



# APRN NEWSLETTER

The Official Newsletter of the Asia Pacific Research Network

First Quarter 2013

## CSOs expose the WTO's neoliberal trade agenda at research conference

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Participants of the APRN Research Conference on Trade and Development held in Bali, Indonesia from March 20 to 21, 2013

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# CSOs expose the WTO's neoliberal trade agenda at research conference

APRN Secretariat

BALI, Indonesia- The Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN) organized a Research Conference on Trade and Development on March 20-21 in Bali, Indonesia. The conference is APRN's contribution to strengthening the critique on the neoliberal trade agenda being forwarded by the WTO. It is also aimed to contribute to raise the awareness and capacities of people's movements in the region and beyond on campaigning around WTO and trade liberalization.

## *20 years of WTO: Country Impacts*

Mr. Sonny Africa, Executive Director of Ibon Foundation said that the WTO's 'achievements' for the past 20 years include locking in previous trade liberalization, hammering new liberalizing agreements in agriculture, services, investments and intellectual property rights, and instituting the dispute settlement mechanisms which allowed foreign investors to sue the governments of developing countries on measures that are deemed to be protective of their national industries.

"However, these achievements did not result to development that was promised by the Doha Round, especially for developing countries. Instead, WTO and neoliberal trade in general lead to agricultural decline, deindustrialization, persistent joblessness, and worsened chronic poverty and inequality," stressed Mr. Africa.

Case reports from India, Indonesia, Philippines, Pakistan, and China concretely demonstrated the impacts of WTO and trade liberalization to their economy and the people as well as the possible implications of a new agreement.

For India, agriculture has been the most critical among all the areas in the Doha negotiations. In a paper sent for the conference, Dr. Biswajit Dhar, Director General of the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) said that "protecting the vulnerable sections of the peasantry has been the key issue that India has flagged

in the current round of negotiations. Large volumes of farm subsidies granted by the developed countries to their producers have resulted in wild fluctuations in the prices of all major agricultural commodities in world markets. The subsidized products have threatened the livelihoods of producers from poorer countries either by displacing them of their domestic market share. This also happened in Indonesia and Philippines."

According to Mr. Bonnie Setiawan of the Indonesian research group Resistance and Alternatives against Globalization (RAG), "the notion that Indonesia is one of the countries whose economy advanced because of trade liberalization is a myth. In reality, the opening of the Indonesian market and its integration in the world economy led to disaster, especially in the 1997 which saw Indonesia's financial sector reel from the Asian financial crisis and its net exports and imports plummet. Meanwhile, the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) devastated the Indonesian agriculture so badly that the country has become among the biggest rice importer and even imports salt, sugar, and onions which can be locally produced."

Pakistan's agriculture was also severely impacted by the WTO and trade liberalization. According to Dr. Azra Sayeed of Roots for Equity, "trade liberalization facilitated the proliferation of genetically modified Bt cotton production which is now 88% of Pakistan's cotton fields, and also land grabbing from small marginal farmers. Liberalization in the agricultural sector also severely affected local farmers in Pakistan whose farm products cannot compete with the highly subsidized imports from India."

In China, Mr. Daxing Zhao of the China Association for NGO Cooperation (CANGO) said, "despite the rise in GDP because of increase in trade, there are currently 650 million Chinese living in poverty. The question on how to protect local farmers from the impacts of trade liberalization still remains amidst the rising cost of food and coming in of

food imports. Another issue tied to trade liberalization is the environmental problems caused by factories built by local and multinational companies.”

#### *Outstanding issues in the WTO*

The research conference also tried to examine the outstanding issues in the WTO negotiations such as on agriculture, finance and investments, and intellectual property.

Speaking on the AoA, Dr. Ujjaini Halim of the Institute for Motivating Self Employment (IMSE) said that, “the WTO-AoA is changing smallholder agriculture to commercial industrial agriculture, controlled by agriculture-corporations and producing genetically modified varieties of crops replacing traditional varieties. The entire issue of sustainability is largely ignored in the process and human rights principles are undermined.”

Prof. Kavaljit Singh presented the issues on finance and investments. According to Prof. Singh, “the agenda of liberalizing financial services did not stop with the Doha impasse. It is also present in the bilateral, regional, and plurilateral agreements being negotiated. This is worrisome because these are pursuing a financial services liberalization based on General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) framework which existed before the global financial crisis that started in 2008. We should not pursue this framework which was discredited by the financial crisis. This framework consists of free flow of capital across borders, deregulation, open financial markets, and light touch regulation.”

Several outstanding issues also exist in the realm of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs). According to Dr. Jeremy Malcolm of the Consumers International (CI), “there is a lot of disagreement in the case of IP. Talks on TRIPs broke down along with the impasse in the Doha negotiations. Among the outstanding issues in the TRIPs are its impacts on traditional knowledge and biodiversity wherein patenting of life will hurt farmers and food security. Meanwhile, public health can be severely affected as strict provisions on patents of medicine may

prevent developing countries to access cheap medicines for their citizens.”

#### *New attempts to revive trade liberalization within the WTO*

Speaking on greening trade, Ms. Nur Hidayati of the Friends of the Earth Indonesia (WALHI) noted that “although the WTO does not have specific agreements on the environment, the objective of sustainable development and environmental protection is considered to be important. However, the responsibility of solving environmental problems, including climate change, is passed on to developing countries by developed countries through the employment of market-based mechanisms in finding solutions to environmental problems.”

Ms. Deborah James of Our World is Not for Sale (OWINFS) gave a update on the current state of negotiations. According to Ms. James, the Bali Package will contain “some reforms on agriculture, some LDC (least-developed countries) issues, and trade facilitation. Trade facilitation will be at the heart of this package.”

Another issue to watch out for is the post-Bali agenda of the WTO. According to Ms. James, “we are going to do an International Services Agreement (ISA) with ‘neoliberalizers’. The group that is negotiating and doing this is called the Really Good Friends of Services coming from 40 countries including New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Pakistan, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The ISA aims to remove trade and investment barriers in services.”

