The process of globalization may have resulted in new avenues of growth but it has created the widest gap in history between the very rich and the very poor, with a very negative impact on women. It has also served to increase dramatically the power of multinational corporations as agents in the international development field. The questions are 'Can corporations be a force of empowerment for women? What types of jobs do they create? What is their wider impact on women's communities and on the women's rights agenda?'.

www.womenalliance.org
Maria Hengeveld
Writer and researcher who focuses on inequalities, gender, education and the world of work. She studied sociology and gender studies at University of Cape Town and was a Fulbright Fellow in Human Rights at Columbia University. Her writing has appeared on Al Jazeera America, The Atlantic, Jacobin Magazine, The Guardian, Vrij Nederland and many others. Maria is also a member of the Africa is a Country media collective. In 2015, she won the Audre Rapoport Prize for Scholarship on Gender and Human Rights. Until August 2016, she will be working at the International Labour Organization's liaison office in New York City.

Hester Eisenstein
Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies at Queens College and the Graduate Center, The City University of New York. A native New Yorker, she earned a Ph.D. in History at Yale University and has taught at Yale, Barnard College (Columbia University), and the State University of New York at Buffalo. Hester also served as a "femocrat" in the New South Wales state government in, Sydney, Australia. Among her books are Contemporary Feminist Thought (1983), Inside Agitators: Australian Feminocrats and the State (1996), and Feminism Seduced: How Global Elites Use Women's Labor and Ideas to Exploit the World (2009).

Chiara Capraro
Gender policy adviser at Christian Aid, responsible for gender mainstreaming across policy priorities and leads Christian Aid’s work on gender responsive fiscal policy. Co-chair of the UK Gender and Development Network Women’s Economic Justice Group and sits on its Advisory Group. Prior to joining Christian Aid Chiara worked in Southern India with women living with HIV and in Italy with women migrants, supporting them to access health care and other services and fight discrimination. Chiara holds an MA in Anthropology of Development from SOAS.

Sophia Lin
International human rights lawyer, admitted to practice in the state of New York. She currently serves as a Legal and Policy Associate at the International Corporate Accountability Roundtable (ICAR), working across the Remedies and Frameworks Programs. Sophia graduated cum laude from American University Washington College of Law. She was a Student Attorney with the law school’s International Human Rights Law Clinic, where she collaborated with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on a project studying issues faced by the Haitian Diaspora in obtaining legal status in The Bahamas. Before joining ICAR, Sophia served as a Legal Advisor at Sorini, Samet & Associates, a consulting firm on trade, labour, and corporate social responsibility policy. Previously, she was an Asia Research Fellow at Freedom House, focusing on human rights issues in China. She has also worked with the Open Technology Institute at the New America Foundation, Human Rights in China, International Rights Advocates, and the Human Rights Law Foundation. She currently serves as a consultant analyst for Freedom House’s 2016 Freedom in the World report. Sophia holds a B.A. from National Taiwan University. She is fluent in Mandarin Chinese.

Gregory Tzetschler Regaignon
Research Director of Business & Human Rights Resource Centre; he joined the Resource Centre in 2003. He oversees the Centre’s research, its Corporate Legal Accountability Project and its work on the UN Guiding Principles and UN Working Group, and manages its Africa team. He helped establish the Centre’s presence in North America in 2003-04. His engagement with Tiffany & Co. about its sourcing of rubies from Burma was featured in a Financial Times article profiling the Centre’s work. Greg was previously an associate at the international law firm Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton, where he focused on emerging market debt restructurings, and pro bono matters involving political asylum, domestic violence and other human rights issues. He has also worked with Human Rights Watch in New York, National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, and Legal Aid Institute of Indonesia in Jakarta; he conducted research on land rights and agricultural development in Senegal, the results of which he published in the Journal of African Law. Greg obtained his JD (Stone Scholar) from Columbia Law School; MA in African Studies & International Economics from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS); and BA in Political Science magna cum laude from American College. His mother tongue is English, he is fluent in French, and has basic proficiency in German, Indonesian & Spanish.

Lesedi Graveline
Research intern at the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre. She will receive her BA in both Women’s Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Human Rights from the University of Connecticut next spring. She has also studied abroad for one semester at the University of Essex in Colchester, England. After graduation, she hopes to travel as well as attend graduate school and eventually join the Peace Corps.
The International Alliance of Women, supported by the Permanent Mission of Greece to the UN and the Business and Human Rights Resource Center, organized a side event in parallel with the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The theme was Corporations, Globalization and Women’s Social and Economic Rights.

I would like to record thanks to H.E. Ambassador Catherine Boura, Permanent Representative of Greece to the UN, for her sponsorship of the side event, as well as to H.E. Ambassador Nancy Vraila, Deputy Permanent Representative of Greece to the UN, for her opening remarks. My gratitude also goes to our Moderator, Maria Hengeveld, for her contribution to the organization of this side event.

With Maria Hengeveld, IAW shares the same views on the problems that were discussed. One year ago she had sent an e-mail to my organization asking for support to do a project on these issues. We were interested and we started collaborating. In the meantime we decided to have this panel to get ideas on strategies and to build meaningful partnerships. I asked Maria to find speakers for this event and she found the best. I would also like to put on record a big thank to all our eminent panelists and the contributions they made. It was very pleasing to see how many attendees our side event attracted, the majority of whom were young people.

The priority issue which was discussed during the CSW 60 was the empowerment of women and its link to sustainable development.

This was exactly the theme we discussed in our side event. Major corporations and the private sector, which have become powerful agents of international development in recent years, can become a force of empowerment for women. Can we make them work for women in a climate of free market economics? What is the wider impact of the philanthropy of these development agents, on women’s communities, on women’s rights agenda?

The centrality of women’s empowerment, gender equality and the realization of women’s human rights in achieving sustainable development have been increasingly recognized in a number of international norms and agreements. The Beijing Declaration of Action provides that the advancement of women and the achievement of equality between men and women is a matter of human rights, a condition for social justice and are the only way to build a sustainable, just and developed society in our world.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development agreed to by member states in the post 2015 Development Summit that took place in New York in September 2015 also acknowledges throughout that achieving women’s empowerment, gender equality and human rights are prerequisites for sustainable development.

