

**Asia Pacific Forum for Women Law and Development,  
ActionAid International, Helvetas Nepal,  
Institute of Development Studies**

## **Global Care Advocacy Workshop**

22-23<sup>rd</sup> January 2015

Bangkok, Thailand

### **Background**

This workshop will bring together activists, researchers, practitioners from diverse civil society organisations for a 2.5-day international workshop, which will be held in Bangkok, Thailand from January 22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> 2015.

The workshop is part of our collective organisations' on-going work to raise the policy visibility of the intersection between women's unpaid care work and their access to decent work.

Feminist economists, researchers and activists have long highlighted the centrality of social reproduction for the functioning of any economy and society. Care work refers to the work required to care for others through cooking, cleaning, taking care of children, the ill and the elderly – this can be paid or unpaid work. Care work is not valued and comes at a great cost to women's rights to an education, decent work, and political participation. As more and more women enter the labour force, primarily in low-paying precarious employment - often in paid care work - their workloads only increase as they are left to balance both paid work and unpaid care work. Cuts in public services and austerity measures across the North and the South have intensified women's and girls' unpaid care work. Unequal levels of care work, and the precarious and low-paid nature of paid care work violates women's rights and reinforces gender inequality.

Yet, women's care work – both paid and unpaid – subsidises the state when public services are not available. Therefore transforming economic and social policies to redistribute care work remains contentious as it calls into question the neo-liberal economic model itself. Development justice must be about finding more sustainable models for care provision that respects, protects and fulfils women's rights and does not exploit women's labour. Public policies must be transformed to recognise and value both paid and unpaid care work primarily done by women; reducing the drudgery of unpaid care work, and redistributing the responsibility and costs of unpaid and paid care work from women towards the state and employers.

We have seen important policy reforms in some Latin American countries such as Uruguay and Chile, and in Asia such as in the Philippines through public policies that support childcare provision for women informal and formal sector workers and the

ratification of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention. At the international level the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights published a report on unpaid care work that was presented at the UN General Assembly in 2013. Moreover, the collective efforts of women's rights organisations, activists and supportive policymakers ensured that the report from the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) includes a target on unpaid care work as part of the Goal 5 on gender equality, and on women's right to decent work under Goal 8.

## **Aims**

The aim of this workshop is to bring together organisations engaging in international advocacy on care work – both paid and unpaid - from a human rights and feminist perspective. This can include national organisations as well as regional and global organisations working on this issue. In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals will be negotiated and finalised; this meeting is an opportunity for us to reflect on what more needs to be done to ensure women's paid and unpaid care work is addressed in the SDG and beyond. In November 2014, regional consultations on Beijing +20 are taking place and the outcomes of these discussions will feed into the 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2015. This meeting will be an opportunity to also share any national and international advocacy actions leading up to CSW.

## **Expected Outcomes**

1. Gain a greater understanding of what national and international organisations are already doing (research, advocacy and programming) on women's work – both paid and unpaid care work.
2. Identify opportunities to link national and global policy agendas to recognise, reduce and redistribute care in public policies, including social protection, and labour rights
3. Improve our individual and collective approaches to influencing policies on care
4. Agree on a set of next steps to take individually and collectively to keep the momentum of care on the national and global policy agenda in 2015.

## **Agenda**

Day 1: Mapping national initiatives and connecting to global advocacy opportunities

Day 2: Identifying key strategies and targets for a collective agenda on care work and women's labour rights

Day 3: Outline key next steps and possible collective advocacy actions