, una

perspectiva de base y local nos permite cuestionarnos a veces el impacto real de estos acuerdos. Solidaritas Perempuan, una ONG de Indonesia, ha cuestionado el reciente Acuerdo firmado entre los gobiernos de Indonesia y Malasia sobre trabajadores inmigrantes. Esta organización afirma que el Acuerdo apoya los intereses de los empleadores y de las agencias de contratación frente a los intereses de las trabajadoras domésticas inmigrantes. Para leer la declaración completa por favor accede a nuestra página web. Para recibir más información contactar a SP en soliper@centrin.net.id.
<http://gaatw.net/content/view/288/1/>

El Informe de 2006 sobre la Trata de Personas del Departamento de Estado de los Estados Unidos se ha hecho público:

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/66086.pdf>

DESDE EL SECRETARIADO

Segunda Reunión Anual de Grupos Auto-Organizados "Haciendo que nuestras voces se escuchen", 22-29 Mayo, Suphanburi, Tailandia



Los Grupos Auto-Organizados (GAOs) miembros de la GAATW, entre los que se incluyen trabajadores emigrantes, supervivientes de la trata y trabajadoras sexuales, participaron en un curso de formación, orientación y auto-ayuda facilitado por Sabala y Kranti. Nancy (de Action for Reach Out, Hong Kong), facilitó una sesión sobre como hablar en público y representantes del Centro de Mujeres de San Yar Thi Pan en Mae Sot (Tailandia) dieron formación a las participantes sobre el uso de remedios naturales. Bandana del SI facilitó las

discusiones sobre empoderamiento, sostenibilidad y auto-suficiencia ayudando a que las participantes compartieran cuáles son sus retos principales. Planes para asegurar fondos para otro seminario dirigido a la formación de formadores de los GAOs están en marcha. Hay más información sobre esta reunión disponible en nuestra página web. ¡Felicitaciones a June por organizar una reunión que alisa el camino para el fortalecimiento de los miembros Auto-Organizados!

Foto: Mujeres creando su futuro activamente: participantes en la segunda reunión anual de GAOs

Cristianos contra la Trata (CAT) III: "Enlazando las Redes", 29-31 Mayo, Utrecht, Holanda, organizada por la Comisión de Iglesias para Emigrantes en Europa (The Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe-CCME).

Esta reunión forma parte de el proyecto "Trata de Personas: Nuevos Retos, Nuevas Alianzas", organizado por la CAT. Bandana y Nerea participaron en ella. Algunos de los puntos más sobresalientes fueron:

- El mapeo de las Redes anti-trata europeas, sus áreas de trabajo y cuáles son los principales retos en el contexto europeo.
- El intercambio de información en relación al cabildeo a nivel regional.
- Información sobre el contexto anti-trata en Holanda, las redes existentes y las principales áreas de trabajo.

Se acordó que la información relativa a eventos/reuniones clave y a los resultados de éstas circulará de forma regular entre las diversas redes participantes. Especialmente importante para la GAATW fue tener la oportunidad de conocer a personas y organizaciones con las que se ha mantenido una comunicación regular así como recibir información de primera mano sobre la situación anti-trata en Europa y sobre aquellos asuntos especialmente importantes que se están discutiendo en el continente.

Reunión Informal con algunas organizaciones Europeas parte de la GAATW, 1 de Junio, Ámsterdam, Holanda.

Aprovechando la presencia de Bandana y Nerea en Holanda para participar en la reunión de la CAT se organizó una reunión informal de un día con algunas de las organizaciones miembros de la GAATW en Europa. Fue una ocasión para compartir información entre el SI y las participantes, discutir objetivos comunes para futuras campañas, discutir sobre la posibilidad de preparar un informe regional sobre el tema de la trata, y afianzar mecanismos para fortalecer la comunicación entre el SI y los miembros europeos de la GAATW.

Encuentro de Acceso a la Justicia, 7-9 Junio, Bangkok (Tailandia)

Abogados especializados en derechos humanos, ONGs que brindan asistencia legal a víctimas de la trata, miembros de la policía, fiscales y supervivientes de la trata que han experimentado procesos judiciales provenientes de 10 países se reunieron en Bangkok para tomar parte en este evento organizado por la GAATW.

Lo más sobresaliente del evento fue la posibilidad de escuchar a una gran diversidad de voces de todo el mundo compartiendo sus experiencias desde posiciones diversas, y especialmente, oír a las supervivientes de la trata que demostraron una valentía y una determinación extraordinaria en sus esfuerzos por buscar justicia. Aunque los participantes vinieron de contextos legales y sociales diferentes encontraron puntos de base comunes y quedó claro que todos ellos comparten los mismos ideales y también frustraciones similares. Al final acordamos objetivos y estrategias comunes para ampliar el acceso a la justicia para víctimas de la trata. Algunos de los resultados del Encuentro son la redacción de una nota de prensa que estará seguida por un informe sobre el Encuentro así como por un breve "documento común" que recoja las conclusiones y los objetivos comunes de cabildeo. Al mismo tiempo el SI empezará a crear una base de datos a las que todos los miembros puedan contribuir y que facilite el intercambio de información, casos concretos y documentos clave sobre el acceso a la justicia para víctimas de la trata en todo el mundo.

Queremos agradecer a Jackie Pollock y Elaine Pearsons la facilitación de dos de las sesiones del seminario. También expresamos nuestra gratitud a Elaine, Siriporn Skrobanek, Anne Gallagher, Uthaiwan Jamsutee y Usa Lerdsrisantad por sus consejos a la hora de diseñar los contenidos del Encuentro. ¡El equipo del SI celebra la exitosa organización por parte de Eleanor y Nerea de este evento pionero en el área de acceso a la justicia para las víctimas de la trata!

MATERIALES

Eventos

Dinero y Movimientos, 9-11 Noviembre 2006, Oaxaca, México, organizado por AWID y Semillas.

Este evento es la continuación del excelente informe publicado por AWID: "¿Dónde está el dinero para los derechos de las mujeres?" Esta reunión de movimientos por los derechos de las mujeres busca propiciar un diálogo sobre nuevas formas, estrategias y retos en la búsqueda de fondos.

<http://www.awid.org/moneyandmovements/>

Conferencia sobre **"Cuestiones Emergentes y Nuevos Retos: Género Y Derechos Humanos en el Sudeste Asiático, incluyendo Sociedades en Transición en la Sub-región del Mekong (Tailandia, Lao PDR, Vietnam, Camboya y Myanmar)"**. Organizada por WARI (Women's Action and Resource Initiative). El objetivo de esta conferencia es analizar los roles socio-económicos de la mujer en los contextos cambiantes de la sub-región, así como las oportunidades y los esfuerzos por parte de los gobiernos y ONGs para aumentar las contribuciones por parte de las mujeres. Bandana del SI de la GAATW participará en la mesa redonda sobre Género, Migración, Trata y Trabajo de la Mujer. <http://geocities.com/wari9/conference2006.htm>

Informes

Informe del Secretario General de las Naciones Unidas sobre Migración y Desarrollo. http://www.un.org/esa/population/hldmigration/Text/Report_of_the_SG%28June06%29_English.pdf

Esta es una lectura clave para toda aquella persona trabajando en el área de las migraciones. El informe afirma que las migraciones pueden beneficiar tanto a los países de origen como de destino, pero que esto dependerá de que los derechos de los emigrantes sean respetados. También revela las nuevas formas cómo los gobiernos están manejando este fenómeno global. Finalmente, el informe propone la creación de un foro permanente en el que los gobiernos puedan explorar y compartir sus políticas migratorias.

Llamado para contribuciones

El próximo número de la Revista Migraciones Forzadas (Forced Migration Review) incluirá una sección sobre *Violencia sexual en situaciones de conflicto y más allá*, que explorará los retos y oportunidades para luchar contra la violencia sexual en contextos de conflicto y post-conflicto. En estos momentos se están recogiendo contribuciones que tengan un enfoque práctico y que traten sobre aspectos clave, retos, buenas prácticas, programas innovadores y recomendaciones. La fecha final de entrega de artículos es el 8 de Septiembre de 2006. Para recibir más información por favor visitar: <http://www.fmreview.org/forthcoming.htm>.

"Me llevé mi uniforme de la cárcel conmigo porque sé que tendré que volver a la cárcel hasta que Birmania recupere su democracia".

Su Su Nway, activista birmana contra trabajos forzados recientemente liberada de prisión

El boletín de la GAATW se envía a todas las organizaciones miembros de la Alianza al igual que a muchos de sus amigos/as y ONG's hermanas a nivel mundial.

El e-boletín se publica dos veces al mes; el 14 y 28 de cada mes. La versión española se envía tres días después de la versión en inglés. Algunas veces también se envía por correo electrónico información adicional y/o recordatorios a las organizaciones miembros.

El boletín pretende ser principalmente un instrumento de comunicación entre el Secretariado Internacional y los miembros de la Alianza, cubriendo así un amplio abanico de temas, aunque las cuestiones relacionadas con la trata continuarán siendo el tema principal. El boletín no tiene un formato rígido; mientras que algunos boletines pueden incluir resúmenes cortos de noticias, otros pueden tener opiniones o informes. De la misma forma, se utiliza este boletín para informar a los miembros sobre las actividades próximas y ofrecer información actualizada sobre el Secretariado.

