

A report on the Panel session at the World Social Forum 2004 on:

**'The Struggle against Exploitative Migration
Especially Trafficking of Women and Children:
The Globalization of Gender Insecurity'**

Organised by:

The International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)

At Hall 3, the NESCO grounds, World Social Forum 2004

13:00 – 16:00, Tuesday, 20 January 2004

A list of the final speakers (in order of presentations):

Chair: Nimalka Fernando, President, IMADR

Part I – Testimonies

Mathama person from Tamil Nadu State

Sex worker from Tamil Nadu State

Ms. Elizabeth Figueroa (Philippines), Third World Movement against the Exploitation of Women

Mr. Valeriu Nicolae (Belgium), Deputy Director, European Roma Information Office

Ms. Yu Young Nim (Republic of Korea), Chair, Korean Women's Peace Network

Part II – Analysis of present insecurities and proposals for actions

Mr Anton Marcus (Sri Lanka), Free Trade Zone (Independent Trade Union Centre in Sri Lanka)

Ms Burnad Fatima Natesan (India), President, Tamil Nadu Women's Forum / Director, IMADR

Ms Farida Aktar (Bangladesh), Ubinig

A representative of CARAM Asia (Malaysia), (on behalf of Dr. Irene Fernandez)

Ms Lin Chew, Global Alliance against Trafficking in Women (GAATW)

Part III - Recommendations

Sr Sol Perpinan (Philippines), RGS, APPRA Secretary General, TW-MAE-W President and CEO

Ms Tadati Bhowmick (India), SANLAAP

Mr Kinhide Mushakoji (Japan), Vice-President, IMADR

IMADR held a panel session entitled 'the Struggle against Exploitative Migration Especially Trafficking of Women and Children: The Globalization of Gender Insecurity' on 20 January, with great participation of survivors from trafficking and sexual exploitation and activists supporting survivors. At the session, speakers and participants denounced trafficking and all forms of exploitative migration in all the respective countries of the participants, and appealed for the development of the 'another world' where exploitative migration is unnecessary and impossible.

IMADR recognize that there is a structural framework that the neo-liberal global economy brings out: massive flows of migration, which is often denied the protection from the States; thus, vulnerable to exploitation; 'feminization' of migration as a result of the intersection with gender, which gives more freedom to practices of

exploitation including sexual exploitation, and insecurity, especially of women belonging to minorities who suffer from social discrimination and poor economic conditions by making them vulnerable to such framework of exploitation. In the countries that the trafficked women arrive, the trafficked women do not have access to any protection at all, as issues of those sending countries are minimized into the issue of 'poverty' and authorities label 'illegal' migrant workers as pre-crime committing groups. What is more, they are likely to be treated as criminals who are smugglers. As a result of such behavior of States, the relation between the 'citizens' in receiving countries and those women trafficked is 'divided'.

IMADR believes that the international solidarity by 'citizens' and the 'multitude' to propose 'another world' without exploitative migration and trafficking can only be achieved when the citizens of receiving countries proactively relate to the 'multitude' in sending countries as well as to marginalized survivors of trafficking, and think of effective policies and measures for the protection of survivors and for the elimination of the root causes of the problems.

A panel session on 'the Struggle against Exploitative Migration Especially Trafficking of Women and Children: The Globalization of Gender Insecurity', which was held on Tuesday, 20 January 2004 aimed to, inter alia:

- Denounce the gender insecurity caused by human trafficking;
- Establish the responsibility of the States along with the civil society, whose masculinist and racist policies intensify the insecurity of the victims of exploitative migration, and
- Proclaim our solidarity with all the victims, support their de-stigmatization and empowerment, and declare our resolution to promote a world without exploitative migration through all means, including the United Nations, by proposing a UN Year to Combat Trafficking.

Chaired by IMADR President Nimalka Fernando, the panel was opened with a drum performance by some Dalit women from Tamil Nadu. In the intervals, street theatre groups from Sri Lanka also joined the Panel.

