



## ASIA PACIFIC **PEOPLES'** FORUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2020: Solidarity and System Change are the only Antidotes to COVID-19 Crisis.

### Weaving Stories in the Time of Crisis:

Women in All Diversities Demand for Accountability and Solidarity

## WOMEN CONSTITUENCY STATEMENT

On behalf of women constituency, we would like to convey our statement of **ANGER, HOPE, and ACTION**

### Why we are Angry:

COVID-19 pandemic and its interconnected crisis hit women the hardest. Women of all diversities bear the brunt of this crisis as they face multiple and intersecting discrimination, exclusion and violence. **Women formal and informal workers** have lost their jobs without any safety net, denied their decent work, while those in the mining and palm oil plantation are forced to work with threats from companies and governments and no health protocol and minimum protection. Women **Service workers, including community health workers, aged care workers, cleaners, emergency service workers, food workers** which whom are mostly

women need to continue working at the forefront, overtime with no compensation, without the right to minimum wage, leave entitlement, pension and social security **Rural and women farmers** lost their livelihood, consequently deepening hunger, individual and household debt crises **Women migrants** face increased work, in almost 20 hours a day to cater the needs of their employer during work from home, denied holiday, stigmatised and some are deported with minimum protection from governments. **Women urban poor have** no luxury of safe self-isolation, as their overcrowded housing often lacks basic utilities, like water and sanitation. **Women in disaster and climate-change prone areas**, need to deal with both climate and COVID-19 crisis, forced to leave their homes and stay at overcrowded shelters, Casteism, racism, feudalism render **Dalits women and indigenous women** vulnerable, discriminated and without adequate health rights. Some of the vulnerability arises from who they are – older women, **women with disabilities, women living and affected by HIV, and women with existing health conditions**

In all these intersecting context and identities, The burden of lockdowns and failures in public health will primarily fall on the shoulders of women who too often shoulder the responsibility to care for children without schooling and care, for sick family members unable to access healthcare, **including SRHR**, and for sustaining families without incomes. Women - particularly **LBT women** - are also experiencing increased threats of domestic violence, with the shutdown, making it more difficult to escape violent men. .

**What makes us more angrier** - is the fact that this COVID-19 crisis was brought by — the interconnected economic, social and political crisis caused by broken systems. This crisis is not an accident. Unless we deal with the systemic failures that render exploited groups more vulnerable, we will not get through this crisis. We have seen how patriarchal neoliberal capitalism - using financial, trade and investment policies that benefit corporations and the elites - has failed to deliver peoples and women's basic needs, including access to quality public healthcare and universal social protection. Patriarchy, embedded in social and cultural norms as well as economic policies, systemically limits women's bodies, work, decision-making power and opportunities. The region has witnessed rising conflicts between and within countries, the use of militarism and surveillance - as we can see in the context of COVID-19 through digital surveillance, as well as militaristic approach of curfews, lockdowns and sweeping measures by military and policy forces. We can see a resurgence of authoritarianism attacking women human rights defenders, 'closing down' of democratic spaces, suppressing movements even using COVID-19 situation to pass anti-peoples laws; COVID-19 crisis has further exposed these systemic failures.

The current crisis is a reminder to the long-fought demands of feminist and peoples' movements for **Development Justice** and an opportunity to realise the elimination of wealth, power and resources, inequalities between countries, between rich and poor and between men and women. WOMEN ALL AROUND THE REGION HAVE BEEN ORGANISING, FIGHTING, RESISTING, AND WE WILL NOT STEP DOWN!. Women's rights organisations have been distributing relief, research and documentation, awareness raising, implementing education programmes, engagement at the local, national and regional levels. We have seen surge of movements led by young women in Thailand, Dalits women in India, Indigenous women in Nepal, Women Human Rights Defender in the Philippines, Women Trade Union and Workers in Indonesia, all have inspired us to move forward, hand in hand with our SISTERS, PERSISTERS, RESISTERS - and with other movements.

#### Our Recommendation:

- Create, implement, and resource human rights-based, gender-responsive COVID-19 recovery plans that first and foremost target the most marginalized groups and are designed to eradicate inequalities.
- Prioritize and actively seek out the participation of feminist, women and youth-led organizations, in the design, implementation, monitoring, and review of COVID-19 recovery plans. Support these organizations, including with financial resources, to carry out this work.
- Build a more just and equitable financial order in order to enable governments to adequately finance public services and robust social protection systems:
- Cancel all outstanding sovereign debt of low- and middle-income countries. • End illicit financial flows and implement progressive tax systems, including by supporting a global tax body.
- Fulfill all official development assistance commitments.
- Suspend patents, lift trade rules that impede access to medicines and medical technologies and that limit government actions required to address the crisis. End unfair trade agreements that push reducing funding for and privatizing public services and the investor-state dispute settlement that impose corporates' interests, extort public money and erode domestic policy space needed to advance sustainable development and the enjoyment of human rights.
- Recommit to multilateral governance and global solidarity, by:
  - Strengthen and fund the UN and its agencies, such as the World Health Organization, including by providing long-term general operating support.
  - Support and protect civil society organizations to engage with the UN, its agencies and processes without fear of retaliation, intimidation, or harassment.



- Collect, analyze, and disseminate disaggregated data with respect for privacy and confidentiality. Use this data to reduce inequalities in all recovery plans and programs.

The COVID-19 crisis requires a global-level collective action and coordinated response to overturn the current dominant rules, and rewrite one that is feminist, based on the principles of human rights, historical responsibility, accountability, international cooperation and solidarity. Feminist and peoples' movements must be at the centre and lead this pathway. WOMEN UNITED, WE'LL NEVER BE DEFEATED. DEVELOPMENT JUSTICE NOW!



**THAILAND HLPF ALLIANCE**