Unfortunately, despite its vision to transform our world, the post 2015 Development Agenda is doing little to address vast inequalities and discrimination embedded in decision making structures and financial systems. It does not deliver a new model for development based on the wellbeing of all instead of profitability, on solidarity instead of competition, transparency and accountability instead of inequality.

It has also served to increase dramatically the power of the private sector and of multinational corporations as agents in the international development field.

The question to be answered is how to hold the corporate sector to account and empower women and girls on human rights. We have to discuss innovative opportunities for advocacy and partnership to advance women’s economic and social rights in a global climate of free market economies and to make corporations work for the empowerment of women and girls in a meaningful way.

Evaluation of Agreed Conclusions (AC) CSW 60

We agree with UN Women that the AC established value added commitments to effectively implement and monitor the progress of the gender equality compact contained in the entire 2030 Agenda in conjunction with BDPA. However, mainstreaming gender equality, women’s and girls’ human rights and the empowerment of women in the entire 2030 Agenda is not enough to achieve the transformative changes that the 2030 Agenda must ensure. We need to work towards the universal realization of all women’s and girls’ human rights as ends in themselves rather than just a means to further economic interests that perpetuate poverty and inequality. There is a need to truly introduce and compound gender inequality overtime and across generations. In other words we need strategies to tackle the root causes of women’s and girls’ human rights violations and gender inequality. The AC do not include any such commitments.

The most important commitments adopted by the Commission are the following:

We are deeply concerned about the private sector’s growing influence in the international gender and development field and its impact on reconceptualizing women’s empowerment in market and not human rights terms. In other words, we do not accept that girls’ agendas do not address issues such as labour rights or their rights to social services.

Governments around the world must set a clear vision for the increasing role of the private sector and business in development with accountability and agreed standards for business practices aligned with human rights, thus creating an enabling environment for women’s empowerment. Women’s NGOs should also try to hold the private sector and corporations accountable for the respect of women’s human rights.

Role of a socially responsible and accountable private sector

The AC call on a socially responsible and accountable private sector to support the full, effective and accelerated implementation of BDPA and 2030 Agenda.

The AC recognize the major contributions made by civil society including feminist groups, women’s community based and youth led organizations.

The AC recognize the essential role of civil society and feminist and youth led organizations by IAW President, Joanna Manganara

The most important commitments adopted by the Commission are the following:

Historic commitment to gender-responsive implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda

The CSW evoked a historic commitment to, and set out to enable conditions for gender-responsive implementation, data, review and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and the systematic integration of gender perspectives in all aspects of the implementation of the entire agenda.

Essentiality of Gender equality and women’s empowerment on all SDGs, Beijing Platform for Action as foundational basis

The AC recognize the essentiality of gender equality and women’s empowerment and progress on all SDGs and targets. The BDPA and the outcome documents of its reviews and the outcomes of relevant major UN conferences have laid a solid foundation for SD.

Women’s human rights affirmations and major role of civil society and feminist and youth led organizations

The AC strongly prioritize the human rights of women and girls in the achievement of GEWE and SD implementations of the 2030 Agenda. CEDAW and CRC provide an international legal framework and comprehensive set of measures for their realization.

The AC recognize the major contributions made by civil society including feminist groups, women’s, community based and youth led organizations.

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Feminist icon Gloria Steinem visited New Zealand and Australia to promote her latest book My Life on the Road. She attracted an enthusiastic audience of 2000 at the Melbourne Town Hall in May 2016; mostly women, many with their daughters, ranging in age from the Fitzroy High School Feminist Collective to wellknown feminist Mary Owen, now 95, who IAW members met at the International Meeting in 2012. Gloria told Mary that she is aiming for 100!


Steinem is executive producer and host of a TV series “Woman” that features a team of all-female journalists telling the stories of women and men on the front lines of fighting gender-based violence. “Polarized gender roles are the main breeding ground for groups and violent societies,” says Steinem. “More than poverty, natural resources, religion or degree of democracy, violence against females is the most reliable predictor of whether a nation will be violent within itself or will use violence against another country—and gender violence has become so great that for the first time, there are now fewer females on earth than males. This series records on-the-ground realities and gives viewers ways to help.”

Episodes include reports on the impact of sexual violence in Democratic Republic of the Congo; the epidemic of femicides in El Salvador; the prevalence of sexual assault in the U.S. military; the devastating effect on American society of incarcerating mothers of young children; and a special episode produced by Oscar-winning filmmaker Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy on how the rise of extremism in Pakistan is both rooted in and reflected by violence towards women.

from Prascilla Todd (Women’s Electoral Lobby) and Eva Court (League of Women Voters)

Empowering women in the digital age with more eSkills in EU

Arina Angerman says “Lifelong learning of new eSkills is urgent in order to improve women’s economic rights and independence. Financial independence for women is very important because one out of three women is a victim of sexual and/or physical violence in the EU!”

Arina Angerman represents IAW on the Board of the European Women’s Lobby

In March 2016 Arina attended the Conference eSkills for Jobs 2016 in The Hague. Marietje Schaake, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and eSkills for Jobs Ambassador, told us “We have to have a leadership that knows why eSkills are important.” Her key recommendation: “Invest in the eSkills of politicians and policy makers.”

On 28 April the European Parliament adopted a very important resolution on gender equality and empowering women in the digital age. This was developed by MEP and Rapporteur Terry Reintke with help from many others.

Congratulations to Sheila Byard, IAW Regional Coordinator – Pacific who was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for service to women in the June 2016 Australian Queens Birthday Honours.

International Women’s News

There have been unexpected delays this year leading up to the production of this edition, which puts on record a successful event at CSW60. The selection of themes and articles involves more research and careful selection of contributors. We hope our readers will enjoy reading and thinking provocative articles. We intend to produce two more editions this year. Please let us know if your email address is changing; also, if you know of any members who are not receiving IWNews, please send us details to iawwn@iaw.alliance.org and iaw.newsletter@inter.nl.net.
The Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Ms Dubravka Šimonović, took up the function as Special Rapporteur on 1 August 2015 and intends to, inter alia, focus on the legal and policy frameworks of her mandate and the international human rights mechanisms to discuss the gap in incorporating and implementing the international and regional standards related to violence against women.