As mentioned earlier, trade facilitation is among the deliverables of the negotiation in Bali. Ms. Kinda Mohamadiah of the South Center sent a video discussing trade facilitation. According to Mohamadiah, “trade facilitation has three pillars: clarifying and improving GATT articles related to expediting the movement of goods and reduce trade costs, enhancing technical assistance and capacity building in the areas of trade facilitation and third is enhancing the cooperation on trade facilitation and customs guidelines issues.”

Trade facilitation may sound good. However, among the implications of a possible trade facilitation agreement are “the increase in imports that is expected to be associated with such import facilitating rules could result in the significant deterioration on the trade balance of developing countries. Furthermore, reduced customs and import duties in developing countries, there is a heavy cost of implementation in terms of procedural and institutional changes to be undertaken. These costs will be recurring costs. They will have implications on yearly government budgets.”

#### *New attempts to revive trade liberalization outside the WTO*

The impasse on the Doha Round had made developed countries increasingly turning towards free trade agreements outside the WTO as mechanisms to further their agenda. According to Mr. T. Rajamoorthy of Third World Network (TWN), “bilateral agreements have become the natural avenue for rich countries to secure concessions from developing countries which they are unable to wrest in WTO negotiations. Bilateral agreements have become the

*Dr. Azra Sayeed discussing the impacts of WTO and trade liberalization in Pakistan. Photo by APRN Secretariat*







*Participants of the workshop on Outstanding Issues in Agriculture.  
Photo by APRN Secretariat*

mechanism through which the developed nations compel the developing countries to liberalize their economies beyond what they are obliged to under the existing WTO rules.”

The US, for instance, has taken the path of FTAs with willing countries as a trade strategy after the collapse of the WTO talks in Cancun on 2003. The US entered into several free trade agreements (FTAs) and negotiating a number of regional trade agreements such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), US-Middle East Free Trade Area (US-MEFTA) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA).

Dr. Jane Kelsey from the University of Auckland described the TPPA as the ‘US strategy to take over Asia’. According to Dr. Kelsey, the TPPA is the “agreement for the 21st century which aims to contain the growing power of China in the region and to reach further behind the border than any previous FTA. If implemented, TPPA’s provisions will allow foreign investors influence over domestic policy and regulation on investment, government procurement, intellectual property, state enterprises, cross border services, supply chains, regulatory coherence, and transparency. One immediate impact that anti-TPPA campaigners see is its impact on public health because of the projected rise in the prices of medicines because of the stricter IP rules in the agreement.”

Scant information about the TPPA comes from leaked documents because of the high-secrecy and total lack of transparency in the negotiations. Although there have already been 16 rounds of the negotiations, no draft text has been released. Talks are done behind closed doors. As of the moment, 11 countries are involved: Australia, Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, US, Vietnam, Canada, and Mexico.

Aside from TPPA, another FTA in Asia is also being negotiated, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). According to Ms. Rachmi Hertanti of the Indonesia for Global Justice (IGJ), “RCEP is a comprehensive economic partnership agreement among the ASEAN Member States and ASEAN’s FTA partners. The coverage of RCEP includes goods, trade in services, investment, economic and technical cooperation, intellectual property, competition, and dispute settlement, all of which

are WTO-compliant. Interestingly, this FTA includes China but excludes the US. As such, some analysts see the RCEP as China’s move to counter US hegemony in Asia.”

*Towards a framework for an alternative trade regime that will serve the people*

Participants in the Bandung Asia-Africa Conference in 1955 formulated agreements on collective means of stabilizing the economy, trade and finance, wherein sovereignty and mutual interest can be assured to encourage the creation of a new world economic order which is fair, equal and mutually beneficial.

In the Dasasila of Bandung Conference, representatives of the 29 countries made an agreement to strengthen cooperation against monopoly and domination of America and the European economies. First is through the strengthening of economic cooperation; second, strengthen cultural cooperation; and third, fight for human rights and self-determination.

According to Mr. Ario Adityo, Managing Director of Institute for National and Democratic Studies (INDIES), “the spirit of the Bandung Conference can inspire today’s campaigners and policy makers in shaping a trade regime that will give emphasis on values such as cooperation and justice rather than the cutthroat values of the freemarket.”

Goal 8 of the Campaign for People’s Goals for Sustainable Development (CPGSD) on the other hand tackles the need for a New Trade, Monetary and Financial Architecture. Salvador Ramo, coordinator of the CPGSD, pointed out that “poor countries were pushed to liberalize trade when they were not ready for it, leading to widespread dislocation that harmed people’s livelihoods and welfare. Current trade rules restrict space for poor countries to acquire technology, to use trade and investment policies to promote domestic economic development as well as social and environmental goals.”

Among the recommendations from the CPGSD are to reform trade relations to promote equality among trade partners, uphold special and differential treatment of developing countries and help economic development in poor countries and to implement democratic and pro-developing country reforms of international financial and monetary system.

Participants shared their country experiences on WTO and trade liberalization as well as ideas on the country and regional level campaigns in the three simultaneous workshops on Agriculture, Industry and Natural Resources, and Services.

Among the policy proposals for a trade agenda that will serve the people’s interests are the promotion and protection of local trade and local industries. The principles of food sovereignty were also recommended as reference towards creating an alternative trade agenda. At the end of the workshops, participants agreed to step-up the campaign against WTO and trade liberalization in their country and in the region through more researches on how the new trends in WTO and trade liberalization are affecting the people and more education-information activities for CSOs and grassroots organizations in the run up to Bali. *END*

## Peasant groups hit World Bank for grabbing ancestral land in Panama, Sri Lanka

*Asian Peasant Coalition (APC) and Movement for National Land and Agricultural Reform (MONLAR)*

PANAMA, Sri Lanka- The Asian Peasant Coalition (APC) and Movement for National Land and Agricultural Reform (MONLAR) hit World Bank for land grabbing in Panama, South East, Sri Lanka. This was disclosed after the groups found out that the World Bank in collaboration with the Sri Lankan government is to blame for the impacts of Arugam Bay Tourism Promotion Zone in Panama.

