



Bangkok Cross-Movement Call on Addressing Poverty, Food Sovereignty, Rights to Food and Nutrition, and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

11 September 2013; Bangkok, Thailand (updated 15 January 2014)

We, cross-movement activists, advocates and representatives of 16 organisations and networks working on addressing poverty, and achieving food sovereignty, food security, rights to adequate food and nutrition, women's rights, gender justice, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) issues in and across Asia, gathered in Bangkok, Thailand on 10-11 September 2013 to deliberate on the intersectionalities of our movements and issues; and to forge a strong cross-movement, intersectional analysis and approach that respects human rights, gender justice, and environmental sustainability. We believe that achieving social justice for all requires addressing issues of poverty, hunger, malnutrition, landlessness, gender inequality, their root causes, and SRHR, together.

We are faced with economic, food, fuel and climate crises, which are compounded by the current development paradigms directed by neo-liberal ideologies that has led to increased inequalities, landlessness, loss of livelihoods, poverty and hunger, especially among women. We are also confronted by policies that do not tackle the structural inequities, but instead opt for 'quick fixes,' such as population control policies or GMOs that endanger women's integrities and sovereignties and challenge the biodiversity and sustainability of our environments.

The rights to adequate food and nutrition is intrinsically linked to all other human rights, including the rights to water, housing, education, property, decent work, livelihood, social security and social welfare. Only if individuals are free from hunger and malnutrition, including the hidden hunger of micronutrient deficiencies, are they able to enjoy a good health, and well-being; a critical pre-requisite to leading a complete life, enabling participation in all domains of the society: economic, social, political and cultural. Similarly, the rights to adequate food and nutrition cannot be separated from women's self-determination, autonomy and bodily rights, and the right to health.

We believe that any new development agenda must be based on gender justice and existing human rights legal norms, standards, and political commitments. We call for the creation of a united movement against neoliberal globalisation, and working towards a brave new world of equity and wellbeing.

In order to ensure a just and equitable world for all peoples, we specifically call for:

- 1 The full and immediate implementation of existing instruments, policies, and agreements at all levels, which ensure equal rights and access to resources and services (including land, water, seeds, forests, housing, education, livelihood, food, and health services, including for SRHR) for women. In addition, we must ensure the monitoring of local implementation of commitments to treaties and reports.²
- 2 Real reform of the monetary, financial and trade regimes that perpetuate inequalities, and results in violence and the undermining of women's human rights, is undertaken immediately. This includes the direction of public investment towards sectors in which the poor work (agriculture), areas in which they live (rural and alternative regions), factors of production that they possess (unskilled labour) and outputs which they consume (food) [UNDP, 2007]. The enabling and legitimisation of government control over the flow of finance and international trade, as well as the cancellation of international debt, are key components for the restructuring of the current paradigms.
- 3 Ensuring enhanced public investments in health, including for sexual and reproductive health and rights,³ education, and other social services; and ensuring universal access to these, regardless of gender, socio-economic status, citizenship, age, ethnicity, caste, geographic location, sexual orientation, gender identity, engagement in sex work, disability, marital status, HIV status, pregnancy status, migration or refugee status, or other status.
- 4 Ensuring the right to adequate, culturally appropriate and safe food and nutrition of all; while giving specific attention to critical groups of women, such as the pregnant, lactating, and those living with HIV and AIDS, who have specific needs to food.
- 5 Immediate regulation and accountability of the private sector, including in services, technology, insurance, health, land, and food. Stopping the onslaught of corporate land grabbing and the forced evictions of communities, especially farming communities and indigenous peoples.
- 6 Governments and any regional/political entities and processes, as well as all development agendas, need to protect people—particularly women—from the negative impacts of WTO and FTA policies and agreements, such as TRIPS, GATS and AoA, that are used to further corporate interests across sectors rather than uphold and protect peoples' rights.
- 7 Repeal of laws and policies that criminalise, punish or marginalise specific groups, based on their gender, socio-economic status, age, ethnicity, caste, marital, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious beliefs, engagement in sex work, HIV status, disability, citizenship, migrant, refugee or other status; or erect barriers to services; and adopt and implement measures to counter discriminatory practices and ensure access to justice.
- 8 Advancing genuine, redistributive agrarian and land reform that ensure land to the landless, especially women's access, ownership and control of land and productive resources.
- 9 Concrete efforts towards demilitarisation and immediate stop of production of arms and ammunition, leading towards a more peaceful and secure space.