Animamos a miembros y amigos/as a enviar sus sugerencias para el boletín a la dirección: gaatw@gaatw.org

Si no deseáis recibir este boletín electrónico por favor enviad un mensaje a gaatw@gaatw.org y os borraremos de la lista de correo.

GAATW no ha enviado ni se hace responsable de ninguno de los anuncios que puedan aparecer ligados a este mensaje. El Secretariado Internacional de la GAATW no está relacionado con ninguno de los posibles anuncios sobre los cuales no tenemos control



GAATW E-bulletin

June 28, 2005

Dear Members and Friends,

Greetings from GAATW International Secretariat.

This is going to be very short bulletin but we are sending you two really important reference documents. None of them have anything to do DIRECTLY with human trafficking. They are not news items about convictions of traffickers or 'rescue' and 'repatriation' of trafficked persons. Such news is important, of course. But aware that many in our Alliance are working on trafficking within a broad women's rights and people's rights perspective, aware also that many of you had lamented the disconnect of 'anti-trafficking' activism from the broader resistance movements, we are sharing with you the Colombo Declaration formulated during the strategy meeting in Sri Lanka from June 6-7, 2005 on the upcoming WTO Ministerial Meeting. The declaration expresses solidarity with peoples and communities fighting back against the WTO and bilateral, regional and multilateral free trade agreements in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and other parts of the world. It underscores the negative impacts of many of these agreements on women who are subjected to worse working conditions, especially those who are less protected by labour laws and human rights codes, and face greater job insecurity than men. This declaration calls for major actions and mobilisations among different groups aimed at preventing a deal from being reached at the Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting in mid-December 2005.

Some weeks ago we had sent you a web link to a study by Action Aid International on how development aid works on the ground. In a similar spirit of critical examination of various efforts to bring in social change, we are sharing with an article by Stuart Hodkinson entitled "Inside the murky world of the UK's Make Poverty History campaign." Hodkinson is the Associate Editor of Red Pepper Magazine and an activist-researcher.

Launched in September 2004 Make Poverty History Campaign (MPH) has become an impressive coalition bringing together a large number of NGOs, GOs and media celebrities and civil society members. As the G8 summit is drawing nearer, pledges of billions of dollars are being made and the MPH wristband is being worn the world over voices of dissent are being heard from many insiders as well as outsiders (who had refused to be part of the Global Campaign against Poverty right from the start critiquing its lack of consultative ness and its strong northern slant. While the mainstream media would like us to believe that the G8 leaders are keen to bring about social change in Africa, the civil society in Africa is saying, 'nothing about us, without us.' Hodkinson's article is a must read for all of us who strongly believe that the root causes of inequality must be addressed and the affected people should participate in the process of social change.

The article is available on several alternative media sites including Znet. Here is the link to the Znet site where you can find the article.
<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=74&ItemID=8176>

Updates from the Secretariat:

We have already informed you about the July issue of the Alliance News focusing on migration, trafficking and the right to health. Many thanks to all the members who have sent their mailing addresses to us. We will do the mail out early next week.

June and Bandana from the Secretariat are participating in the 7th International Conference on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP) in Kobe, Japan from July 1-5, 2005. In addition to presenting a paper on the Health Research Project with migrant workers in Thailand they will also meet up with colleagues in Osaka and Tokyo. Masumi Yoneda and Yuriko Saito, with support from many local NGOs are organising seminars and meetings in Osaka and Tokyo. We will bring you more details in the next issue of this bulletin.

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GAATW E-bulletin

14 July 2005

Dear Members and Friends,

We are writing in the shadows of the London bombings and would like to express our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the innocent victims of the explosions. Many analysts say that this was uninvitingly predictable. Many also blame the 'intelligence experts' for not having been able to stop this from happening. The loss of innocent lives, in London, Baghdad or Afghanistan is shocking and such actions should be condemned. What is deeply worrying, however, is the way the bombings in London are being interpreted by some powerful leaders. Reading these events as civilization versus barbarism, and 'our values' against 'theirs' creates a simplistic and dangerous worldview which fuels hatred and suspicion among people. The 'war on terror' only begets more wars, more terror and more losses.

In this issue of the e-bulletin, we bring you some news from the 7th ICAAP and the symposiums in Japan which Jiraporn and Bandana from the GAATW IS participated in. We also have some information for you on upcoming events and references to a couple of recent publications on human trafficking.

7th ICAAP and GAATW Symposiums in Japan

The Seventh International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (7th ICAAP), a conference to facilitate international cooperation on prevention, care and treatment of HIV/AIDS, took place at the International Conference Center Kobe (ICCK) in Kobe, Japan from July 1 to 5. Under the main theme "Bridging Science and Community," the congress aimed to foster a sense of solidarity in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the Asia-Pacific region and encourage the Japanese government to increase its efforts in this field. Participants included HIV-positive individuals, NGOs, community representatives, policymakers and medical experts.

There were a number of sessions focusing on the mobile populations and a few presentations were also made on the situation of human trafficking. Sharuna Verghis, Regional Coordinator of CARAM Asia (Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility), speaking at the Plenary on 3rd July called for an integrated and holistic approach with health and human rights as guiding factors in the process of migration. She identified major challenges to regional strategies to address HIV among mobile population. Commenting on the absence of reliable data on migrant population and the 'Regulation vs. Protection' regimes Sharuna pointed out that there is very little political will on the part of the states to defend the rights of mobile people. She also stated that there is room to improve coordination among NGOs working on overlapping issues as that would ensure effectiveness of interventions.

Jiraporn Saetang of GAATW IS shared our work with the women migrant workers in Maesot, Thailand in a session on 'Mobile Populations: Interventions beyond borders'. A brief report of the research project is featured in the July issue of Alliance News.

Unfortunately, the presentations on trafficking at the ICAAP which we attended were marked by a complete lack of any contextual links with factors that propel migration and mobility. Instead we heard about the efforts which are on-going to 'intercept' would be trafficking victims, the raids that are being conducted to rescue the victims and the shelters which house them. Now, as before, we underscore the plight of trafficked persons and the urgency of providing them with care and support. We reiterate our call to advocate for the protection of the rights of trafficked persons.

However, it is more important than ever before not just to conceptualize trafficking within the context of migration and mobility but also to translate this understanding in our programmes. Advocating for the rights of all migrants, pushing states to recognise the contribution of migrant workers to the economy, working with them and empowering them to address their problems will go along way to stop trafficking. Simultaneously, work with women and girls in socially disadvantaged situations will also address the current problems. The 'raid/rescue-rehab' paradigm as a solution or strategy which is extremely popular in some parts of the world needs serious re-evaluation. We hope that our proposed workshop in November 2005 on psycho-social assistance to trafficked persons will help us understand the situation better.

In addition to participating at the ICAAP conference Jiraporn and Bandana also met up with many Japanese colleagues working on trafficking and migration in Osaka and Tokyo. A symposium was jointly organised by Hurights Osaka and JNATIP in Osaka and was attended by 120 people. The Tokyo symposium was organised by IMADR and other members of JNATIP and around 50 people

participated in it. Jiraporn and Bandana also visited SAALA and HELP, the two shelter homes in Tokyo who provide assistance to trafficked women.

Over the last two years JNATIP (Japan Network Against Trafficking in Persons) has carried out important work and brought together the many activists and organisations who were working on this for several years but to a great extent in isolation. JNATIP recently launched its report on trafficking which will be available in English soon. It was encouraging to see many young students interested in the issue. Colleagues in Japan are now preparing to lobby with their government for inclusion of legal provisions that would protect the rights of trafficked persons.

Upcoming Workshops/ Seminars

V International Human Rights Colloquium

The V International Human Rights Colloquium is being organized by Conectas Human Rights and the Sur-Human Rights University Network from 8 to 15 October 2005 in Sao Paulo, Brazil. This year's theme is the "South-South Dialogue to Strengthen Human Rights". The primary objective of the Colloquium is to strengthen new leadership and to enhance the capacity of human rights activists to improve the performance of their own organizations.

Applications for the V International Human Rights Colloquium have already started. The application to the Colloquium can be made directly online on the website www.conectas.org/coloquio or through an offline application.

All applications will be reviewed by an independent selection committee. Please be reminded that the application period is now open and the deadline for receipt of application is August 1st 2005. The result of the selection process will be publicized on the Conectas site (<http://www.conectas.org/>) on August 15. For more information, please write directly to: conectas@conectas.org

The 13th Annual Workshop of the Framework on Regional cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia Pacific Region

This workshop is being organised by the UNOHCHR in cooperation with the Government of the People's Republic of China on 30 August-2 September in Beijing. This year, for the first time, the workshop has a thematic focus which is on human trafficking. There will be a one-day consultation with NGOs on 29 August. The workshop will address a variety of policy issues and will try to identify next steps taken towards increased cooperation at the national, sub-regional and regional levels in the field of human rights.