“Our forefathers have cultivated our land since British colonial period. We have legal documents to prove it and the Magistrate of Court already made a decision that we are the rightful owners and we can cultivate it once again,” remarked P. Somasiri, local leader of the Organization for the Protection of Pannam Paththuwa (OPPP) and a member of the IFFM team.

“The Commissioner of the Ampara Office of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka has stated that the people of Ragamwela should be allowed to settle and cultivate the land as there had been evidence that they own the land. The judge therefore, instructed the SP Ampara, the DS of Lahugala to let the people go in the land. However, when we are trying to go back and reclaim our lands, the Navy and the security forces are harassing us.” added Somasiri.

“During our interviews, most of the villagers said that their parents and grand-parents have cultivated and lived in the land since the 1960’s. We have learned that people had legal documents from the Divisional/District Secretariat Offices to prove their ownership of the land.” said Zenaida Soriano, APC Southeast Asia Coordinator, who also joined the mission.

“Unfortunately, the overall conditions of life & livelihood changed dramatically because in the past the people had land where they could farm and sea where they could fish at the same time, being in one place, their homestead. Now the villagers of Ragamwela, Shasthrwela, Ulla, Ulpasa, Egodayaya and Horewkanda have to look for menial labour work outside of the village mostly,” Soriano added.

“Most of the people now live with their relatives in Panama. They live in compounds with about 2-3 families living in one house. It gets so crowded for them and there’s no room

anymore. They would have wanted to plant crops in the lot but they also need shelter,” according to Sunil Santha of MONLAR, also a member of the IFFM team.

“We condemn the World Bank for investing \$18M in this so-called ‘Sustainable Tourism Development Project’, signed in January 2010. Its documents said that the project’s objective is to strengthen the institutional framework for the tourism sector to facilitate environmentally and socially sound investments, in eastern Sri Lanka’. But who really benefits in this project? For whom is this investment actually?” stressed Soriano.

“The government’s collaboration with the World Bank obviously, is the reason for Panama’s conversion into a tourism zone. Unsurprisingly in 2010, the arson attack on the Ragamwela village coincided with the signing up of the project and extensive road construction and infrastructure building programs of the government in the area.” exclaimed Somasiri.

“Worst, Sri Lanka today is aggressively promoting local and foreign investments in tourism towards ‘transforming Sri Lanka to be Asia’s foremost tourism destination’, with the capital investors getting the upper hand as against the rights of the people of the land.” both Soriano and Santha added.

“We call on the World Bank and the Sri Lanka government to stop the Arugam Bay Tourism Promotion Zone project. We demand for the implementation of the court order allowing the Panama people to cultivate their land once again,” the three leaders ended.

The APC and MONLAR conducted the “International Fact Finding Mission (IFFM) in Defense of Land and Livelihood in Panama, Southeast, Sri Lanka,” on February 24 until March 1, 2013. The IFFM team composed of 22 local and international participants from Pakistan, India, Nepal, Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, were invited by the OPPP to Panama to gather data from the villagers on the current land grabbing problems in the area.

You can download the IFFM Key Findings at [www.asianpeasant.org](http://www.asianpeasant.org).

### *Peril in the Pacific:*

## Trans-Pacific trade agreement threatens people and the planet

*Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET)*

A new video from Friends of the Earth-US highlights the threats to the environment and human rights posed by the secret negotiation of the TPP deal and in particular its draft investment chapter.

The video illustrates these threats by telling the story of Chevron vs. Ecuador, in which oil giant Chevron successfully

sued the Ecuadorian Government in an international tribunal because an Ecuadorian court ordered Chevron to pay for the pollution caused by its operations in the Ecuadorian rain forest.

You can watch the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LW-TEHIScvw>

## As Sabah standoff continues: Aquino gov't should resolve conflict, protect Fil migrants and junk double-standard in territorial issues

*Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM)*

The Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM) expresses grave concern on the safety and security of Filipino migrants residing and/or working in Sabah as the standoff between the Malaysian authorities and the Royal Army of Sulu, who is now occupying a village in the said island, continues at high alarm.

The Royal Army of Sulu, a group of around 100 armed people under the leadership of Agbimuddin Kiram, occupied the village of Lahad Datu early February 2013 claiming and demanding rightful ownership of Sabah. On March 1, an exchange of gunfire occurred between the Malaysian police and the members of the said Royal Army. Ten people from the Royal Army and two from the Malaysian police have been reportedly killed.

In the light of an intensifying battle between the armed groups, the APMM fears that such a standoff, if not resolved properly, immediately and peacefully, would impact on the more than 800,000 Filipinos living in Malaysia, many of whom are in Sabah. Already, there have been news reports of Filipinos in Malaysia being laid off from jobs and massive arrest, detention and deportation of undocumented Filipinos are happening as a result of the standoff.

More than layoffs, it is racism, discrimination and ostracism that APMM is concerned about. "We fear for the lives, livelihood and dignity of the many Filipinos in Sabah," says Ramon Bultron, managing director of the APMM, expressing the possible intensification of the Malaysian government's crackdown on undocumented migrants, specifically Filipinos. According to APMM, the Malaysian government did not

really cease in its policy and operation of arresting, detaining and deporting undocumented migrants in Sabah. A February 25 news report from Business World Online mentioned of 150 Filipino deportees arriving late night in Mindanao.

However, the Philippine government is caught unprepared yet continuously insensitive on the plight of its own people living and working in Sabah. President Aquino must ensure and prioritize the protection of Filipinos in Sabah.

APMM also calls on the government of President Aquino to cease from his double standard approach on the issues of territorial boundaries and sovereignty. "The President is quick in filing international claims in the Spratly Islands but done nothing to reclaim Sabah. Is it because the US government is more interested in Spratlys than Sabah? Again, the President must put the interest of its own people as a priority," adds Bultron.