The Special Rapporteur considers that the discussion on the adequacy of the international legal framework on violence against women initiated by the former mandate holder should continue and she wishes to secure views from different stakeholders, including States, National Human Rights Institutions, Non-governmental organizations, as well as members of academia.

Taking into consideration the important role that different stakeholders play in reinforcing universal human rights standards, she would be very interested to receive input and views on the following questions:

1. Do you consider that there is a need for a separate legally binding treaty on violence against women with its separate monitoring body?
2. Do you consider that there is an incorporation gap of the international or regional human rights norms and standards?
3. Do you believe that there is a lack of implementation of the international and regional legislation into the domestic law?
4. Do you think that there is a fragmentation of policies and legislation to address gender-based violence?
5. Could you also provide your views on measures needed to address this normative and implementation gap and to accelerate prevention and elimination of violence against women?

Your views are important and the International Alliance of Women urges readers to respond to these questions.

Please send your comments to vaw@ohchr.org no later than 1 October 2016.

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to this side event on “Corporations & Globalization: Women’s Social and Economic Rights” co-hosted by the Permanent Mission of Greece and the International Alliance of Women.

We would like to thank you for your interest in this side event in the second week of this year’s very busy Commission for the Status of Women. We are looking forward to a fruitful and thought provoking discussion on this particularly timely issue.

As you very well know, Greece attaches major significance to the social and economic aspect of the protection of human rights, especially in reference to the empowerment of women. The economic crisis and the austerity measures affecting my country over the last years have had severe effects on women; women who, as all over the world, constitute the most vulnerable part of the working age population, with young women facing in Greece more than 60% unemployment rate.

However, we are fully aware that the issue of women’s social and economic rights constitutes not only a Greek but a universal challenge, especially in reference to the implementation of the recently adopted 2030 Agenda. Globalization and multinational corporations may have created opportunities but they have also paved the ground for difficult situations for many countries, especially in the developing south.

Unequal access to paid work, lower earnings, lack of social benefits and persistence of stereotypical gender roles are only some of the challenges faced by women globally. The need to advance women’s economic rights in the free market economies figures among the main challenges in order to achieve sustainable development.

2015 was a milestone year for gender equality: the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, the 15th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the Adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In 2016 we should focus on implementation. In this context, women’s access to employment and their full economic empowerment remain key factors for the realization of the 2030 Agenda and for ensuring that no-one is left behind.

I look forward to hearing what I am sure will be very interesting interventions by our panelists on the above issues.
With the rise of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and philanthro-capitalism, Multinational Corporations (MNCs) have come to play a prominent role in the international development field the past decade. The past fifteen years have, in response to mounting critiques and protests against corporate impunity, seen a growing number of initiatives to promote responsible business practices. Some refer to this as ‘corporate social responsibility’. The formation of the UN’s Global Compact, its Ten Principles on corporate sustainability as well as the UN’s Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights are examples of such CSR efforts.

With respect to the ‘philanthro-capitalism’ agenda, women’s empowerment seems to have taken on a particularly large role the past decade, as a growing number of MNCs have explicitly embraced the feminist cause. There is a ‘business case’ to be made for gender equality, they argue, because investing in women’s capabilities ‘pays off’. It’s ‘Smart Economics.’ Nike, Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, Walmart, Johnson & Johnson, Coca Cola and Avon are amongst the growing group of MNCs who argue that the most effective way to combat poverty is to unleash the repressed entrepreneurial potential of impoverished women to lift themselves and their countries out of poverty. Women, the logic goes, invest a large share of their incomes back into their families, which drives economic growth. To support women in realizing their economic potential, these MNCs promote ‘empowerment’ programs for girls and women; market-focused education initiatives that encourage women and girls to be confident about themselves, believe in their own potential as business women and teach them how to access credit, open bank accounts and start businesses. Under this corporate embrace of Girl Power, embedded in long-standing Western preferences for market-led development models, the notion that economic justice hinges on the attitudes and financial behaviours of impoverished women seems to have become hegemonic in the international development field the past. MNCs such as Walmart, Nike and Goldman Sachs have been endorsed by people as influential as Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, two World Bank presidents and a host of senior United Nations (UN) representatives for their ‘game changing’ philanthropy. The Nike Foundation, a leader in international trade policies and corporate accountability mechanisms, corporations will harm women more than they help them. I have written quite a bit about the tensions surrounding the feminist philanthropy of Nike, Goldman Sachs, and the like, in a couple of media articles. For an upcoming investigative article (to be published in August), I spent the month of January in Vietnam, where I interviewed twenty-five garment factory workers, all women, to find out what CSR has done for them the past twenty years. My findings place me squarely on the side of Hester Eisenstein; the corporate responsibility movement has failed them. It is time for accountability. And the transnational feminist movement plays a key role in pushing for such change.

It is through these research and media projects that I learned about our speakers and what the organizations they represent are doing on the topic - and I am grateful and excited that they accepted our invitation to talk about their work today. Each of these panelists will offer us their unique perspectives on what needs to be done to make globalization work for all women.

As you will all be well aware, this is a vastly complex and multilayered question with no single, easy answer. And we can’t even touch the surface of the experiences of those who suffer from the negative impact of harmful business practices, be it extraction of resources, pollution, displacement or otherwise, in communities across the global south and elsewhere.

But that’s not the goal of this conversation. Instead, our objective is to examine some of the links between women’s struggles and corporate accountability questions, in the context of economic globalization as we have experienced the past few decades, and to deepen our understanding of how and why women’s groups can push back against the enormous power that corporations have gained during this period. I look forward to a lively debate.