For further information on the workshop, please contact Ms Aida Nejad at anejad@ohchr.org and please note that the OHCHR's office will need to finalize the participants list by 15 July, 2005.

Resource Materials

CD on Civil Litigation on Behalf of Victims of Human Trafficking

The Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles has released Civil Litigation on Behalf of Victims of Human Trafficking, co-authored by Kathleen Kim of the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area and Daniel Werner of the Workers' Rights Law Center of New York, Inc. This comprehensive legal manual is designed for advocates interested in learning how to seek civil relief for trafficking survivors. Topics include logistical factors to be considered in seeking civil action, procedures involved in filing a civil trafficking case, causes of action, and damages. The manual also includes sample pleadings used in civil cases brought on behalf of trafficked persons.

The "Civil Litigation on Behalf of Victims of Human Trafficking" is now available online and in hard copy and CD formats. For more information, please directly contact the authors at kkim@lccr.com and dwerner@wnylc.com.

Report on the Reintegration of Victims of Trafficking from Cambodia to Thailand

The Ministry of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) in cooperation with IOM Cambodia released a report entitled "The Return and Reintegration of Victims of Trafficking from Cambodia to Thailand and Repatriation from Cambodia to Vietnam of Vietnamese Victims of Trafficking."

The report provides quantitative information of the returnees' demographic profile, trafficking circumstances and results of reintegration and repatriation process of victims of trafficking.

If you would like an electronic copy of this report in English please send an email to the Anti-trafficking and Reintegration office at MoSVY at the following email address: cdcmosalvy@online.com.kh

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GAATW E-bulletin

July 28, 2005

Dear Members and Friends,

Greetings from GAATW International Secretariat! We hope all of you are doing well and not too busy. The weather has changed here in Bangkok-- from hot and humid to rainy and windy days. Monsoon has finally arrived. Two very important Buddhist holidays were celebrated last week, on 21st it was "Asadha Bucha" when people paid homage and on 22nd it was the beginning of the Buddhist Lent. "Khao Pansaa" or Buddhist Lent marks the start of the rainy season when monks return to the temple for the duration of the rains, usually to the temple where they were ordained, and stay there for approximately three months.

In this issue of the e-bulletin, we bring you short commentaries on the G8 summit on Aid, news on a trafficking trial in Cambodia, updates on WSF 2006-2007 and news of the upcoming events to be coordinated by the Secretariat.

G8 Summit

The world, it seems, has set its eyes on Africa since the start of the G8 Summit. The leaders have announced that "the commitments of G8 countries and other donors will lead to an increase in official development assistance to Africa. The promise is of more than doubling the current aid to Africa. Responses from NGOs to these promises have been mixed and by and large skeptical. First of all no one is sure yet how much of this promised amount is really going to be new money. Also, going by past examples, most NGOs know that there is often a long wait between promises and actual delivery and sometimes promises are not kept. According to Peter Hardstaff from the World Development Movement (WDM), "the G8's approach on trade seems to be 'Ask not what we can do for the poor, but what the poor can do for us.'"

"What Africa needed from the G8 was a giant leap forward, all it got was tiny steps. The deal that has been announced falls way short of our demands. We have some aid, but not enough, some debt relief but not enough and virtually

nothing on trade. Once again Africa's people have been short-changed" says Action Aid. We would like to hear from our colleagues on Africa how they view this focus on their continent and these promises.

To read more responses, visit

http://redpepper.blogs.com/g8/2005/07/in_their_own_wo.html#more

Sex Trafficking Trial Case

Two persons have been convicted on charges of sex trafficking and pimping in a trial held on 22 July 2005 at the Phnom Penh court. Tep Nith was charged of sex trafficking and pimping and was sentenced to 18 years while Heng Vouch was charged of sex trafficking and was sentenced to 14 years in prison.

Ms. Noun Sokchea of ADHOC, a human rights organisation in Cambodia that aims to empower people to realise and defend their rights and to educate the government to work for good governance, provided legal protection to the victim. ADHOC learned about this case through the victim's sister who directly informed them of the situation. After the rescue, ADHOC provided counseling to the victim and her sister and referred the victim to a shelter home. Until now, the victim is staying in the shelter where she is learning some skills to become self sufficient. The victim will receive \$2,000 as compensation after the trial.

The above information was provided by Ms. Ol Sokhan, the Deputy Head of Womens' Programme for ADHOC.

WSF in 2006 and 2007

The World Social Forum (WSF) International Council (IC) meeting held on June 20-22nd 2005 in Barcelona, Spain has confirmed the venues for the WSF Polycentric events in 2006. The confirmed venues are Barnako, (Mali, Africa), Caracas (Venezuela) and Karachi (Pakistan). During the meeting it was also decided that WSF 2007 will take place in Kenya, Africa. More details on the WSF site at http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/noticias_01.php?cd_news=1857&cd_langu age=2

On August 16, 2005 a meeting will be held to discuss the planning and preparatory process for the proposed 2006 WSF Asia polycentric forum to be held in South East Asia. All social movements, organizations and NGOs from the region who wish to be part of this process are being invited to attend. The meeting will start at 2:00 pm onwards at Bangkok Palace Hotel, Bangkok. For further information, please write to JS- APMDD secretariat c/o Liza Clavecilla at liza@jubileesouth.org.

Secretariat Updates

Workshop on Psycho-social Assistance to Trafficked Persons

Initial information on two upcoming Workshops on Assistance to Trafficked Persons has been set to our membership. The first workshop scheduled to be held on 21-25 November 2005 will focus on psycho-social assistance and the second one scheduled for early 2006 will focus on legal assistance. Several members working to provide assistance to trafficked person have sent in their expressions of interest. The details of the agenda are currently under discussion with the membership.

OHCHR Annual Workshop in Beijing

Nelia Sancho, member of GAATW's International Board and a staff from the secretariat will participate in the upcoming 13th annual workshop on the Framework on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia Pacific Region scheduled to be held in Beijing on 29 August-2 September, 2005. Professor Vitit Munthabhorn has prepared a discussion paper for this workshop. If you are interested to read the discussion paper and provide some input for the workshop, please write to Alfie Gordo at the GAATW Secretariat.

For more information and to get a copy of the workshop agenda, visit http://www.asiapacificforum.net/activities/international/un_asia/thirteenth.htm

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GAATW E-bulletin

August 15, 2005

Dear Members and Friends,

Warm greetings from Bangkok!

In this issue of the e-bulletin, we share with you some information and comments on a 'raid and rescue' which was conducted recently in India and updates from the Secretariat.

Raid and Rescue

We would like to draw the attention of our members to a recent 'brothel raid' in Sangli, Western India. The raid was carried out by police in civilian clothes based on information provided by Restore International, a group with US affiliations. 13 brothel owners were charged for harboring minor girls and 35 not under age, but by then they had already faced a lot of unwanted media exposure.

VAMP, a collective of women in prostitution based in Sangli expressed opposition to these raids and stated that these 'rescues' do not really help the girls and do not address the problems at all. VAMP believes that "prostitution is a system that exists in a society fraught with inequalities. They believe that a simplistic solution - such as raid and rescue - only offers patchwork relief, and takes away the rights of the girl child by inflicting untold violence on her in the process. The 'raid, rescue and rehabilitation' model blames the community, pushing it to a corner of no return. Such strategies that have violated the rights of the women in prostitution have not yielded good results for generations."

It is important for GAATW's membership to look at the paradigm of rescue and rehabilitation critically and analyze in whose interest these are being conducted and to what extent they are really working to stop abuse and exploitation of women and girls. If indeed these are nothing more than 'fodder' for sensationalist media and/or groups who think that there is a 'quick fix' solution to women's exploitation, we need to raise our voices against such practices.

(Note: For more details on this raid in Sangli, go to the archives of sex-work list-serv. Over the last two years we have heard of several such raids conducted in Asia. It would be useful to know if this is also a practice in other parts of the world.)

Updates from the Secretariat

Meeting of IS Staff with Network Members

On July 28, June from the Secretariat attended an informal meeting organized by the Foundation for Women (FFW) in Bangkok. Three groups who are providing direct assistance services participated in the information sharing on related laws and cited cases of direct assistance provided to Thai and Lao women victims in Berlin. Payungsri Adam of Ban-Ying, emphasized that it is necessary for government in destination countries to provide resident status to victims of trafficking who are vulnerable to social rejection and more harm upon returning to their home country.

Bandana was in the Netherlands last week primarily to have a meeting with Novib but she also took this opportunity to meet up with member organisations in the country. On August 10, a meeting was held at Blinn (Bonded Labour in the Netherlands) office among Blinn, STV and La Strada International Secretariat. Bandana provided details of the upcoming activities coordinated by the Secretariat and the whole team spent considerable time in discussing how best to go about the workshop on psycho-social assistance scheduled for November 2005. It was felt that a prep-committee comprising members from various regions would be a good idea. The team also talked about the 2007 international congress and agreed that the planning process should start soon so that members can be involved in it. On August 11, Bandana and Suzanne Hoff (coordinator of La Strada International) interviewed three candidates for the upcoming programme positions in GAATW IS. If all goes well we may soon have a programme staff at the IS responsible for Africa and Latin America.

