



Dear Friends

A warm hello from wet Bangkok!

Time is passing quickly, and we are already in the second half of 2006. We hope your year so far has provided you with opportunities, challenges, and a sense of accomplishment. Ours certainly has!

Thus far 2006 is proving to be as busy for us as 2005, and many changes and events have taken place. In the first quarter of the year, we doubled in size here at the International Secretariat. There are now 11 of us working full-time within three key areas - Administration and Finance, Communications and Programme. You can find an introduction to our people and structure in the 'Updates from the Secretariat' section. Following an initial orientation and ramping up period for new staff, we are now able to dive more fully into our 3-year programme and continue to build on the work completed last year.

Our time this year has been taken up with ongoing work and a number of special activities and events. The World Social Forum Regional Workshop in

Caracas, Venezuela in January provided an excellent space for linking up with other social movements. We also held a final preparatory meeting in Caracas to discuss the implications of a possible regional chapter in the Latin American and Caribbean region. In mid-March, the "New Voices, New Strategies" Conference by Freedom Network in Chicago gave us the opportunity to learn about anti-trafficking initiatives within the US, especially the work that is being done on trafficking for forced labour.

The Global Fund for Women sponsored 2-day summit in New York in early May was yet another opportunity to meet up with many long term associates of GAATW in the US and also make contact with colleagues working on reproductive health, labour rights and migration. Similarly, the 'Networking the Networks' meeting in The Netherlands organised by the Christian Action Against Trafficking (CAT) project of the Churches' Commission on Migrants in Europe (CCME) was an excellent opportunity to share information, opinions and concerns with colleagues working in Europe. Being

in The Netherlands also allowed us to hold an informal meeting with some members based in Europe and meet up with some of our donors.

Events held in conjunction with member organisations this year included training sessions for two Thailand-based groups on concepts of self-help, participation and organisational development. This work was then followed up with the 2nd Annual Meeting of Self-Organised Women Organisations workshop themed 'Getting Our Voices Heard'. We had a well-received Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Consultation at the end of April, which has spawned many new activities and plans for the region. A global consultation on 'Access to Justice' held in early June provided all participants with an opportunity to understand the current legal scenario in many countries and make plans to advocate for the legal rights of trafficked persons.

Alongside these external meetings, we participated in a number of internal meetings, including orientation sessions for new staff members, discussions with donors and an analysis of our progress to date at the GAATW Board Meeting in April.

Now, for a few words on this issue. Providing assistance to trafficked persons is one of the key areas within anti-trafficking work, and many of GAATW's member organizations work in this area. This issue provides a regionally diverse view of direct assistance from the perspective of those who provide it and

those who receive it. A complex picture emerges from the essays and the interviews even though they cover only a few countries. Institutionalized assistance is available in many countries although the extent to which it is being used and meeting the needs of trafficked persons varies. In some countries such as Nepal, trafficked women are often having to stay on in shelter homes for a longer period because going back home is not possible for various reasons, including the real fear of being rejected by family and community (p.38). In the life story from the Dominican Republic, we notice that a family's moral judgement can be a source of emotional punishment for the woman even after she has been able to regain her internal strength (p.42). The stories from Thailand and Brazil are testimonies to the supportive role which family, relatives and friends can play in restoring the wellbeing of the person (p.46 & p.35). The story from Thailand also has some words of advice for zealous anti-trafficking programmes. Above all, the interviews with the trafficked women illustrate their courage and strength to move on in life even as they point out that real social integration can be a long process.

Carina Morita's essay on caring for the caregivers opens up another area which needs to be thought about (p.6). While in some countries 'debriefing' or 'supervision' programmes may be available for caregivers, even a well thought out semi-structured tea-time discussion can go a long way in releasing some of their stress.

◆EDITORIAL◆

The interview-based essay from Singapore is a departure from the other pieces in that the organisation it details does not assist trafficked persons per se. We decided to include this essay because it is an extremely good example of how important informal support systems are (p.27). It does not have to be a choice between one or the other - rather, institutionalised programmes and informal support systems should coexist to assist trafficked people in their process of recovery.

This issue, then, comes to you with a rich content. Our hope is that we can all

learn what works, what does not, what upholds human rights, and what does not, from the people who are directly involved with and impacted by assistance initiatives.

Our sincere thank you to all the contributors for this issue. We are especially grateful to the trafficked women who spoke to us through translators and hoped that their stories would enrich the work of assistance providers. We also thank all our members, friends and donors for their continued engagement with the Global Alliance. We look forward to continuing our work together.

Gerardine Daniels