Bultron calls on both governments of Malaysia and the Philippines to immediately resolve the standoff and discuss the issue of territorial claim and sovereignty in the most peaceful manner. The Philippine government in particular, he demands, should not leave the Filipinos, both the Muslims occupying the Lahad Datu village on one hand and the many Filipinos living in Sabah on the other, at the hands of the Malaysian authorities.

"No one's life or dignity should be violated in this crisis. What passion the Philippine government put on in its claim on Scarborough shoal should be equal to its will in resolving this very urgent concern," concludes Bultron. *END*

## APRN holds training on People's Research in Bandung

*APRN Secretariat*

BANDUNG, Indonesia- The Asia Pacific Research Network conducted a Training on People's Research together with Serikat Perempuan Indonesia (SERUNI), Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria (AGRA), Friends of the Earth Indonesia (WALHI), and Inisiatif. The training was held from March 24-28 in Bandung, Indonesia.

According to Dewi Amelia Eka Putri of SERUNI, "We decided to co-organize this training on people's research in Indonesia because we think this can be instrumental in building the capacity of people's movements to do research that can contribute to their own advocacies for social change." Dewi Amelia was among the participants of the APRN Training on People's Research held on November 2012 in Ha Noi, Vietnam.

The training had a total of 25 participants who came from youth, peasant, women, and farmer groups from West Java, Central Java, East Java and Jakarta. These organizations include Forum Mahasiswa Nasional (FMN), AGRA,



SERUNI, SBPJ, FDKIM, WALHI, SPPQT, LIPS, Rifka Annisa and PMII. The participants agreed to implement the research designs that were outputs from the workshops. They also established their own people's research network named Jaringan Peneliti Rakyat (People's Research Network) which carries the tagline "research to serve the people." *END*

## International Women's Day:

# Women against free trade demand economic justice

*Gerak Lawan*

JAKARTA, Indonesia- Various organization and movement members of Gerak Lawan (Indonesia People's Movement against Neo-colonialism and Imperialism) urged the government, in this case the Ministry of Trade, to protect the rights of women against trade liberalization because it has seized the economic control and access of women. Based on that, Gerak Lawan demands for Indonesia to step out of the World Trade Organization (WTO). This demand is part of the reflection of women's struggle in this year's commemoration of International Women's Day (IWD).

The WTO's free trade scheme has created vast market opening which does not contribute to economic welfare of women in Indonesia. On the other hand this led the state to lose its sovereignty to control financial and basic services such as health care, education and water, and eliminated basic human rights, including women's rights, namely the supply of safe and healthy food, decent living and access to basic services, by transferring the control over these basic rights to transnational corporations.

The Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) of the WTO pushed agriculture to produce for the commodity market rather than for daily consumption. The shift towards export-oriented agricultural products resulted in the loss of agricultural land to large-scale farming business, the loss of livelihoods, and increase in landless farmers. This also led to the decline of the number of farmers, especially, peasant women. The flood of imported products due to the implementation of AoA also killed home-based industries and traditional products of which the majority is managed by women.

Heavy foreign investment in plantations and mining sector that amounted to US\$ 48 billion throughout 2012, have resulted in the decrease of local food production due to high agricultural

land conversion. According to data from Ministry of Agriculture, agricultural land conversion reached 140 thousand hectares per year for various purposes. In addition, the implementation of Mode 4 of WTO trade services agreements led to the marginalization and discrimination migrant domestic workers (PRT)-whom majority of them are women.

Therefore, in the Commemoration of International Women's Day, Gerak Lawan demands the State to promote social protection and justice by:

1. Evaluating all existing free trade agreements that have been agreed before, whether at WTO and/or regional and bilateral FTAs.
2. Applying the principles of just trade system by not applying "one size fits all" to WTO member countries, not creating equal treatment between imported products or foreign companies with domestic products or local company, and restore the sovereignty of the State in providing protection and strengthening local production, especially for small and medium-scale production, including traditional and home industries.
3. Restoring access and control over land and natural resources to the people of Indonesia.
4. Providing protection for Indonesian workers, both domestically or abroad, from the competition with foreign labor and, in particular.
5. Cancel the Trade Bill.

The statement was shorten for brevity. For a copy of the complete statement, please contact **Puspa Dewy, Program Coordinator Solidaritas Perempuan**.

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## IGJ: APEC Opens Importation

*Indonesia for Global Justice*

JAKARTA, Indonesia- Indonesia for Global Justice (IGJ) urged Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono not to discuss the Master Plan for the Acceleration and Expansion of Economic Development (MP3EI) at the APEC Forum in 2013. Based on IGJ's monitoring, the infrastructure project will open Indonesia to the world's supply chain to facilitate the entry of imported products. On the contrary, this facilitate export of raw materials from Indonesia.

With the theme "Resilient Asia-Pacific, Engines of Global Growth", the Government of Indonesia will take advantage to bring the MP3EI issue into the APEC, in between two other high-priority issues within the APEC Bogor goals to achieve sustainable and equitable growth.

IGJ Head of Programme Monitoring Rachmi Hertanti explains, "Connectivity in the APEC framework is to facilitate trade in and out of Indonesia. The MP3EI will open the door for

Indonesia with trade facilitation infrastructure that will facilitate access to exports and imports from and to Indonesia."

IGJ urged the Indonesian government not to make the APEC Forum as a means to sell an investment that could ultimately backfire against Indonesia's national interests. This forum can be used appropriately to address practices that perpetuate global economic imbalances and also address issues of cross-border crime (transnational crimes) such as illegal fishing, mining, logging, human trafficking, and so on.