New Intern/s at the GAATW IS

On August 8, Elodie Magnier joined the IS as an intern. Elodie is currently a Masters Degree student at the Faculty of Law of Aix-en-Provence, France and this internship is part of the requirement for her degree. During her 4 months stay with us Elodie will assist us in communication in Spanish and translate GAATW publications into French and Spanish. You can see that we already have a French section of the website, thanks to Elodie. She will also assist with the workshop on psycho social assistance.

Between September and October two more interns will also join the team, from Bulgaria and Ireland respectively. In October 2005, an Australian Youth Ambassador will also join the IS team who will work closely with Alfie in the communications unit.

We thank all of you who have sent in their details for the directory of support groups and resource persons database.

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GAATW E-bulletin

29 August 2005

Dear Members and Friends,

Warm greetings from GAATW International Secretariat!

In this issue we provide you with a brief report on a recent workshop held in Bangkok on development & aid and GATS, some update from the secretariat and reference to some useful resources.

Development, Aid and GATS

A Conference on Development and Aid followed by a Seminar on GATS was sponsored by Jubilee South Asia/Pacific Movement on Debt and Development (JS-APMDD) and Action Aid Asia in cooperation with PSI-Thailand, Focus on the Global South and Forum Asia. The meetings held on August 17-19 in Bangkok, were attended by various movements, groups and NGOs from Asia.

Alfie from the GAATW International Secretariat participated in these meetings and later held a staff seminar to share her learning with other colleagues. As some of these issues are new to us as well as to many of our member groups, and yet extremely relevant for our future work, we bring you the following short report and would be happy to share more details on request.

The first meeting aimed to provide an understanding on the issues and debates surrounding Aid in relation to its goal of bringing economic development and poverty alleviation to developing countries. Critical analysis on the conditionalities set by donor countries and multilateral institutions involving the process of aid donation and its implications to aid recipients especially on national policies were presented. Other sessions during the conference on aid and development focused on NGOs accessing aid, aid cancellation, aid additionality issues, aid accountability and review mechanisms. The conference ended with group presentations on action points and resolutions on the sectoral impact of aid.

The Primer on GATS prepared by JS-APMDD, General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is defined as "a legally binding set of rules covering international trade in services." It is also "one of the more than 20 international trade agreements enforced by the WTO among its 148 members." Requests or commitments are made in respect of the following four modes of supplying services: Mode 1 refers to the cross border supply, Mode 2 refers to the consumption abroad, Mode 3 is referred to as commercial presence, and Mode 4 which concerns the movement of natural persons. WTO member countries' commitment under mode 4 refers to the "temporary admission of foreign natural persons as service providers into their territory." Migrant workers groups such as the Asian Migrant Centre (AMC)/ Migrant Forum Asia (MFA), present in the seminar on GATS, called on colleagues to join them in their campaign to stop unfair trade agreements and to reject such a framework that treats workers, women and migrants as tradable commodities. So far, no commitments have been made to create just labor standards under GATS. The debates on the issue of GATS will remain complex but the need for the recognition of migrants' rights and fair treatment should never be compromised. "People before Profits," is one of the calls for action in the upcoming 6th WTO Ministerial and we invite all of you to join this campaign.

Relevant Resources

Database on Women and Health

ISIS International has recently introduced a new Database on Women and Health. In line with their new work in the information and communication technologies (ICT), this database aims to provide systematized and updated information on all aspects related to gender and health. The first delivery of the database is dedicated to the HIV/AIDS and its effects on the life and health of women. For more information, visit the link to their website at <http://www.isis.cl/MujerySalud/index.htm>

A Commentary on the US Anti-AIDS Policy

In an article published in the Economist.com on August 18, entitled "Aids, aid and prostitution: A Challenge to America's Anti-AIDS Policy," the authors have presented the latest controversy over the \$15-billion aid package to help fight AIDS abroad. The new policy which requires receiving agencies to sign up an "anti-prostitution pledge" in order to receive funds are creating restrictions for aid recipients to access those who are more vulnerable to acquiring AIDS, particularly those who are working in the sex industry. DKT International, a social-marketing organisation that supplies family planning goods in the developing countries, argues that "the government's policy undermines the battle against AIDS by forcing groups to condemn the very people they seek to

help-commercial sex workers at high risk of catching the disease. This is hardly the basis of a trusting, effective partnership to prevent the spread of AIDS."

For more details on this article, go to

http://www.economist.com/research/articlesBySubject/displayStory.cfm?subjectid=548064&story_id=4292608

Updates from the Secretariat

Meeting with member organisations in Hong Kong, SAR

On August 20-24, 2005, June from the Secretariat visited some migrant workers organisations based in Hong Kong in preparation for the upcoming GAATW consultation with self-organized groups. These organizations were Asosiasi Tenaga Kerja Indonesia (ATKI), Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM), Action for Reach Out (AFRO) and Bethune House. The visit with these groups provided us with valuable insights into the self-organising of migrant workers. AFRO, ATKI and possibly a representative from the Asian Migrants Coordinating Body (AMCB) will participate in the upcoming GAATW consultation.

Member Page on our Website

Alfie is developing a members' page in the GAATW website which would serve as a message board for the members. She has started by posting some information that had come from Projeto TRAMA, Brazil. If you would like to post details on upcoming events organized by your group, details on your new publications, updates on activities/projects and other relevant information to share with fellow members and colleagues, please send it to alfie@gaatw.org.



And finally we would like to share with you two photos from the birthday party held recently for our dynamic and hard working office manager Apivart (Nong).

(clockwise: Nong, Fah, Noi, Shyamali, Bandana, June)



Many happy returns of the day to you, Nong.

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GAATW E-bulletin

September 14, 2005

Dear Members and Friends,

Warm greetings from GAATW International Secretariat. In this issue of the e-bulletin, we bring you some information on three upcoming events scheduled for September and October 2005 in which member organisations of GAATW are participating. We also attach a call for papers for the March 2006 issue of the **Forced Migration Review (FMR)** which focuses on the theme of Trafficking and Human Smuggling. This issue of FMR will be a collaborative effort of GAATW and the FMR Editorial Team.

Our Bodies and Our Selves: Voices of Women on the Margin

22 September, 4-5:30PM, Conference Hall 1, Hotel Ashok, New Delhi

A workshop at the 10th International Women and Health Meeting (IWHM)

GAATW International Secretariat is coordinating a workshop at the 10th International Women and Health Meeting (IWHM) to be held in New Delhi, India, on September 21-25, 2005. The workshop entitled "Our Bodies and Our Selves: Voices of Women on the Margin" will bring together 4 speakers representing 4 member groups of GAATW; three from South & South East Asia, and one from Latin America. All our speakers are migrant and/or marginalized women workers and belong to the so-called 'affected communities'. Starting out with structural disadvantages such as poverty, gender, racial and ethnic discrimination, some of these women have also experienced militarism, violence perpetrated by the state and other forms of violence. Leaving home in search of work they have found employment in the unprotected, informal economy but the working conditions have been highly exploitative. Some of them have fallen into the trap of traffickers and have suffered extreme forms of human rights violation.

What sets these women apart is that they have been able to not just survive but also to form informal groups among themselves to advocate for their rights. While the international feminist community has battled on over the issue of

sexual exploitation and the most appropriate way to solve the problem of human trafficking, these women have fallen back on their own survival strategies and continued to question the mainstream paradigm from the margins.

While the mandate of their groups is broad, the speakers will focus on the issue of health in this workshop. Their discussion of 'Health' will also cover psychological/mental health. Each speaker will address the following questions:

- How has her own experience (and that of her peers) of mobility and work in the informal sector impacted on her/their health?
- What have been the health impacts of violence, social exclusion and marginalization?
- What kind of health services has been available to them and what are the lacunae in those?
- How has forming a collective helped them in addressing the issue of health both at the pragmatic and political level?
- What are still the challenges and what is her group's recommendation to address those?

The theme for the 10th IWHM is "**Health Rights, Women's Lives: Challenges and Strategies for Movement Building**". The Venue of the conference is 'The Ashok', New Delhi. For details of the IWHM visit:

<http://www.10iwhmindia.org/>

If you are in Delhi for the IWHM join us at the workshop.

First Annual Consultation with Self-Organized Member Organizations September 28-October 1, Maesot, Thailand

The team from the IWHM will come to Bangkok where 5 other groups will join them for our First Annual Consultation with Self-Organised Member groups. This consultation is being held in response to the request made by the groups at the December 2004 international congress. It will bring together sex workers, domestic workers, factory workers and formerly trafficked women who have organized themselves to advocate for their rights as collectives. The three day event will serve as a forum for the groups to share their work and their concerns. It will also serve as a planning meeting for their future collaborative action as part of GAATW's membership.

We will bring you more details of this workshop in October.

GAATW Women at the AWID Conference on 27-30 October, 2005

This seems like a season for international meetings and conferences in Asia!

On 27-30 October 2005, **The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)** is hosting its 10th International Forum in Bangkok with the theme; *How Does Change Happen?*

GAATW International Secretariat, in conjunction with its members and friends is facilitating 2 workshops at the AWID conference.