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For example at: 
Jami Lee Runge ‘How Nike Seduced Women’ http://www.academia.edu/901441/How_Nike_Seduced_Women
The Feminist Wire ‘How Nike’s Neoliberal Feminism Came to Rule the Global South’ http://www.thefeministwire.com/2015/02/nikes-neoliberal-feminism/
The material I am presenting is drawn from two books published by Paradigm Publishing in 2009, Feminism Sediuced: How Global Elites Use Women’s Labor and Ideas to Exploit the World (now available from Taylor and Francis). The book grew out of an article I wrote some years earlier, entitled “A Dangerous Liaison? Feminism and Capitalist Globalization.” I so you can see that I have been working with these metaphors of seduction for some time!

I will address only two of the forms of seduction that I refer to. But the underlying fear that I want to speak to is this: that the utopian vision of feminism – really a very radical intervention that over a couple of centuries has sought the liberation of women from patriarchy – with all of its revolutionary potential as a force for social change – has been seized on by the powers that be in governments, corporations, and international financial institutions, and used, not to liberate the great mass of women, the majority of whom are poor, but to shore up the globalized capitalist system that in our time has underwritten the enormous transfer of wealth upward to the 1%, and the cynical dismantling of the safety nets of all kinds that were won after intense struggles in the post-World War II era by labor and other social movements.

So I want to trace some of these developments here: how is it that we hear constantly from corporations, or rather, their public relations arms, of women’s empowerment, through the use of microcredit and other interventions, will lift not only women, but their children and families out of poverty and into the middle class. Consider, for example, the cheerful words from Nike’s “girl effect” website (see www.girleffect.org): Girls are agents of change. They play a crucial role in solving the most persistent development problems facing the world today. By investing in their economic potential through education, and delaying child marriage and teen pregnancy, girls are agents of change. They play a crucial role in solving the most persistent development problems facing the world today. By investing in their economic potential through education, and delaying child marriage and teen pregnancy, issues such as HIV and AIDS can be resolved and the cycle of poverty can be broken.

This belief in the transformative power of individual women and girls is a cynical use of feminism, or rather pseudo-feminism, ideology. The creation of national wealth and a rising standard of living has been, by and large, the result of state-led development, not the upshot of small loans or job training for a small number of lucky women. The modern “success stories” of economic development, like that of South Korea, have been due to policies of state intervention, where the government acted as designer, instigator, director, and impresario of the whole range of economic sectors. They used state power to modernise infrastructure, restrict direct foreign investment, and protect domestic producers against foreign competition by restricting imports. Although contemporary mainstream commentators treat the concept of state-led development as anachronistic, it is the only viable alternative to the industrial powers of the 18th and 19th centuries – Great Britain, Germany and the United States – owed their industrial strength to state-led development policies. But disregarding this well-established history, the international financial institutions have, since the 1980s, imposed on Global South countries a neoliberal, “free market” regime that has made state-led development impossible.

The net result is a distorted development process that does not replicate the successful path taken by the original industrial powers of Europe and newly industrialized countries of the post-World War II period (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and China). In today’s global economy, it is illusory to think that poor countries can eliminate poverty and ill health without genuine industrial and agricultural development.

The international financial institutions and the wealthy countries have created the myth that helping individual women one by one is going to eliminate poverty, disease and malnutrition. Referring to women and girls as the key to development is a sleight of hand, a way to turn the gaze of policymakers, activists and working people away from the vicious actions of groups like the troika of institutions – the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank – and the other indebted countries of Europe in the name of the financial interests of bankers, bondholders and the rich lending countries.

Of course it is crucial that women and girls everywhere receive education, training, reproductive rights, affordable health care, control over their own decisions about work and marriage, and over their own sexuality. But these fundamental tenets of feminism cannot be achieved by helping a select group of women and girls one by one, in a context where the entire society is being ravaged by contradictions and the market fundamentalism of neoliberal policies.

Note: some of this material is drawn from my article “The Sweatshop Feminists,” Jacobin Magazine, 2015; see https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/06/kristof-globalization-develop.