The APEC Forum in October will discuss the Bogor goals which includes regional economic integration and the expected establishment of linkages among APEC economies so as to facilitate trade by building the infrastructure needed. In carrying out its role, Indonesia, as host of the APEC meeting in 2013, began by carrying out the agenda of First APEC Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in Jakarta on 24 January to 7 February 2013. SOM will formulate recommendations that will be taken at the APEC leaders meeting in October 2013 in Bali. *END*





Photo by IBON International

## **“Stop trade liberalization! Defend people’s livelihoods!”**

*Indonesian movement launch international campaign vs. WTO and trade liberalization*

*Indonesian Peoples’ Alliance (IPA)*

BALI, Indonesia- On March 22, the Indonesian Peoples’ Alliance (Aliansi Rakyat Indonesia), a broad alliance of progressive mass organizations and civil society organizations in Indonesia, launched its international campaign against trade liberalization in the run-up to the 9th WTO Ministerial in Bali. At the launch, IPA called on mass organizations and international networks of social movements to counter trade liberalization and campaign for sovereignty and trade that would serve the people.

According to Abednego Tarigan from the Friends of the Earth Indonesia (WALHI) said, “trade liberalization did not benefit the people. It should be stopped in order to defend people’s livelihoods in Third World Countries.”

Also present at the launch were the members of the International Coordinating Committee of the IPA: Our World is Not For Sale (OWINFS), International Women Alliance (IWA), International Leagues of Peoples’ Struggle (ILPS), International Anti-Imperialist Coordinating Committee (IACC), Asian Peasant Coalition (APC), IBON International and the International Migrant Alliance (IMA).

According to Len Cooper of the ILPS, “this year’s WTO ministerial is an expression that monopoly capitalism will use every means to recover from their own multiple crises.”

Speaking in solidarity, Deborah James of OWINFS said that “it is important for both Indonesian and international mass organizations to join forces to put decisive interventions in order to stop trade liberalization agenda in the upcoming WTO ministerial.”

Speakers at the IPA International launch also tackled the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and the UN High Level Panel on the Post 2015 Development Agenda. Sectoral leaders from trade unions like Federation of

Independent Trade Union (Gabungan Serikat Buruh Indonesia- GSBBI) and Konfederasi Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia- KSBSI (ITUC) said that CSOs should doubt every progress report of government about MDGs application, especially on the poverty reduction.

Rudy Daman of GSBBI criticised the Indonesian government for its alleged support to repressive labor policies. “Until today there is no decent national minimum wage, while the application of the new provisional minimum wage has not pushed through.”

Ngurah Karyadi from KPA-Bali (IPA-Bali Committee) said that “international events like this impacts the lives of ordinary people. More than 150 peasantry families in Jimbaran, will be displaced from their land, since the Indonesian government would like to use 250 hectares of crop land to establish the facilities of the venue for the APEC Summit which will also be held in Bali this October.”

IPA will coordinate national and international campaigns towards the Bali Ministerial. On December 2013, IPA will organize the Peoples’ Global Camp (PGC), for the various initiatives during the Bali ministerial. Among the various activities that will hosted in PGC is the Global Peoples’ Conference.

The IPA National Secretariat is composed of Friends of the Earth Indonesia (WALHI), Institute of National and Democratic Studies (INDIES), Gabungan Serikat Buruh Independen, and Aliansi Gerakan Reforma Agraria (AGRA).

For more information about the alliance, please contact the IPA Secretariat:

E-mail: sekretariat.ipa@gmail.com

Blog: [www.indonesianpeoplesalliance.wordpress.org](http://www.indonesianpeoplesalliance.wordpress.org)

Twitter: @indopeopleall



## HK's move to abolish levy is migrant workers' win, says APMM

*Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM)*

*It is a victory of the struggles of migrant workers in Hong Kong!*

This is the statement that the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM) issued as the Hong Kong government announced in its 2013 policy address the intention to abolish the levy for Hong Kong-based people who want to employ foreign domestic workers (FDWs).

The levy pertains to the HK\$9,600 tax imposed by the Hong Kong government in 2003 on anyone who would want to hire an FDW. The levy was announced six months after the said government cut the wages of FDWs by HK\$400. The said levy was suspended in 2008.

According to the APMM, the HK government should not only attribute the levy's abolition to easing the burden of families hiring FDWs but also to the FDWs themselves who have launched a resounding campaign to abolish the levy.

The APMM recalled the campaign launched and steadfastly conducted by FDWs in Hong Kong under the banner of the Asian Migrants Coordinating Body (AMCB) and the International Migrants' Alliance (IMA) to increase the wages of FDWs and abolish the said levy. The AMCB is a Hong Kong-

wide network of migrant organizations of various nationalities while the IMA is an international alliance of grassroots migrant organizations and their support groups.

The APMM, a regional center working with migrants and advocating for migrants' rights, said that while the action was long overdue, the Hong Kong government took political will to finally put an end to the levy. It challenged the said government to do the same thing to other policies that are oppressive of migrants and their rights.

"Hong Kong has policies that restrict, discriminate and violate the rights of migrant workers, particularly foreign domestic workers. What the government has decided to do with the levy, they can also do with all these anti-migrant policies," said Ramon Bultron, director of the APMM, pertaining to policies like the New Conditions of Stay (or the Two-Week Rule) and the Minimum Allowable Wage policy, among others.

The APMM further challenged other governments in the region to do the same, naming a few policies and practices that need to be abolished, like the Employment Permit System of South Korea, the Visa 457 of Australia, and the Kafala sponsorship system of many Gulf countries. *END*

## CI Members celebrate big on World Consumer Rights Day

*Consumers International*

On 15 March, CI Member organisations around the world celebrated World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) 2013. More than 90 CI Members in more than 60 countries got involved, and joined the call for 'Consumer Justice Now!'

The call was heard in every corner of the globe and consumer groups highlighted the vital importance of consumer protection in a wide variety of ways. In Africa, public rallies were held in Sudan, Nigeria and Cameroon. CI Members across the continent also organised a range of conferences, workshops and symposiums to address various debates around promoting consumer protection.