Notes on the Journey: Trying to Change the Dominant Discourse on Trafficking in Women

This interactive session will feature 5 women who are part of the GAATW team since its inception in 1994. Indeed, for these women (and many of their friends) the launch of GAATW was a culmination of several years of their engagement with the women's movement. By launching a global alliance they reaffirmed the power of women's collectives. Together they worked to address the problem of trafficking while acknowledging the needs and desires of many women to leave 'home' for work. They tried to mobilize the international community to move away from a moralistic, protectionist approach towards a human rights based approach to address the issue of trafficking. Now, some years after the adoption of the Palermo Protocol on human trafficking when there is a plethora of organizations and individuals, working on the issues - how does one assess the human rights impact of anti-trafficking initiatives? Are we closer to the change that we aimed to effect? Where do we go from here and how we do plan our future work? These are some of the questions the GAATW women will discuss in their interactive forum.

If you are coming to the AWID join us at this workshop and engage in an interactive forum with Siriporn Skrobaneek (President, Foundation for Women, Thailand), Fanny Polania Molina (Colombia), Stana Buchowska (La Strada, Poland), Sereyphal Kien (Cambodia Women's Development Agency) and Masumi Yoneda (JNATIP, Japan). Nelia Sancho (AWHRC, Philippines) will facilitate this session.

Change from the Ground: Trafficked women speak about the social exclusion they face and their struggle for participation in society

Foundation for Women, a founding member of GAATW is also coordinating a session at the AWID entitled "Change from the Ground: Trafficked women speak about the social exclusion they face and their struggle for participation in society." Held in cooperation with Action Aid Vietnam, Cambodia Women's Crisis Centre, Shakti Samuha/AATWIN & Oxfam Nepal, this session will feature 4 presenters who have experienced the trauma of trafficking. Speaking (through translators) from their own experience the women will highlight how social and political exclusion continue to affect their lives even though the actual experience of trafficking happened a long time ago. They will also talk about the actions they have been able to take at a personal and social level to change this situation and reclaim their place in society.

We hope to see many of you at the AWID conference. Join us at our sessions and do send us information about the sessions you are organizing. Let us hope that we can also meet up for informal talks outside the sessions.

And finally, a call for papers:

We are delighted to inform you that the March 2006 issue of **Forced Migration Review** is focusing on the theme of trafficking and human smuggling. [Forced Migration Review](#) (FMR) is a practitioner-focused magazine published in English, Arabic, French and Spanish and distributed without charge in 169 countries. FMR is the world's most widely read publication on refugee and internal displacement issues and unlike other publications in the field of forced migration, FMR is read primarily in the South. Two thirds of all copies are sent to developing countries and 27.3% of all copies to Africa. GAATW is very happy to be part of the Editorial Team for this issue.

This issue aims to explore

- The nexus and distinction between trafficking, smuggling and refugees;
- Gaps and strengths of the existing international instruments and the human rights framework to enhance understanding and response in the field of trafficking and smuggling;
- Gaps in protection and assistance including repatriation and reintegration policies;
- Changing patterns and trends with respect to vulnerability of social groups to trafficking and smuggling;
- Prevention strategies and programmes to address trafficking and smuggling;
- The smuggling and trafficking of minors - special considerations, needs and protection;
- Emerging focus on 'demand' and 'forced labour' to enhance analyses and understanding of prevention; and
- Human rights impact of interventions aimed at combating trafficking and smuggling.

Deadline for submission of articles: 1 December 2005. Maximum length: 2,500 words. For author guidelines, see www.fmreview.org/writing.htm. FMR is also online in Arabic www.hijra.org.uk, Spanish www.migracionesforzadas.org and French www.migrationforcee.org

We have attached the FMR call for papers with this bulletin. We are sure that members and friends of GAATW will be able to make time to write for this issue to share their work, ideas and concerns with a global readership.

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GAATW E-bulletin

October 14, 2005

Dear Members and Friends,

Warm greetings from Bangkok! In this issue, we would like to share with you a short report of the consultation with our self-organised member organisations held on September 28 to October 1, 2005 in Maesot, Thailand.

We would also like to bring you some updates during the recently concluded 10th International Women and Health Meeting (IWHM) in India.

1st Annual Consultation Meeting with Self-Organised Member Organisations.



Around 21 participants representing 8 organisations namely, Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC), India; Cambodia Prostitutes Union (CPU) from Cambodia; Action for Reach Out (AFRO), Hong Kong; Sanayar-Thi-Pan Women's Centre, Thailand; Asosiasi Tenaga Kerja Indonesia di Hong Kong (ATKIHK); National Domestic Workers Movement (NDWM), India; Shakti Samuha (SS), Nepal; and Self Empowerment Program of Migrant Women (SEPOM), Thailand gathered in the border town of Maesot on September 28 to October 1, 2005 to share with each other their organising strategies and agendas for social change.

The three-day consultation meeting included presentations of each groups' works, current activities, success and challenges, and analysis of their struggle for the articulation and realization of their rights. Given that the issue of health is a common one for all the groups, discussions also focused on the right to health, access to health services and the need to build a knowledge base on health. The groups have come up with a collective action plan and have set up

small core group among themselves which will discuss and fine tune the plan in the next couple of months. An open letter addressed to all the members and friends of GAATW has also been drafted by the groups which we will share with you in the next issue of the e-bulletin.

Updates about the GAATW Independent Workshop during the 10th IWHM in Delhi



More than 800 people from 70 different countries were gathered together at the recently concluded 10th IWHM in New Delhi, India. At the meeting, there was a call for an increase in expenditure on health and less on militarism. A declaration among the participants was released voicing out concerns on the special needs and vulnerabilities of marginalised categories among women in the planning and implementation process of health policies. To view the declaration, go to, <http://www.10iwhmindia.org/#>

GAATW's independent workshop entitled "Our Bodies and Our Selves: Voices of Women on the Margin" was held on 22 September and 30 people joined the parallel workshop. Sonia Beatriz dos Santos from our member organisation Criola in Brazil spoke about the discrimination which black women face in her country and how it affects their health situation adversely. She also talked about Criola's ground breaking work to counter the discrimination and assert the rights of black women. Sunita Danuwar and Januka Bhattarai from Shakti Samuha, Nepal shared with the audience the social exclusion which trafficked women continue to face even while they try to put the traumatic experience behind them and move on with life. They also described some of the successes of their organisation and emphasized that forming a collective has been empowering for them. Also among the presenters, we had Eni Lestari from the Asosiasi Tenaga Kerja Indonesia di Hong Kong (ATKIHK) who gave a clear and comprehensive picture of the situation of migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong. Her talk made it clear that having a contract does not really ensure that terms would be honoured. It is still an uphill task for the women. Emphasizing that the issue of health must be seen holistically Eni expressed that there is a need for the migrant domestic workers to build their own knowledge regarding health and the right to health. Parada from the Sanayar-Thi-Pan Women's Centre in Maesot shared with the audience their experience of having undergone a self-help training on health and how it has been beneficial for the community.

Participation in a large conference such as this was a wonderful experience for the GAATW team. It helped us make the links between various vulnerabilities and their impact on health. It also helped us make links with some many wonderful women who have been doing such great work on issues of health.

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GAATW E-bulletin

01 November 2005

Dear Members and Friends,

Warm greetings from Bangkok! Hope this bulletin finds all of you well and not too busy. We have just gotten back to our everyday work after two weeks of hectic but very engaging meetings. We began with the annual meeting of the GAATW board of directors and then moved on to the AWID conference. The venue for both the meetings was in Bangkok so we also had the opportunity to invite some friends over to the office in the evenings.

In this issue we bring you a report on the AWID conference with some details on the sessions around trafficking including those organized by us. We would also like to share an article submitted by the Action for Reach Out (AFRO) entitled "Hong Kong Police's Attitude towards Female Sex Workers." AFRO, who are based in Hong Kong, was part of GAATW's 1st Consultation Meeting with Self-Organised Member Organisations held last month.

How Does Change Happen?

The 10th AWID International Forum on Women's Rights and Development started with the Welcome Plenary Session focusing on the theme of "What Have We Changed Now" and the reasons behind such a momentous gathering of diverse women's movements, support groups and individuals. Six key reasons were highlighted by the panel presenters; to connect in a global way in the same space; to understand what changes we have already made and how; to understand how the world has changed; to engage in a self-evaluation and have greater accountability for the demands we are making; to shift the focus from deconstruction to reconstruction and finally, to revitalize women's hope to make change happen.

More than 100 break away sessions and caucuses on a wide range of issues were held during the four-day event at the Shangri-la Hotel in Bangkok. The event was an opportunity to link up with new groups who are working on similar issues, learning from experts about issues that we are not familiar with, meeting old contacts and

discussing common concerns and action plans with like-minded groups. On the whole it was an amazing experience, thought provoking and great fun.

For more information on the recently concluded AWID Forum, visit their website at <http://www.awid.org/>

There were several sessions on labour rights, WTO, migration and the situation of migrant workers. Four sessions had exclusive focus on human trafficking all of them emphasized the need for anti-trafficking activists to prioritize the voices and demands of trafficked persons and migrant workers, to be aware of the implications of state policies which may have negative impacts on the rights of people and to be conscious of the impacts of their own work on migrating people. These points were also stressed at the final summing up session on 30 October.