Corporations

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into question the global financial system and those the realisation of women’s rights is shifting from a the question of how to raise adequate resources for development assistance collected in Africa was ten times the volume of development finance. In 2012, total tax revenue of human rights’ clearly commits governments to deploy ‘maximum progress towards the realisation of women’s rights. sexuality education and universal, affordable women fleeing domestic violence, comprehensive for women employees to respecting rights at work are shaped by tax policy. Second, women’s economic activities and rights at work are shaped by tax policy, 80% of women in South Asia and 74% in Sub-Saharan Africa work in the informal economy, mostly without access to legal contracts and social protection. However, they were harassed by tax collectors and never saw any improvement to their working conditions, for example, improved facilities, like toilets, in the market7. While women run less than 1% of commercial banks in the US11, tax and an array of local taxes, corporations enjoy generous tax breaks as governments compete to attract foreign direct investment. There is no clear evidence that tax incentives attract productive investment; what we know instead is that they are often associated with violation of labour rights and clampdowns on freedom of association and collective bargaining9. In particular, tax incentives to the extractive sector should be removed as they do nothing to encourage investment and deprive governments of revenue at the face of often huge environmental and social costs. Tax incentives mask the contribution that women workers make to the economy and effectively transfer the costs of women’s work to women. While women who rule it. We can’t say such questions have been looked into very closely at tax. Over the past 8 years, tax has become a mainstream development issue. In 2008 Christian Aid calculated that developing countries were losing USD 160 billion per year to tax dodging by transnational corporation8, due to trade mispricing and other practices. Global tax rules have not kept pace with the nature of globalised trade, 80% of corporate profits are shifted across borders for fiscal purposes they are treated as individual companies. This creates a series of loopholes that allow different parts of a company to trade goods and services at artificially inflated prices and post profits to those jurisdictions which have the lowest or even zero tax rate, to minimize their tax liability. So both outdated rules and the global network of secrecy jurisdictions facilitate tax dodging and add to the ability of minimizing their tax bills, corporations have been enjoying a reduction in corporate tax rates: according to KPMG the average corporate income tax rate in advanced countries worldwide reduced from 38% in 1993 to 24.9% in 201010. Corporates are only one of the tax payers developing countries need to collect more revenue from them as they are critical one. According to the IMF corporate income tax makes up 16% of government revenue compared to just over 8% in high income countries11. The immediate consequence of tax dodging is that, governments face difficulties in implementing policies and programmes, UN Women costing of selected national action plans for gender equality show funding gaps of up to 70% in some countries. Official development assistance is therefore under pressure to increase tax revenue and do so by increasing indirect taxes such as VAT and corporate tax. But these taxes often have a regressive impact on those on low incomes and especially on women who, due to their assigned gender roles, have to balance household budgets. 1http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx 2http://www.cesr.org/downloads/fiscal_revolution.pdf 3http://www.cesr.org/downloads/Gettong-to-good-corporate-tax-November2015.pdf 4http://www.uncio.org/en/news/in-focus/financing-for-gender-equality 5http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/deathand-taxes.pdf 6http://unctad.org/en/pages/PressRelease.aspx?OriginalVersionID=113 7http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/ghana-women-en-informal-sector.pdf 8http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/taxing-men-and-women-gender-analysis-report-july-2014.pdf 9http://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/womens_rights_on-line_version_2.1.pdf 10http://www.christianaid.org.uk/en/news/in-focus/financing-for-gender-equality 11http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/gender-policy-adviser-at-christian-aid 12http://www.christianaid.org.uk/en/news/in-focus/financing-a-priority-in-womens-rights-spaces-and-making-womens-rights-a-priority-in-financing-spaces. Christian Aid is committed to a deep gender analysis and a gender policy that contributes to women’s rights and gender equality. The call for the global tax body is illustrated in the following example: in 2011, the Spring Meetings of the IMF, where global economic policy is discussed, such as the Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and SDR’s allocation, was on the agenda and the issue of tax policy was discussed. The call for the global tax body is illustrated in the following example: in 2011, the Spring Meetings of the IMF, where global economic policy is discussed, such as the Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and SDR’s allocation, was on the agenda and the issue of tax policy was discussed. It is critical for the women’s rights agenda that governments, and especially developing countries, work to strengthen their tax capacity, as this is central to the implementation of the SDGs. 1 http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/gender-policy-adviser-at-christian-aid 12http://www.christianaid.org.uk/en/news/in-focus/financing-for-gender-equality 13http://www.christianaid.org.uk/en/news/in-focus/financing-a-priority-in-womens-rights-spaces-and-making-womens-rights-a-priority-in-financing-spaces. Christian Aid is committed to a deep gender analysis and a gender policy that contributes to women’s rights and gender equality. The call for the global tax body is illustrated in the following example: in 2011, the Spring Meetings of the IMF, where global economic policy is discussed, such as the Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and SDR’s allocation, was on the agenda and the issue of tax policy was discussed. Therefore, we must look very closely at tax. Over the past 8 years, tax has become a mainstream development issue. In 2008 Christian Aid calculated that developing countries were losing USD 160 billion per year to tax dodging by transnational corporation, due to trade mispricing and other practices. Global tax rules have not kept pace with the nature of globalised trade, 80% of corporate profits are shifted across borders for fiscal purposes they are treated as individual companies. This creates a series of loopholes that allow different parts of a company to trade goods and services at artificially inflated prices and post profits to those jurisdictions which have the lowest or even zero tax rate, to minimize their tax liability. So both outdated rules and the global network of secrecy jurisdictions facilitate tax dodging and add to the ability of minimizing their tax bills, corporations have been enjoying a reduction in corporate tax rates: according to KPMG the average corporate income tax rate in advanced countries worldwide reduced from 38% in 1993 to 24.9% in 2010. Corporates are only one of the tax payers developing countries need to collect more revenue from them as they are critical one. According to the IMF corporate income tax makes up 16% of government revenue compared to just over 8% in high income countries. The immediate consequence of tax dodging is that, governments face difficulties in implementing policies and programmes, UN Women costing of selected national action plans for gender equality show funding gaps of up to 70% in some countries. Official development assistance is therefore under pressure to increase tax revenue and do so by increasing indirect taxes such as VAT and corporate tax. But these taxes often have a regressive impact on those on low incomes and especially on women who, due to their assigned gender roles, have to balance household budgets. 1http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx 2http://www.cesr.org/downloads/fiscal_revolution.pdf 3http://www.cesr.org/downloads/Gettong-to-good-corporate-tax-November2015.pdf 4http://www.uncio.org/en/news/in-focus/financing-for-gender-equality 5http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/deathand-taxes.pdf 6http://unctad.org/en/pages/PressRelease.aspx?OriginalVersionID=113 7http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/ghana-women-en-informal-sector.pdf 8http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/taxing-men-and-women-gender-analysis-report-july-2014.pdf 9http://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/womens_rights_on-line_version_2.1.pdf 10http://www.christianaid.org.uk/en/news/in-focus/financing-for-gender-equality 11http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/gender-policy-adviser-at-christian-aid 12http://www.christianaid.org.uk/en/news/in-focus/financing-a-priority-in-womens-rights-spaces-and-making-womens-rights-a-priority-in-financing-spaces. Christian Aid is committed to a deep gender analysis and a gender policy that contributes to women’s rights and gender equality. The call for the global tax body is illustrated in the following example: in 2011, the Spring Meetings of the IMF, where global economic policy is discussed, such as the Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and SDR’s allocation, was on the agenda and the issue of tax policy was discussed. Therefore, we must look very closely at tax. Over the past 8 years, tax has become a mainstream development issue. In 2008 Christian Aid calculated that developing countries were losing USD 160 billion per year to tax dodging by transnational corporation, due to trade mispricing and other practices. Global tax rules have not kept pace with the nature of globalised trade, 80% of corporate profits are shifted across borders for fiscal purposes they are treated as individual companies. 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HOW CAN WOMEN’S GROUPS USE NATIONAL ACTION PLANS ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO ADVANCE THEIR GOALS?

In 2011, the UN Human Rights Council unanimously endorsed the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (Guiding Principles), which established a global standard on how to address the adverse impacts on human rights of business activities. Three years later, the UN Human Rights Council called on each Member State to develop a state-specific National Action Plan (NAP) to support the implementation of the Guiding Principles. The push for the adoption of NAPs has since garnered momentum all around the world among governments and civil society groups. This movement towards NAPs on business and human rights presents a great opportunity for engagement and advocacy for women’s rights groups.