Members in Asia also took to the streets to spread their message, from staging a 'walk for a consumer-friendly Singapore' to street theatre in India. Other members in the region took their campaigns online, like Foundation for Consumers, Thailand, who launched a competition for the best viral video to support their call for an independent consumer protection agency.

Latin America and the Caribbean also saw a rich variety of activities to mark WCRD. Public exhibitions were staged in Chile and Peru, while members in Brazil, Argentina and Mexico launched new campaigns on issues as diverse as access to internet services, pre-payment of energy and supermarket transparency.

In Europe, CI Members also launched new initiatives, including

Which?'s new consumer rights website in the UK and a campaign for disclosure of commissions by financial advisors in Germany. CI staff were also very busy on 15 March, attending WCRD events around the world. Luke Upchurch, head of communications and stakeholder relations, and Robin Simpson, senior policy advisor, joined a conference organised by the Research Centre for Global Policy and Law on Consumer Protection in Wuhan, China.

Onica Makwakwa, head of CI's Office for Africa, joined Namibia Consumer Trust for their WCRD activities, while Indrani Thuraisingham, head of CI's Office for Asia Pacific, spoke at FOMCA's public forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

This year's WCRD theme - Consumer Justice Now! - was chosen to mark the revision of the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UNGCP). Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1985, the UNGCP are an important international instrument and have helped to guide the development of consumer protection laws and measures in many countries.

However, the world is a very different place 28 years on, and the UNGCP must be made fit for the 21st Century. CI's new report on the state of consumer protection around world, launched ahead of WCRD, also demonstrates that - while progress has been made in recent years - there is still some way to go to ensure that consumers everywhere receive the protection they deserve. *END*

# What the “Rising Tiger” means to the Filipino women

Photo from Bulatlat.org

Center for Women's Resources

Clearly, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is pleased with the Aquino government's economic program. Its description of the Philippines being a “rising tiger” signals an affirmation that all its demands for structural reforms are in place through the public-private partnership (PPP) program. If the IMF is satisfied with Aquino's PPP economic program, does it also reflect the improved condition of women?

The Center for Women's Resources (CWR) does not think so. Regular jobs and decent wages are still wanting. Food is not yet seen on every family's table. Hunger and violence against women prevail. IMF's structural reforms especially PPP only worsen the condition of women.

Jobs available for women are very limited and low-skilled. More than half or 68% of women can be found in the service sector. Almost 85% are contractual workers and can only have jobs in three to four months. Four of the ten unemployed persons are women. In terms of wages, the long-standing call for a Php125-increase to meet the rising inflation has yet to be answered. Usually, when workers ask for increase in wages, there is a threat from businessmen of downsizing the workforce or shutting down businesses.

By the end of 2012, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) reported that hunger worsens in the Philippines, ranking 27th in the hunger incidence. Calamities worsen the poverty condition in the country. With the government's permission of large scale mining and logging concessions, the Philippines became vulnerable to floods, as what happened in the supposedly rarely-hit-by-typhoon Mindanao that was gravely hit by super storm Pablo. Many women and their families lost their homes and jobs in the plantations.

*Conditional Cash Transfer*

CWR's preliminary study on Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) revealed that the program hardly empowers women with the dole-out of more than a thousand pesos for a month. Women surveyed by CWR admitted that they become timid to question those who are disbursing the cash due to fear of being delisted. They say that beggars can't be choosers. What more, they could no longer participate in any other activity because 4Ps meetings and cash disbursement always coincide with their local events. Again, absence in the meetings will mean deduction or loss of the cash grant. So, there are many women who are members of local women organizations who became limited for community interaction like training or events because of CCT/ 4Ps. Among those beneficiaries surveyed by CWR, 77% of them vowed that having a secured job or source of income will be a long-term protection than the cash hand-outs. They consider the cash dole-out as a palliative measure and not the security that they need.

*Continuing violence*

As hunger persists, so does violence. Based on the data culled from the women's desk of the Philippine National Police (PNP) last year, there is a woman or child beaten every 34 minutes and 48 seconds; and there is a woman or child raped every one hour and 42 minutes. Worse, there is an increasing case of rape committed by state authorities. But most of these cases remain unresolved. Intimidated and threatened, victims choose not to pursue the case just like what happened to the 21-year old woman who was raped by six military men in Masbate province in Bicol.

In terms of health services, the recently passed Reproductive Health Law reeks of population control instead of giving a comprehensive and free health service to women. The Health Department implements USAID's PRISM (Private Sector Mobilization) for family health project, which is geared towards controlling the population and using private clinics to enhance the “clinical and entrepreneurial skills” of 300 midwives. In more than a decade, health expenditure comes from the patient's pocket than from government support. Almost 60% of hospitals are privately-owned. As public hospitals and services are being converted into private venture and as health budget is allotted more for PhilHealth enterprise, the 11-dead mothers-a-day will prevail.

*“Daang Matuwid”*

Aquino's policy of “daang matuwid” was cited as one of the reasons for making the Philippines a “rising tiger”. Observably, the road has been selectively paved for big businessmen and foreign investors. Yet, the foreign direct investments were 60% down in 2012, as reported by the Central Bank of the Philippines. The government's tireless dependence on foreign capital, particularly from the US, has been politically reflected on how it reacted to the destruction of the US warship to the Tubbataha Reef, a national treasure. The tiger could not even growl. It only speaks of compensation.

For the Filipino women, the destruction is beyond compensation. It embodies intrusion, a rape in another form --a rape of motherland. Yet seemingly, such crime can hardly get a guilty verdict. The reaction of the government on the Tubbataha Reef's destruction reminds the Filipino women of how the government had helped a US soldier-rapist escape from national incarceration in 2006. The trend of letting the US government be forgiven again by the Philippine government is disturbingly possible. Given such condition, how can a Filipino tiger rise? END

*Reference:*

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# “Promote equality, sustainability and justice”

*CPG statement on the agenda at the Global CSO Forum and HLP*

*Campaign on People's Goals for Sustainable Development*

The Campaign for People's Goals (CPG) - a grassroots-led movement from Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean which demands a set of specific, new people-authored development goals - played a lead role in a Global CSO Forum held this week ahead of the fourth meeting of a UN-appointed “High-Level Panel (HLP) on the Post-2015 Development Agenda”.