Survivors of Trafficking Speak Out



The title of the first session which GAATW co-organised with Foundation for Women (FFW), Shakti Samuha, Nepal, Cambodia Women's Crisis Centre, Action Aid, Vietnam and Oxfam-GB, Nepal was "Extraordinary Lives, Hard-Won Lessons: Survivors of Trafficking Speak Out." More than 60 people from different academic, media and NGO backgrounds attended the panel. The session brought together four strong

women, some of whom spoke in an international gathering for the first time and shared their own experiences as victims of trafficking and how they have started rebuilding their own lives. The messages were clear and direct. Tam from Vietnam narrated how difficult it has been for her to lead a simple and ordinary life after being trafficked. Ratree from Thailand talked about the isolation she faced while in a shelter and her continuing struggle to live her life. Mitsitha from Cambodia said that she hopes to continue her studies and also earn for her family. Natisara from Nepal appealed to the audience that survivors of trafficking not only need understanding and empathy but they also demand that their suggestions are reflected in anti-trafficking initiatives. All the speakers stressed the need for access to justice and reiterated that while they would like to see the traffickers punished, they would also like to receive compensation and long term support. Together, the four young women stood out as victims who are also models of resistance and courage.

Notes on the Journey



The second session entitled "Twenty Years of Anti-Trafficking (Advocacy): Notes on the Journey" provided an overview of the anti-trafficking work taken up by some of the GAATW women. Nelia Sancho, a founding member and a current board member of GAATW facilitated the session. Siriporn Skrobaneek, Lin Chew, Stana Buchowska

and Fahima Hashim shared their experiences of working on this issue in various regions of the world as well as their collaborative action at the international level. Siriporn criticized the adhoc rescue-rehabilitation actions of several groups and emphasized the need to shift from a vertical approach to a horizontal approach that would have greater involvement of the affected communities. Stana shared La Strada Poland's experience at the practical level in supporting trafficked victims and the national action plans which have emerged as a result of the work of La Strada colleagues in nine different countries of Europe. Lin provided an overview of how the advocacy campaigns, analysis and lobbying initiatives started as a result of the work with the migrant women. She also emphasized the need to have the principles of participation and self-representation of affected women in all areas of anti-trafficking action. Fahima Hashim, from Salmamah Women's Resource Center in Sudan who has recently joined the GAATW board talked about the situation in her part of the world and the work that she hopes would be undertaken by GAATW in that region in future. Nelia provided a clear summary of the discussion and stressed that in spite of the very concrete work that has been done, much still needs to be done and it seems that some old challenges are still persistent.

The Attitude of Hong Kong Police towards Female Sex Workers

We would like to share with you the attached police survey summary conducted by Action for Reach out (AFRO) in Hong Kong. The survey aimed to enhance understanding on the interaction between sex workers and the Hong Kong police, and highlight the unfair treatment that are meted out to sex workers.

For more details, contact AFRO at afro@iohk.com

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GAATW E-bulletin

14 November 2005

Dear Members and Friends,

Greetings from Bangkok! Mid- November is "Loi Krathong" time in Thailand. For Thai people, for everyone who is in Thailand and for all the tourists who are in town at this time of the year this is the time for 'sanook'—to have some fun. We will float the little decorative boats made of flower and banana leaves - the krathongs—and show our gratitude to the water goddess. Watching hundreds of those little krathongs float for a while and watching children and adults enjoy the evening by the river is a great sight.

In this issue, we share with you some relevant information/reports on trafficking and some details about upcoming events.

Trafficking for Forced Labour in Iraq Halliburton's New Low in Treachery by Dave Zweifel

The Chicago Tribune produced an incredible story last week detailing how unsuspecting young men from poor countries are tricked into working in dangerous jobs for a Halliburton subsidiary in Iraq.

The two-part series retraced the journey of a group of Nepalese men who were lured to the Mideast with fraudulent paperwork that promised them jobs at a luxury hotel in Amman, Jordan, but instead wound up in Iraq working for the Halliburton subsidiary KBR, America's biggest private contractor there.

What was even more startling was the stories' revelation that the operation is financed with U.S. taxpayers' money.

According to the Tribune, American tax dollars and the wartime needs of the U.S. military are fueling an illicit pipeline of cheap foreign labor into Iraq. Most of those falling for the fraudulent job offers are

impoverished Asians who, the newspaper said, "often are deceived, exploited and put in harm's way with little protection."

The Tribune got on the story after 12 young civilians from Nepal were kidnapped by terrorists in Iraq and a few days later publicly slaughtered. The newspaper sent a reporter and photographer to Nepal, where they interviewed families and friends and soon discovered that thousands of men are routinely recruited for "good" Mideast jobs, but wind up in the most treacherous stretches of Iraq territory working in private jobs for the U.S. military.

A brother of one of the kidnapped men told Cam Simpson, the Trib reporter, that the last time he heard from his brother was when he called from his supposed job in Jordan. He was being sent against his will to Iraq, the brother said, and then blurted out, "I am done for." The phone then went dead. The next time the young Nepalese was seen was on a TV screen two weeks later, his hands tied behind his back and a gun pointed at his head.

Simpson reported that the trail of those dozen men from Nepal revealed a chain of brokers, middlemen and subcontractors along the way, all of whom stood to profit from the trade.

To maintain the flow of cheap labor that is key to the military support and reconstruction in Iraq, the U.S. military has allowed KBR to partner with subcontractors that hire workers from Nepal and other countries that prohibit their citizens from being deployed in Iraq, the story said. That means that the brokers operate illicitly and falsify documents that describe far different jobs near Iraq, which eventually turn out to be smack dab in the middle of the country.

"Even after foreign workers discover they have been lured to the Middle East under false pretenses, many say they have little choice but to continue into Iraq or stay longer than planned," the story continued. "They feel trapped because they must repay huge fees demanded by brokers."

KBR, which has a multibillion-dollar contract with the U.S. Defense Department, pays the subcontractors for finding it employees to do the cleanup and rebuilding work in Iraq.

The tentacles of this war keep getting this country deeper and deeper into places we shouldn't be, including this atrocious practice that the Chicago Tribune has uncovered.

Dave Zweifel is editor of The Capital Times.

Published on Monday, October 17, 2005 by the Madison Capital Times

Summary Report on the Return, Reintegration and Repatriation of Trafficking Victims in Cambodia

UNIAP Cambodia has released a summary of the compiled detailed report prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) and supported by the International Organisation for Migration. The report provides information on the return and reintegration of trafficked victims from Cambodia to Thailand; and the repatriation of victims from Cambodia to Vietnam. The report is based on the bilingual database of MoSVY which was established in 2002. The database contains information of trafficked persons, their circumstances and their reintegration to the community.

The summary shows that about 137 trafficked persons were assisted in returning to Cambodia to Thailand between July 2004 and March 2005. 51% of these trafficked persons were trafficked at the age of 9 -15 years. Majority of the victims was trafficked for begging to the destination country. And 87% originally left home to earn an income that would enable them to support their families.

Full report is available online at

http://www.humantrafficking.org/countries/eap/cambodia/resources/pubs/final_report31_may_2005.doc

Two very relevant and timely resources from CHANGE

This week in a friend-of-the-court brief the Center for Health and Gender Equity joined twenty-one other organizations deeply concerned that the "prostitution loyalty oath" in U.S. global aids policy undermines effective programming. In conjunction CHANGE is releasing two new resources below.

[Policy Brief: Implications of U.S. Policy Restrictions on Programs Aimed at Commercial Sex Workers and Victims of Trafficking Worldwide:](#)

A new CHANGE policy brief outlines the legal origins and program implications of restrictions on organizations working with commercial sex workers and victims of trafficking worldwide. The brief outlines the ways in which requirements within U.S. global AIDS and anti-trafficking policy violate public health and human rights norms and threaten to undermine HIV and human trafficking prevention efforts.

[Timeline: Application of the "Prostitution Loyalty Oath" in U.S. Global AIDS Policy](#)

CHANGE also has published a timeline outlining the passage of laws, promulgation of regulations, and subsequent policy guidance applying the anti-prostitution loyalty oath to U.S. and foreign NGOs receiving U.S. global AIDS funding.

You will find full information on the "prostitution loyalty oath," including two lawsuits, at www.genderhealth.org/loyaltyoathsuit.php.