Business and Human Rights Is a Women’s Rights Issue

As a result of globalization, many essential social activities are now structured by multinational corporations. The impact is not always gender neutral. Women suffer disproportionately bearing the brunt of the negative consequences. For example, the commercialization of land by multinational companies in many developing countries has resulted in profound and disproportionate impact on women living in the community. In a 2013 report, Oxfam researchers found that in many rural parts of Africa, land is a critical resource that supports the livelihoods of the majority of women, who use the land to grow and gather food. When companies purchase these lands and transform them for cash crop production or other commercial purposes, women are shut out from accessing the land and deprived of their main source income. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that women often do not have formal title and property right to the land under local land tenure laws, and are not consulted during the negotiations over the land acquisition deal. The disproportional impact on women is often seen in the global apparel sector, where women comprise the overwhelming majority of the manufacturing workforce, for instance, over 90% of garment factory workers are women. Working conditions in these factories are abysmal: workers are often forced to work overtime, and denied sick leave and rest breaks. Female workers constantly face a range of gender-oriented problems, such as sexual harassment or discrimination for becoming pregnant. The frequent use of short-term contracts discourage workers from participating in union activities to collectively bargain for better working conditions. It also allows factory owners to avoid paying maternity benefits by refusing to renew work contracts after discovering an employee is pregnant.

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

The impacts of corporate activities on human rights are precisely what the UN Guiding Principles set out to address. The Guiding Principles consist of three pillars. They establish that (1) States have a duty to protect against human rights abuses by third parties through appropriate policies, regulation, and adjudication; (2) corporations have a responsibility to respect human rights by avoiding infringing on the rights of others and addressing adverse impacts that occur; and (3) victims of corporate human rights abuses should be afforded greater access to effective remedies.

The Guiding Principles are significant because they are the first internationally agreed upon standards on the intersection of business and human rights that cover a comprehensive range of rights affected by business activities, as opposed to just one specific industry or issue area. The Guiding Principles are also particularly important as they establish a normative framework to address the issue of corporate accountability for human rights abuses.

National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights

To promote implementation of the Guiding Principles, the United Nations Human Rights Council issued a call to all of its Member States in June 2014 to develop NAPs on business and human rights. A NAP is a government-led policy document that lays out priorities, commitments, and a series of steps that a government plans on taking in a particular policy area or topic. In the published NAPs so far, action points identified by governments range from conducting sector-wide human rights risk analysis, promoting respect for human rights through responsible government procurement practices, to considering requiring companies in certain high-risk sectors to submit reports detailing payments made to host-country authorities.

The call to adopt NAPs on business and human rights has gained traction around the world. Ten countries have published or drafted a NAP so far. These countries have begun, under pressure from governments, national human rights institutions, or civil society groups, in nearly forty countries, including the Philippines and South Korea in Asia, Mexico and Peru in Latin America, and Tanzania and Ghana in Africa.

NAPs on Business and Human Rights: A Women’s Right to an Effective Remedy

Women’s rights groups should support and actively engage in the development and adoption of a gender-sensitive NAP for a number of strategic reasons. First, the NAP process, through the exercise of a national baseline assessment, presents an opportunity to review policies and laws that may have a disproportionately negative, or even discriminatory, impact on women. The UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights and many civil society groups, including the International Corporate Accountability Roundtable (ICAR), have stressed the importance of conducting a national baseline assessment before developing a NAP. The national baseline assessment is a process through which gaps between international standards and national laws and the implementation of such laws are identified. Second, women’s rights groups and experts can provide the necessary input to ensure that the NAP is gender-sensitive and promotes women’s rights. Women’s rights groups and experts can ensure that the NAP includes an analysis of gendered impacts and implications of business practices, as well as specific action points and targets to address them.

3 UNHRC Res. June 27, supra note 2.
Introduction

Every business sector affects women's human rights. Although the modern human rights movement long concerned itself with government's conduct and obligations, human rights advocates began to look seriously at the impacts of companies in the 1990s, as garment, mining, and oil & gas companies became embroiled in human rights scandals from China to Nigeria to Central America. In the 20 years since, both the United Nations and companies and business organizations in every sector have recognized that their operations and business relationships have serious, direct impacts on human rights – and with the massive power they have amassed in our increasingly globalized world comes responsibility to avoid abuses and contribute to human dignity and needs.

The impact on women is rarely at the forefront of this struggle but women are, inevitably in many cases, the most affected. For example, most apparel, footwear and sporting goods companies stopped actually producing goods decades ago, instead outsourcing production to factories in low-cost countries like Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, El Salvador and Jordan – which also often feature weak protections for workers' rights. Women comprise a staggering 80% of the global workforce in this sector. The business and human rights movement, and specifically our organization, Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, use a range of mechanisms to help companies conduct more visible, so that activists, consumers, and others can put pressure on companies to improve; and accountability to help survivors of abuse to stop the wrongs and give strong incentives to business to avoid abuse in future.

Sometimes, human rights can seem divorced from current themes that dominate the headlines and powerful, citizens, workers, communities and consumers. We see the opposite as true. Threats to human rights involving business are inscribed in problems of widening global inequality. To be sure, about issues that affect their livelihoods, as the land is often in the name of some male relative – and the pay gap between women and men is wider. The recent rapid rise in economic inequality in most countries is, therefore, a serious blow to efforts to achieve gender equality.

Conversely, gender justice and equality are the most powerful drivers of economic development that narrows wealth and income gaps.