The Campaign, through its members drawn from across NGOs, trade unions, farmer and peasant, and youth and women's organizations, among others, champions goals including human rights, food sovereignty, gender justice, and a new financial and monetary architecture.

Through its engagements, the CPG succeeded in bringing in new civil society supporters from across the world; being selected to put its message across at the beginning and end of the 200-strong Global CSO Forum; running two CSO breakout groups; and having its Latin America coordinator selected to speak directly to the HLP during the official outreach sessions with civil society.

At the two-day Global CSO Forum, which ran from March 23 – 24 in Bali, Indonesia, CPG Latin America coordinator and People's Coalition for Food Sovereignty (PCFS) representative Alejandro Barrios Noya from Bolivia, spoke to the plenary about the People's Goals in the context of environment and sustainability in its opening session.

Through lobbying the forum's organizers during a planning session, CPG arranged for a breakout session scheduled specifically for Global civil society groups, which it facilitated, and a thematic group with a specific focus on peasant, fisherfolk, pastoralist and coastal communities – crucially, separating this group from urban workers. It also facilitated the first caucus held by Latin American and Caribbean delegates at the forum, and delivered the official CPG statement on the HLP process to many forum delegates.

CPG member and PCFS co-chair, Azra Sayeed, from Pakistan, was widely applauded when she spoke about the People's Goals in the forum's final session. Calling on the forum to “unrelentingly

force the HLP to focus on bold, concrete processes to tackle the structural problems exacerbated by the dominance of the neoliberal growth model”, Azra demanded that development processes must be led by the grassroots, and expressed concern at the prominence of the grassroots at the Global CSO Forum.

She said, “Unite grassroots voices in responding to and challenging not only the HLP process, but the long-term attainment of a transformative, human rights and justice-based sustainable development for our constituencies and future generations. “We would like to call the attention of this process to three main concerns that must be promoted to the heart of the process: equality, sustainability and justice.”

At the “stakeholder outreach day”, the HLP members engaged with civil society through a Townhall meeting – where thematic and sectoral CSO representatives gave short statements to the panel - and roundtable breakout groups attended by panel members which focused on the specific themes of “vision and priorities”, “global partnerships”, “means of implementation”, “governance and accountability”, and “the informal sector and inclusion”.

In front of a packed audience, CPG Latin America coordinator Alejandro Barrios Noya delivered a statement to panel members on behalf of peasants, fisherfolk, pastoralist and coastal communities' to the Townhall. He highlighted four key issues raised by the group: the right to access to land, water and other resources; destructive corporate agricultural practices; the right to be given ample support and protection from government; climate change. After this, CPG was also able to engage in direct meetings with panel members from Indonesia and Mexico, with a view to CPG's further direct involvement providing input on its perspective on how the new development framework must be shaped. *END*

*“We would like to call the attention of this process to three main concerns--- equality, sustainability and justice.”*



# Asia Pacific Women Speak Out about Sexual Violence and other forms of Violence against Indigenous Women at CSW\*

Photo by APWLD (Rio+20)

Indigenous women from Asia and Pacific speak out about sexual violence and multiple forms of discrimination against indigenous women and girls. In a statement delivered to the Commission this week, indigenous women from Asia highlighted the connection between the collective rights to lands and resources on which indigenous peoples depend, and the status of indigenous women and their vulnerability to violence.

This week, indigenous women from throughout Asia-Pacific have gathered to raise their voices and present their concerns to the on-going session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York. This session of the CSW is focusing on the priority theme of violence against women and girls.

In preparation for the discussions taking place this week, indigenous women have submitted to the Commission a range of documents detailing how indigenous women experience violence against themselves and their peoples. These documents also reiterate the fact that indigenous women suffer disproportionately from a multi-fold of discrimination and oppression based on their ethnicity, race, location and economic status together with their sex.

In a statement delivered to the Commission this week, indigenous women from Asia highlighted the connection between the collective rights to lands and resources on which indigenous peoples depend, and the status of indigenous women and their vulnerability to violence.

The statement notes the impact of militarization of indigenous peoples' lands in Bangladesh: "occupation of indigenous peoples' land, evictions and sexual harassments, including rape and murder of indigenous women by military and settlers continues".

The statement also notes that this phenomenon is not restricted to a single example but can be

found throughout the region: "dispossession goes hand in hand with violence by state armed forces, settlers or the security personnel of private companies. The occupation of indigenous peoples' land not only means forced eviction but murder and sexual harassment including rape of indigenous women".

The women gathered in New York from March 4-15, 2013 have presented to the Commission a number of recommendations to help address these issues, primarily by providing for the effective participation of indigenous women in the governance of their own communities, peoples and nations.

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\*This statement is supported by the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), the International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI) and all the indigenous women participants in the CSW 57.

For further information about indigenous women delegates from Asia-Pacific and interviews, please contact:

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## Relevant resources:

Statement and recommendations by Indigenous Women from Asia-Pacific and the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact Foundation (AIPP) to CSW:

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/fpp/files/publication/2013/03/aipp-statementto57session-cswmarch2013.pdf>

Written Statement by the Asia Indigenous Peoples' Pact Foundation (AIPP) and the Forest Peoples Programme 'Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls: a complex phenomenon':

<http://www.aippnet.org/home/statement/1023-written-statement-violence-against-indigenous-women-and-girls-a-complex-phenomenon->

*"The occupation of indigenous peoples' land not only means forced eviction but murder and sexual harassment including rape of indigenous women"*



## APRN addresses CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment at two CPDE sub-regional consultations

### APRN Secretariat

The Asia Pacific Research Network participated at two CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) sub-regional consultations in Asia-Pacific. APRN BOC Chair Ms. Maria Theresa Lauron attended the CPDE SouthEast Asia sub-regional consultation held on January 24-26, 2013 in Bali, Indonesia. APRN Junior Programme Officer Mr. Jodel Dacara attended the CPDE South Asia sub-regional consultation held from March 5-7, 2013 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

CSO DE is part of CSO's commitment to improving their own effectiveness as independent development actors. However, the work on CSO accountability mechanisms are an important and continuing challenge for CSOs – especially for those working in situations where the environment is not conducive and are restrictive of CSO voices.