CEDAW 34th Session

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women will hold its thirty-fourth session at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 16 January to 3 February 2006. Thailand was among some of the states that submitted a periodic report to the Committee. Thailand adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1985. Two years after, its First CEDAW Report was submitted and considered by the Committee during 9th Session in 1990. This year's report is the combined fourth and fifth CEDAW report of State Parties. The report provides information on current progress made since implementing the Convention. Article 6 of the report includes Thailand's situation on the Trafficking and exploitation of women, new measures and program undertaken by the state to resolve trafficking, and the process of rehabilitation and repatriation of trafficked women and children. The report also provides information on Thai women who entered into commercial sex industry. This was seen as the salient issues explained in the report. Though enactment of new laws was clearly stressed, legal assistance to trafficked victims and to those who were not victims was not stated. To read the full country reports for the CEDAW 34th Session, go to <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/34sess.htm>

Regional Workshop on Trafficking and National Human Rights Institutions: Cooperating to End Impunity for Traffickers and Secure Justice for Victims

Sydney, Australia, 20-23 November 2005

The Asia Pacific Forum joined by Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission are organising a Regional Workshop on Trafficking and National Human Rights Institutions: Cooperating to End Impunity for Traffickers and Secure Justice for Victims to be held in Sydney, Australia from 20-23 November 2005.

The primary target audience for this workshop is APF's national human rights member institutions from Afghanistan, Australia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Jordan,

Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Palestine, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor Leste; and the non-governmental organisations from the region. The workshop aims to provide a realistic framework for constructive discussion and practical outcomes and to reflect the APF's commitment to encouraging the strengthening of institutional mechanisms for the protection of trafficked persons.

Bandana from the secretariat, Dr Renu Rajabhandari the director of WOREC, Nepal and Ms Siriporn Skrobaneck, President, Foundation for Women are joining this meeting as resource persons. For more information, visit <http://www.asiapacificforum.net/training/workshops/trafficking/index.htm>

**Less than two weeks to go for our Global Consultation Meeting on Assistance to Victims of Trafficking
26-30 November 2005, Thailand**

We at the Secretariat are busy now in last minute preparations for the consultation with several of our member organizations on victim assistance. 26 women from 17 countries working in organizations which have programmes to assist victims of human trafficking are participating in this consultation. If we include the Secretariat team more than 22 countries are being represented in this 5 day meeting. In addition to mapping the on-going assistance programmes in various countries and sharing information and skills among peers, this meeting also aims at a participatory analysis of the human rights impact of victim assistance. A comprehensive report of the meeting will be available by March 2006. We will bring you some photos in the next issue of the e-bulletin which can go out on 1 Dec when we are back in office.

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GAATW E-bulletin

December 1, 2005

Dear Members and Friends,

Greetings from GAATW International Secretariat!

We have just come back to office from the Consultation Meeting on Assistance to Trafficked Persons which was held in Nakhon Nayok, Thailand. In this issue of the e-bulletin, we are sharing with you some photos and brief details of our schedule during the meeting. A slightly longer summary of the meeting will be sent in the next issue of the e-bulletin and we will be able to share with you a comprehensive report by end of March 2005.

Assistance to Trafficked Persons: A Consultation Meeting November 26-30, 2005



GAATW International Secretariat hosted a consultation meeting with member and sister organisations from Albania, Belarus, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, India, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Moldova, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Serbia, South Korea, Thailand and United States of America. The meeting aimed at mapping the work that is being done in the area of assistance in these countries and discussing the challenges and

dilemmas that service providing organisations experience. It also aimed to provide opportunities for mutual skills sharing and participatory impact analysis of direct assistance work.

The Secretariat team with support from a preparatory committee comprising some participants worked during September and October to make this consultation an engaging and useful experience for all. At the same time, knowing the stressful life most

colleagues lead, all care was taken to find a quiet and relaxing place, a little away from the madding crowd of Bangkok.

The meeting started with presentations of country reports and sharing of information on the participants' organisations. On the third day we moved on to focused discussions on issues that had arisen in the presentations. Small group discussions were held on victim identification, short and mid term assistance and social integration. While sharing the good practices with each other we also analyzed the disempowering practices we must avoid in our work and made concrete plans for future collaborative action. We had intensive discussions on issues of power (including our own power over the people we assist), empowerment, the various dilemmas we confront in our everyday work and how the rights based approach plays out on the ground. On the fourth day two of our colleagues took us through a process oriented, interactive skills sharing session. It was a deeply moving day which all of us will treasure for ever. During the concluding session of our meeting on 30th November, we went over our action plan again, put timelines and names of persons responsible for coordination around the plans and also got some feed back on the meeting from everyone. Evening sessions focused on discussion on the upcoming events of GAATW including the 2007 members' congress. Participants who have completed their staff exchange programme also reported to the group during that time.

But it was not all work and no play! Colleagues from Brazil put together a lovely evening filled with fun and music which was much more than an ice-breaker. At the end of the evening each one of us had already received a present from our 'secret friend' even though some of us had great difficulty in trying explain through mimic the country of origin of our 'friend'. Other evenings were also international dance time with colleagues from Africa and Latin America leading the show and others joining in with enthusiasm. The ever friendly staff of the resort looked after us as well and the swimming pool and the spa convinced us that 'self-care' is as important as caring for others. The lotus pond and the frangipanis in bloom will stay in our memories for ever. As one of the participants put it, "we worked very long hours, woke up early and went to bed late, but we also had fun." We really missed colleagues from our member organisations who have been working with trafficked persons from a long time, wanted to come for this meeting, but could not make it. Our sincere thanks to them for their written input to this meeting.

The Secretariat team is grateful to all participants for making this meeting such an enriching experience by sharing their work so generously and so honestly. Our special thanks to colleagues who took on additional tasks in the preparatory team, in sessions facilitation, translation and in organizing evening sessions. We are sure that we will continue this conversation via email in the coming months and realize our plans of action well within the time frame.

For more details of our discussions in this meeting, look out for the next bulletin.



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GAATW E-bulletin

21 December 2005

Dear Members and Friends,

Season's Greetings from GAATW International Secretariat! Our sincere thanks to all those who have sent in their feedback to our communications and information unit. We will incorporate your input in our future action.

Today's bulletin is the last issue for 2005. In this issue we are sending you a summary of the discussions at the GAATW Global consultation meeting on assistance to trafficked persons held on November 26-30, 2005. We also provide you with a brief report on the recently concluded WTO ministerial in Hong Kong and some useful links where you can get more information.

People's Action Week on WTO Hong Kong



Two staff from the Secretariat joined the People's Action Week during the 6th WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong. It was an opportunity to meet with several migrant and labour rights groups from various countries including Hong Kong and learn about their perspectives on the WTO agenda and their strategies to address it. The staff also used this opportunity to have the final planning meeting with some of our HK based member groups such as Asosiasi Tenaga Kerja Indonesia di Hong Kong (ATKIHK) and Action for REACHOUT (AFRO) for the proposed Training of Trainers (TOT) on health and women's rights to be held in 2006.

ATKIHK were actively campaigning to push forward the protection of migrant workers rights and to work in solidarity with other campaigners against the impact of WTO agreements to migrant workers. ATKIHK was in the forefront of the Indonesian groups who joined the Migrant's Consulate Hopping organized

by the AMCB. The event was a gathering of AMCB members and supporters to present the migrants' concerns to the Consulates of Nepal, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Hong Kong and the US Embassy.

Thousands of people who came from different countries and social backgrounds staged intense lobbying campaigns to voice their discontent with the WTO to the delegates of the ministerial meeting. Protesters gathered at strategic places within and around Victoria Park to hold a series of activities from campaign marches, consulate hopping, press conferences and independent forums to discuss the situation of the affected sectors on issues of war & trade, globalization, neo-liberalism, and privatization.

To view the draft ministerial declaration please visit

http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/min05_e/final_text_e.htm

To get in-depth information/analysis/comments on the recently concluded WTO ministerial from a people's rights perspective, you may visit the following websites:

Focus on the Global South: www.focusweb.org

Migrant Forum in Asia: www.mfasia.org

Hong Kong People's Alliance: www.hkpa-wto.org

Civil Society TV on WTO in Hong Kong: www.wto-cs.tv

Real World Radio: www.realworldradio.fm

For Photos of Resistance From Indy Media, visit:

<http://publish.indymedia.org.uk/en/2005/12/329901.html>

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ATTACHMENT:

A Summary of the Discussions at the GAATW Consultation Meeting on Assistance to Trafficked Persons, November 26-30, 2005

We 26 women representatives from member and sister organizations of the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) from Albania, Belarus, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, India, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, South Korea, Thailand and United States of America gathered together in Nakhon Nayak, Thailand to share our work with each other, to analyze the impact of our work on the rights of trafficked persons, to learn from each other and to strategize for the future.

Diverse as we are, we felt that we are united by our commitment to center the rights of the trafficked persons in our work. All of us work with trafficked persons to help them cope with their traumatic experience and rebuild their lives. Some of us also work within broader mandates that include work with migrant workers, workers in the informal sector, on women's issues and on many other national and international issues.

We noted with deep concern that our countries are ravaged by wars, armed conflict, civil strife, political instability and natural calamities. Our societies are still confronting racial, gender and class/caste discriminations. The current economic and development models adopted by our governments are increasing the vulnerabilities of many people. The strong right wing, conservative political climate and distrust of the 'other' is making our lives and work increasingly difficult.

We shared information about the situation in our countries, the assistance work we are doing in our respective organizations and the good practices which keep us moving forward. We also shared our frustrations and our concerns with each other hoping to be able to learn from one another and take action together.