The particular harms to women's human rights are often because women are invisible and their voices are marginalized. In the case of large-scale land acquisitions for agricultural investments, for example, Amy Lehr, of law firm Foley Hoag’s Corporate Social Responsibility practice, states, “Something as ‘simple’ as acquiring land can significantly disadvantage women farmers and deny them the right to make decisions about the land they use. It is complicated, global, and请联系作者。
The global business and human rights movement

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights were endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011. As the outcome of a six-year process by UN Special Representative on Business and Human Rights, John Ruggie, with broad consultations with stakeholders from all sectors and regions, the Guiding Principles were the first comprehensive set of standards to address the human rights impacts of business, and recognizing companies’ responsibility to respect human rights. The Guiding Principles are based on three broad principles:

1. The state’s duty to protect human rights
2. The corporate responsibility to respect human rights
3. The obligation of all participants to ensure access to remedy for victims of abuse

Many human rights advocates argue that the principles are not enough because they do not feature any mechanism for enforcement – although they have been incorporated into other mechanisms that do include consequences for companies that fail to respect human rights. Still, given the lack of enforcement, some companies do not see the need to incorporate human rights obligations, some governments and advocates have urged the drafting and adoption of a global, binding treaty on business and human rights. The Intergovernmental Working Group on the Responsibility of Transnational Corporations and Other Business Entities for Their Relevance to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been working to develop such a treaty. It has strengthened and gotten louder as the years have passed since the endorsement of the Guiding Principles in 2011. With NGOs support, the&action of the Human Rights Council in 2013, and the Fifth Anniversary of the endorsement of the Guiding Principles by noting, “violations of human and environmental rights continue, and access to justice remains as difficult as it ever was.” Opponents of the treaty underlie that the process to pass such an instrument would likely take years, even decades, if it were feasible at all, and would distract from the urgent need to develop pragmatic solutions much sooner. The debate over the need for and advisability of formal accountability via outside pressure—if the measuring and reporting are rigorous.

Two approaches: Transparency and accountability

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre creates transparency of the records of over 6000 companies’ impacts on human rights, both positive and negative. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) compiles the information about human rights policies and performance that companies make publicly available, for use by the public (consumers, individual investors, or employees), business partners, and institutional investors including pension funds.

The Global Reporting Initiative has helped establish another form of transparency through the globally applicable guidelines it has developed to standardize companies’ reporting on their social and environmental policies, practices, and impacts. In the best cases, sustainability reports illustrate the link between a company’s strategy and its commitment to a sustainable global economy. Similarly, the United Nations Guiding Principles Reporting Framework offers clarity on how companies can report in a meaningful and clear way on their progress in understanding human rights and their responsibilities to respect human rights. Companies’ measuring and reporting on how they are doing can drive both internal change (by knowing, which they often do not) and better accountability via outside pressure—if the measuring and reporting are rigorous.

Outside advocacy vs. Engagement

Companies are not just sitting on the right of respect, which is usually far from the reality on the ground, and have little interest in recognizing the steps that some companies take on human rights, including some companies’ responsibility to respect the rights of others. The onus is on the companies to disclose the policies, practices, and impacts of their operations and supply chains. The amount of information we have about companies’ operations impacts and supply chains is revolutionary compared to where we were 20 years ago, but it is not enough. The jury is still out on whether these transparency measures will lead to real change. It is imperative for NGOs, stakeholders, pension fund participants, shareholders, journalists, friends, neighbours, and readers of this article to use all this information to put pressure on companies to improve.

Accountability

Companies’ “company response mechanism” seeks to go beyond transparency and provide an informal accountability mechanism by pushing companies to respond publicly to accusations of misconduct. We have done this over 2500 times in the last 10 years; companies respond about 75% of the time. Yet women’s voices are routinely silenced when they try to speak out about poverty wages and dangerous working conditions. As our colleague Harpreet Kaur recently wrote in The Guardian, “The garment sector is great at employing women. At the bottom.” She cited a recent International Labor Rights Forum report that found threats against workers in the Bangladesh garment industry who attempt to speak out about workplace abuses.

The California Transparency in Supply Chains Act requires companies that do business in California to report that found threats against workers in the Bangladesh garment industry who attempt to speak out about workplace abuses.

Unfortunately, some consultants and others who work with companies do not firmly ground their approach in the rights of workers and communities. As a result, they may entirely overlook some abuses—especially harm to women and other marginalized groups. Amy Lehr recently told us she has seen numerous ESIAs [environmental and social impact assessments] and labor audits led only by men in cultures where they can’t sit down and talk to women: What often happens in these situations is that women are not interviewed. And even if they are, I wouldn’t necessarily trust their answers about harassment and discrimination. Under these circumstances, companies are both required to disclose the factories they source from and to ensure that those factories take steps for basic building safety to avoid fires and collapses.

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Some governments have taken action to require transparency on key corporate risks. For example, the US Dodd-Frank Act on financial disclosure includes a provision requiring companies to disclose what they are doing to avoid buying conflict minerals and metals, which are often sourced from armed factions and parties to armed conflict. Some companies even avoid buying “conflict minerals” or declare that they have done nothing to confirm trafficking in their own operations or supply chains – or declare that they have done nothing to confirm trafficking in their business.

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Despite the lack of enforcement, these principles provide a solid foundation for ongoing advocacy and corporate accountability.

Mukwege

Mukwege, founder of Panzi Hospital, wrote last year: “The garment sector is great at employing women. At the bottom.” She cited a recent International Labor Rights Forum report that found threats against workers in the Bangladesh garment industry who attempt to speak out about workplace abuses.

The California Transparency in Supply Chains Act requires companies that do business in California to report on actions they take to eradicate slavery and human trafficking in their supply chains. The ILO estimates that women are: 55% of those subjected to forced labor globally, 58% of those subjected to slavery globally, and 97% of those subjected to domestic labor globally. The Act requires companies to report on their efforts to avoid conflict minerals and metals, which are often sourced from armed factions and parties to armed conflict. Some companies even avoid buying “conflict minerals” or declare that they have done nothing to confirm trafficking in their own operations or supply chains – or declare that they have done nothing to confirm trafficking in their business.

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Although the California law was the first in the world to require companies to disclose their approach to these issues, a review of its record five years after its passage found that its impact was limited by, ironically, a lack of transparency (the California government does not list the companies that are subject to the Act) and insufficient understanding by companies of the Act’s requirements. Similarly, the 2015 UK Modern Slavery Act (which came into force in April 2016) requires companies to annually report on their risks of slavery or trafficking in their own operations or supply chains – or declare that they have done nothing to confirm slavery or trafficking in their business.