The panel discussion started with a testimony by a Dalit Mathamma survivor. In the name of dedication, she 'married' the goddess, Mathama, and became a companion, not allowed to marry any man: becoming public property. Not married, no family, no land, no security. Sex workers from Tamil Nadu and from the Philippines also testified about exploitation, prejudice and insecurity that sex workers constantly face.

Many trafficked women are from minority or other marginalized groups. Cases of Roma women who have been trafficked from Eastern Europe reaffirmed such a reality of multiple discrimination and insecurity faced by women belonging to minority groups.

The situation of sex workers in US military bases in the Republic of Korea underlined the nexus between militarization and sexual exploitation. During the 1960s, many women came to US military bases (慰安 towns) to escape from poverty, initially became factory workers, suffering from long working hours and low wages, then became sex workers. Later, foreigners (especially from the Philippines and former USSR) started to enter the camp towns, while remaining Korean women worked as 'managers'. Many of those women lived in extreme insecurity.

In Sri Lanka, globalization has given an impetus to exploitative migration, mostly of women, from rural areas to urban areas where factories are located. Some boarding facilities for those workers are very primitive with no electricity and water. In the Free Trade Zone, governments have more people willing to work despite their exploitation, which makes the situation worse.

'We - Dalits - are untouchable in daytime, but touchable at night', resented Ms. Burnad Fatima Natesan from Tamil Nadu Women's Forum (IMADR's Board member). She particularly pointed out the social structure exploitative of women, especially the combination of caste-based discrimination, discrimination against women and poverty.

The link between human trafficking as gender insecurity led by the feminization of migration, and trafficking of organs was presented and the role played by the media was particularly underlined in this respect.

A message from Dr. Irene Fernandez also reached the panel. Her organization, Teneganita, published its findings in 1995 under a program focusing on migration, health and HIV/AIDS in Malaysia. As a result, Irene was charged for maliciously publishing false news, and eventually, convicted and sentenced to imprisonment. She called the verdict a brazen attack against human rights defenders, and a denial of the truth of migrant worker's plight in the immigration detention camps.

On the issue of human trafficking, there was a call for change in the structure where people, especially women, are 'forced' to migrate because of the agriculture/rural situation due to globalization. Emphasis was made on the importance of awareness raising and training especially through 'South-South' cooperation. The close link between prostitution in military bases and sex tourism on one hand and human trafficking on the other was also pointed out.

In the red light districts in Calcutta, the younger are more exploited by madams. Among the numerous problems, the main one is on the legal side: to give justice to victims. 'We have good law in India' said one panelist, 'but police do not know'. The need of sensitization of police and judiciary was particularly stressed.

Summing it up, Kinhide Mushakoji, IMADR Vice-President called trafficking the worst combination of gender discrimination and racial discrimination, including discrimination based on descent. The roots causes were also addressed - poverty at the sending side and masculinism at the recipient side.

Trafficking must be considered as part of large exploitative migration. Criminal organizations can still work thanks to states which create institutions where only those labors required are welcome, others illegal. Strict immigration controls effectively promote trafficking/exploitative migration. Billions of dollars are earned by traffickers - it is a big industry.

Mushakoji called on all the participants to combine their efforts to build up another world. There is a proposal to launch a UN Year against Trafficking - we, the civil society, have to be prepared.

In conclusion, IMADR President Fernando declared that exploitative migration, especially the trafficking of women and children, is a violent form of multiple discrimination led by neo-liberal globalization, and called for a joint front against it.

This report covers part or whole of the substance of the following two articles in IMADR's newsletter "Connect" Vol.8 Issue 2, April 2004:

Hideki Morihara, "*Seeking a Passage to Build 'Another World' through International Solidarity for Anti-Discrimination*", and
Atsuko Tanaka, "*The Struggle against Exploitative Migration Especially Trafficking of Women and Children: The Globalization of Gender Insecurity*"