- 10 Addressing the increased vulnerabilities of women and other marginalised groups due to climate change, disasters, conflict, migration, and the economic, food and fuel crises, and adopting concrete measures to mitigate their impacts on livelihood, food sovereignty and security, and SRHR.
- 11 The creation and implementation of strict anti-corruption policies, along with ensuring that all policies and guidelines are transparent, gender-sensitive and can be held to account. There must also be a concerted effort to connect policies and guidelines across issues and themes at the government policy level. There must also be greater collaboration between the different agencies working on the specific areas of Poverty, Food Security and SRHR.
- 12 The optimisation of existing mechanisms that ensure equity budget, such as a mid-term budgetary review and ensuring gender-sensitive budgeting.
- 13 Synthesising existing research on the interlinkages among poverty, food sovereignty, food security, gender and SRHR issues, as well as conducting essential primary research. We recommend the creation of a multi-sectoral team of researchers to conduct and support ethical, gender-sensitive research that provides the evidence for policymaking and programming related to interlinkages of these issues. Data should be disaggregated according to age, sex and other socio-economic indicators.
- 14 Ensuring meaningful participation of NGOs, communities and progressive social movements as equal partners in sustainable development at all levels, including in the ICPD+20 and post-2015 development agenda and processes, particularly women-led groups. Enabling environment for their work must be ensured. This includes protection of human rights defenders—including women's human rights defenders—from State and Non-State actors, including religious fundamentalists and other elements.

Notes:

¹ Including but not limited to UDHR, CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, ECSR, and ICCPR.

² This includes CEDAW (general recommendation 26), ICSCR, UDHR, IAASTD (reports), ILO Convention 184 (especially articles 18, 189) and ICERD.

³ This would include provision of the full range of contraceptives (including emergency contraception), services to ensure maternal health and nutrition, emergency and comprehensive obstetric and postnatal care services, interventions for maternal morbidities including uterine prolapse, services for abortion and management of abortion complications, infertility treatment, and access to medication and treatment for STI, HIV and reproductive cancers. It should also include comprehensive sexuality education and information. Services and programmes for SRHR, HIV and AIDS and VAW needs to be inter-linked, gender-sensitive, rights-based, disability-friendly, youth-friendly, migrant-friendly, and available even in times of conflict, disasters, migration and displacement. Referral systems need to be in place.

ABOUT THIS CALL

This call was an outcome of the meeting, titled, Intersectional Understandings: A Regional Meeting to Build Inter-movement Linkages in Poverty, Food Sovereignty, Food Security, Gender and SRHR in South Asia, which was organised in Bangkok on 10-11 September 2013 by the Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW). ARROW is a regional women's organisation who has been working to advance women's health, affirmative sexuality and rights, and to empower women through information and knowledge, evidence-generation, engagement, advocacy and partnership building since 1993.

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Formulated and endorsed by:

Organisations and Networks

- ■ Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)
- ■ Asian Rural Women's Coalition (ARWC)
- ■ Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW)
- ■ Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha (BNPS)
- ■ CREA
- ■ Food-first Information and Action Network (FIAN) - Nepal
- ■ Naripokkho
- ■ Pesticide Action Network Asia-Pacific (PAN AP)
- ■ Roots for Equity
- ■ Rural Women's Social Education Centre (RUWSEC)
- ■ Shirkat Gah
- ■ Society for Rural Education and Development (SRED)
- ■ South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE)
- ■ Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN)
- ■ Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC)

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