Both Ms. Lauron and Mr. Dacara spoke on the CSO Development Effectiveness (CSO DE) and Enabling Environment (EE) agenda. Specifically, they discussed the the two consolidated outcomes of the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness: the Istanbul Principles and the International Framework on CSO Development Effectiveness. They also promoted the reference materials for CSO DE work which are the Implementation and Advocacy Toolkits and the Practitioners' Guide to the International Framework. As the global co-chair of the CPDE Working Group on CSO DE, APRN also updated the participants on the post-Busan work, the transition process to the CPDE, and the tasks that the WG is currently doing.

The two consultations were also venues wherein participants developed their own country plans for CPDE. For South Asia, these plans included outreach for CPDE expansion, capacity-building on CSO DE, engagement strategy on EE, and also policy advocacy in aid and development programs.

Both sub-regions were also able to set-up their own structures. For South East Asia, Mr. Don Marut of INSIST, was selected as CPDE SEA focal point, with Ms. Sylvia Mallari of APC as the alternate. Focal points were also selected for the following countries and sectors:

Philippines: Ms. Jazminda Lumang, AidWatch Philippines  
Indonesia: Mr. Abednego Tarigan, Friends of the Earth Indonesia (WALHI)  
Cambodia: Mr. Seoung Saroeun, Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC)

Vietnam: Mr. Phan Anh Son, Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Association (VUSTA)

Laos: Mr. Thongdam Phongphicith, Sustainable Agriculture and Environment Development Association (SAEDA)

Rural: Ms. Sylvia Mallari, Asian Peasant Coalition (APC)

Women: Ms. Dian Kartika, Indonesian Women's Coalition (KPI) and Ms. Liza Maza, International Women's Alliance (IWA)

Faith-Based: Christian Foundation for Public Health (YAKKUM)

Migrants: Ms. Retno, Association of Indonesian Migrant Workers (ATKI)

Indigenous People: Ms. Robeliza Halip, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)

Youth: College Editors' Guild of the Philippines (CEGP) (Name to follow)

Representatives of other countries-- Thailand, Burma, Brunei, Timor Leste, and Malaysia, and the Labor sector are still to be confirmed.

South Asia CPDE was also able to set-up its structure by confirming Ms. Azra Sayeed of Roots for Equity-Pakistan as South Asia focal point with Mr. Arjun Karki of Rural Reconstruction Nepal as alternate. Ms. Sayeed is also the interim Asia Pacific Regional Focal Point of the CPDE and will be confirmed by mid-2013.

Participants attending the consultation also elected their focal points:

Bangladesh: Mr. Rezaul Chowdhury, EquityBd

India: Ms. Shubha Chacko, ANEKA

Pakistan: Ms. Azra Sayeed, Roots for Equity for Pakistan

Nepal: Mr. Arjun Karki, Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)

Maldives: Maldives NGO Federation (Name to follow)

Sri Lanka: Mr. Sarath Fernando, Movement for National Land and Agricultural Reform (MONLAR)

CPDE South Asia recognized the need to reach out to CSOs in Afghanistan, Iran and Bhutan. Sectoral representatives will soon be confirmed after their respective consultations.

Both consultations resulted to plans for their constituent countries and produced declarations endorsing the CPDE.  
*END*



The **Asia Pacific Research Network** is a network of leading research NGOs in the Asia-Pacific. It is active in promoting exchange, coordination and capacity building support in research.

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# Available APRN Publications



**Sowing Seeds of Change and Hope <sup>NEW!</sup>**

The food producers of Asia Pacific are now reclaiming agroecological farming systems and methodologies through their own farmers' organizations and other support institutions. These local 'alternatives' from the people are rooted on local context and situation and are mindful of sustainable management of communities' resources



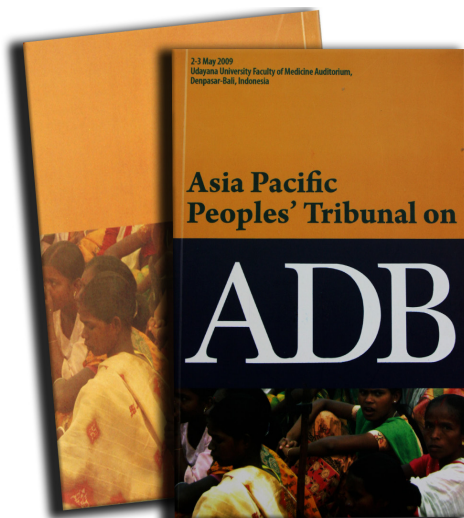
**Women Resisting Crisis and War <sup>NEW!</sup>**

Although women are mostly at the receiving end of the negative impacts of neoliberal globalization and war, the reality is that they also go through various cycles of coping with, adapting to, and resisting the onslaught of the multiple crises.



**Intensifying Working Women's Burdens:**

*The Impact of Globalization on Women Labor in Asia*  
Contrary to claims by promoters of globalization, women end up losing more than gaining from free market and monetarist policies that have dramatically rewritten economic policies and opened the way for corporate expansion in countries around Asia.



**Asia Pacific People's Tribunal on ADB**

Taking into account the need to create space to examine the roles and impact of ADB on the issue of development, APRN and its members from Indonesia, organized the Asia Pacific People's Tribunal on ADB to gather studies, researches, and testimonies from affected communities on the negative impacts of ADB projects and submit these evidences before a tribunal of law experts, development practioners and parliamentarians.

**Contact the secretariat to get the full list of  
publications and how to avail of copies.**