During this consultation we specifically focused our discussion on the issue of identification of trafficked persons, psycho-social assistance to trafficked persons and social integration of trafficked persons. We also discussed strategies to deal with power, dilemmas of development, empowerment and the concrete implications of a rights based approach to trafficking. Through process

oriented, interactive sessions we learned from each other how to expand our counseling practices and also how to care for ourselves.

Issues around Identification

We noted with concern that the procedures around identification still lack clarity and are informal in many countries. We were deeply disturbed by the raids which have been conducted in several countries without any long term planning and with total disregard for the rights of the persons who were supposedly 'rescued'. We noted with concern the huge amount of mediation/recruitment fees which some migrant workers are made to pay by government registered agencies. We also realized that sites other than prostitution, such as domestic work, forced or fake marriages and various sites of informal work have rarely been given any attention even though the Palermo protocol recognizes them as possible sites for trafficking.

We recommend that lack of freedom of movement, confiscation of legal documents, , dependant bonding to the employer, restriction of contact, exploitation of vulnerability, use of force, fraud and psychological coercion, any form of debt bondage, under payment, misleading and false information regarding working conditions or marriages be taken as basic criteria for identification. For every case when only one of these is present, there is clear evidence for trafficking in human beings.

We recommend that in order to avoid further traumatization of the person during the process of identification, interviews should be conducted by trained persons who respect the human rights of the trafficked person and are sensitive to her/his situation. The number of interviews should be reduced to a minimum and a reflection period be granted to the person in order for her to decide to take any legal action or not.

More specifically we recommend that

- people involved in the identification phase shouldn't be the ones providing direct psycho-social assistance afterwards as they may be seen as working with the police and associated with them; they may be seen as rescuers and consequently awarded with heavy and ambivalent expectations, which will influence the service provider-client relationship
- service providers and the police forces should work cooperatively
- the rights of the victims should be at the center of the initiative and no harm should be done to the victim in the process of identification

- joint teams(lawyers, counselors, police officers) could be the best choice if it is feasible. An alternative would be to train specialized teams from the police. NGOs with many years of experience should think of training police personnel.
- The labeling "victims of trafficking" should be avoided during the identification process because it also has negative connotations; the accent should be on informing the person clearly about the human rights that have been violated, explaining to her realistically about the help that is available and finally providing accurate information about possible compensation.

With regard to methods of reaching out to trafficked persons we think that organisations who are working with sex workers, domestic workers and other migrant workers are in a better position to know the situation. Many of these organisations have peer support programmes and some have also facilitated self-organisation among the workers. We strongly recommend that authorities contact and consult these organizations first before carrying out raids.

Issues around Social Assistance

Our concerns around social assistance focused on various kinds of shelters currently operating in many countries, some of which appear to violate the rights of the women who are placed there. We felt that there is need to develop working guidelines for shelters based on human rights principles. We also noted with concern that often the perspective of the trafficked persons are not prioritized.

Discussion with colleagues made us aware of several good practices on social assistance. These include the women's club in Albania where women gather for coffee and information sharing and the proposed 'Day center' in Serbia. We discussed in detail whether shelters should be exclusively for trafficked women or include other women in need of such services and concluded that local context should be the deciding factor. We agreed to share information on the advantages and disadvantages of both the practices. Similarly, freedom of movement in shelters may depend to some extent on the local context especially in countries where criminality is a major problem. However, we strongly recommend that all shelter staff should be adequately trained and accurate information, explanation of the rules of the shelter and the entire process of assistance should be shared with the trafficked person.

We strongly discourage practices where trafficked persons are kept ignorant about the process and are sometimes pushed to tell their stories many times. We are also aware that even the most well equipped shelter can cause

depression if they do not allow contact with outside world and not have any activity for the women. We also noted with concern that in some shelters trafficked women are 'forced' to 'volunteer'.

Our strategies and action plan include advocating for adequate funding for assistance work, for training programmes for shelter staff, incorporating mechanisms for receiving regular feedback from trafficked women, developing in-depth description of closed shelters, open shelters and those in between highlighting their strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of trafficked persons so that service providers can choose models which best suit their local context. Noting with concern the limited resources with which direct service providers work, we plan to actively lobby with donors to allocate adequate funding for assistance.

We have two specific recommendations to GAATW International Secretariat:

- GAATW IS should work with members and friends to bring out a publication on shelter issues with case studies and examples of programmes.
- GAATW IS should organise a training programme for people who are providing direct assistance.

The proposal for a training crystallized as a result of the one day in-depth skills sharing session during the consultation meeting. During this day which was facilitated by two participants with long experience in this field, we shared of personal experiences, difficulties, innovative practices in the field of the direct assistance and went through an experiential learning process of new counseling skills and methods for self care. By active participation in group exercises and creative group methods, we discussed and further explored the following themes: the physical and psychological consequences of the trafficking experience, the identity crisis that follows often such experiences and the integration of the traumatic past; the influence of these traumatic symptoms on the counselor and on the relationship, personal and professional boundaries, the issue of the trust in client-counselor relationship, establishing respectful and supportive contact with our clients, using our intuition in the work with the women, recognizing the resources of the client and building further resilience, how do we understand the term empowerment, etc.

We strongly feel that such a group training session will be immensely valuable to all member organisations of GAATW and indeed to many people who are working with trafficked women. We are happy that the GAATW IS has promised to take this idea further and work with a group of participants who will help in putting together a module. We hope that it will be possible to hold this training in 2006.

Issues around Social Integration

We strongly believe that the process of social integration/inclusion is a mutual responsibility of countries of destination and origin. We note with concern that social integration is still understood by and large as the responsibility of countries of origin. Our experience shows that many women who are repatriated or deported have no 'home' to go back to and/are unwilling to go back to families that had violated their rights. We are deeply upset that trafficked women are stigmatized as this affects their process of recovery. We are also very aware that many of our income generation and vocational training programmes do not meet the demands of the women for work.

Following in-depth discussion with colleagues we were heartened to learn about several good practices on social integration. The national program to dignify domestic work in India and organize the domestic workers, the micro credit scheme for women in Dominican Republic, the programme to protect the rights of migrant workers and women who have married South Korean men, the programmes in the Republic of Moldova to organize summer camps to facilitate acceptance of trafficked women by their children and husbands, the social campaign to change public attitude towards trafficked woman, the support to trafficked women to complete their schooling, professional training for street children and adolescents and subsequent job placements in Albania, the work with young women working in the entertainment sector in Nepal, the successful networking among police, government sector and NGOs on the issue of trafficking in Colombia and the Alnima project in Benin city, Nigeria were discussed in detail and we felt that some of these practices could be replicated in other countries as well.

Our discussion on the process of social integration also made us aware of some practices we should avoid in our future work. We learned that proliferation of support programmes for repatriated trafficked women has unwittingly created a situation in some countries where other young women and girls think that they will be 'eligible' for assistance if they are trafficked. Some programmes have also created a dependency among the trafficked women. There are too many isolated and non-sustainable programmes. Regrettably much of anti-trafficking work can be seen as 'anti-migration' and they are simply inadequate to counter the illusions that many young people have regarding destination countries. Studies in various countries have shown that many people will 'migrate' regardless of their knowledge of the dangers of trafficking.

Our future strategies on social integration include sustained work with women and men in the informal sector especially with internal and cross border migrants, lobbying governments to adopt policies for safe migration, domestication of the Palermo protocol with stronger provisions for the protection of rights of trafficked persons, to look beyond trafficking for sexual

exploitation and to implement some of the laws already in place, providing realistic information on migration and stronger networking between destination and origin countries. Awareness raising in countries of destination is also a priority as it would go a long way in changing people's attitude towards trafficked persons.

Our collective action plan on social integration includes information sharing on labour laws, studying and working closely in sites to which people are migrating for informal work, deep listening to the trafficked women so that their perspective informs our action, creating support structures among people working on direct assistance which would result in concrete sharing and reduce burnout among us.

Issues around power and dilemmas we confront

Issues of power came up again and again in our discussions. We spent considerable time pondering over the hierarchical relationship in which trafficked persons, employers, NGOs, donors and states are placed. We noted with great concern the difficulties these bring to the application of the human rights approach.

Further discussions made us aware of some human rights based strategies that are being used by some organizations. For example, facilitating organizing among workers, providing them information about their rights, pushing donors to adopt a process and impact oriented approach rather than looking for numbers and results, working closely with the affected community rather than spending resources on abstract agendas were high lighted in our discussion as good practices.

We also spent time discussing in detail the dilemmas we face in our everyday work. We realize that the same factors which enhance people's freedom and increase the potential for their development also make them more vulnerable. For example, movement of people across borders and improved information technology are absolutely crucial for development. And yet, these opportunities are also used by traffickers and criminal groups. However, we must strongly protest against policies that restrict movements of people, especially of working class people in the name of protecting them, and those that restrict their access to information. Regressive steps such as trying to stop people from moving only endangers people's lives by forcing them to make use of illicit means. Accurate information on migration and available work, protection of all work places and fair treatment of all workers in the informal sector will go a long way in reducing risks of human trafficking.

In conclusion, we are deeply grateful towards each other for these few days of sharing our common experience amidst the diversity of culture, language and country conditions.