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We also seek to promote legal accountability by demystifying key lawsuits on business and human rights. We highlight the existence of corporate abuses and the provision of effective legal remedies for corporate abuse. We profile over 120 lawsuits, from all regions, trying to make these sometimes very technical mechanisms accessible to victims and advocates because they may be victims’ only path to justice. One example of a key lawsuit that we highlighted—and that failed to provide a remedy for those affected: The United States Supreme Court decided in 2011 to limit the availability of class action lawsuits in large-scale gender discrimination cases in a lawsuit brought on behalf of 1.5 million women in PNG. The women had done the work and were not getting sufficient attention from women’s rights organizations or sufficient advocacy for a technical fix to make class actions like this more accessible.

But lawsuits are not a panacea. In some parts of the world, courts are difficult for poor women to access, and often devalue their experiences. One possible solution is the creation of non-judicial complaint mechanisms to address gender violence and other abuses, but this too can have pitfalls. For example, in the Porgera case, Barrick Gold, the largest gold mining company in the world, set up a mechanism to compensate women who were raped by security guards at its Papua New Guinea mine site. The non-judicial mechanism set up by the company, met with opposition from some women’s rights advocates and mistrust amid a social context where women are radically disempowered. Questions of adequate compensation for poor women are still being debated—should it be “cheaper” for a company to settle rape charges in PNG than it is in the US? What is the purpose of compensation? If women received a payout in line with damages in a rape case in the United States—which would be a huge sum in Papua New Guinea—would that place them at a heightened risk of exploitation and violence? Barrick Gold sought to create mechanisms so that women would not receive a lump sum because of concerns that the money would be taken from them or that women would be in danger over it. Activists replied by saying that this replaced local disenfranchisement with a new form of paternalism, by the company, so it backed off from this proposal.

Many international institutions that finance major projects, such as the World Bank, have complaint mechanisms that affected people can use if they experience violations of the institutions’ environmental, social and human rights standards. One NGO, Accountability Counsel (which is mostly led by women), specializes in representing affected communities before these mechanisms. It applies a “Gender Approach” that many other advocates in the field have learned from, including: “Forced out women leaders to guide our work and ensure that we are aware of issues uniquely facing women and girls, with frequent work in small groups...[taking] particular care to ensure that women’s rights organizations’ and women’s experiences of gendered impacts of projects are understood and documented...[respecting] women’s confidentiality, security, and decision-making...[in] follow up work...[ensuring] that our process of seeking accountability has an empowering impact that does not further oppress vulnerable members of society.”

Besides formal mechanisms, NGOs seek to hold companies accountable for their impacts and drive improvements via indexes like Oxfam’s Behind the Brands Scorecard, which “assesses the agricultural supply chain from farm to fork of the 10 largest food and beverage companies.” The scorecard evaluates their performance on themes including transparency, women farm workers and small-scale producers, land, water, and climate. The initiative has driven numerous major food companies to sign “zero-tolerance” commitments on land grabs in their supply chains. These land grab often have a disproportionate impact on women. For example, Oxfam has documented failing food security for women in Cambodia following large-scale land acquisitions due to labor shortages in food farming (people moving to work on commercial farms but not channelling those earnings to provide food) and reductions in communal lands.

Where we stand, and what’s next
If gender impacts and women’s rights are inadequately accounted for by companies, and rarely the explicit focus of business and human rights advocacy, the problem can arguably be traced in part to inadequate representation in leadership and international fora. The UN Working Groups on business and human rights has always had a majority of men among its five members. Recently it has been four men and one woman. When the only remaining woman on this expert body announced that she would step down, we pushed for leading women to be considered for the slot. Thankfully, it seems her replacement will be a woman, Professor Anita Ramasastry of the University of Washington, but the challenge remains. When Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed. Fatima, a 30-year-old woman, was rapidly crushed.
Bandana Rana
Co-Founder and Strategic Director, Saathi

Key Leader of the women’s movement in Nepal with 25 years of active engagement in promoting women’s rights and gender equality, Bandana Rana has extensive experience in leading national, regional and global advocacy programs and research linking global policies and UN instruments particularly CEDAW, BPFA and UNSCR 1325 to national and local initiatives.

In January 2017, Bandana Rana will commence her term as the first Nepali candidate to be elected to the UN Committee for CEDAW.

UN CSW 2016 honoured Bandana Rana with the Women of Distinction Award. Speaking at the NGO consultation, she prioritised the task of “changing the mindset of men and boys in the home”, and looked forward to the day when “every home rejoices at the birth of a girl”.

National positions held include Member of the High Level Steering Committee for the Implementation of the UNSCR 1325 & 1820 chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and co-chaired by the Minister for Peace and Reconstruction; Former Chair of National Women’s Commission of Nepal and currently advisor to the Commission. In the media, Bandana Rana was Co-founder and First Elected President of Sancharika Samuha (Forum of Women in Media) during her time as Editor/Anchor in the News Department of Nepal Samuha (Forum of Women in Media) during her time as Editor/Anchor in the News Department of Nepal Television (1986-2006), First Woman Board Director of Radio Nepal (2002-2004) and First Woman Executive Member – Press Council Nepal (2004 to 2006).

Internationally, Bandana Rana has served as a Member of the UN Women Global Civil Society Advisory Group (2012-2015); the High Level Advisory Group for the UN Secretary General’s Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2014/15); the Regional Advisory Group for Women Peace and Security at UNESCAP. She was a Steering Committee Member of Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) and Asia Pacific Women’s Alliance for Peace and Security (APWAPS). Co-Chair of the Asia Pacific NGO Committee on the Status of Women and Vice President of International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT) (2007/2010).

Saathi
Saathi, meaning ‘friend’ in Nepali, is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation, which was established in 1992 to address contemporary challenges being faced by Nepali women. In keeping with this agenda, Saathi identified Violence Against Women (VAW) and Children (C) as an area requiring urgent attention and intervention and has been working on this issue since this time.

Today Saathi not only works for the upliftment of the women in Nepal but also to inform men that women cannot be empowered until the men of her family treat her with equal respect and dignity, until they both share equal powers and understand their equal roles in taking a decision, whether in the private or the public sphere.