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## EDITORIAL

The case of Beatriz sent shock waves across the international community earlier this year when El Salvador refused to let her have a therapeutic abortion given that her pregnancy was putting her life at risk. She carried a non-viable foetus but in El Salvador dogma dictates that a woman's life never comes first. This year's International Day for the Decriminalization of Abortion will be celebrated by thousands across the globe, including CAWN. This campaign was first initiated in Latin America and it has made of the 28th of September a day when women's rights activists demand the right to abortion for all.

To join this day of action CAWN is hosting an international event, taking place simultaneously in London and Madrid, on Wednesday 2nd October, showcasing a new documentary on the impact on women of the draconian ban on abortion in El Salvador, to whose production CAWN contributed. There will also be a panel discussion with experts on reproductive rights from Amnesty International, the International Planned Parenthood Federation and CAWN, as well as the lawyer of Beatriz's case. Reservations for the London [event can be made here](#); to book spaces at the event in Madrid, please email us at [campaigns@cawn.org](mailto:campaigns@cawn.org).

In addition to the defence of the right to abortion, this term CAWN has continued to work on the issue of trafficking and exploitation of women. Our latest report '*Exploitation and Trafficking of Women: Critiquing narratives during the London Olympics*' looks into the role of civil society and the media in shaping public understandings of exploitation experienced by women in the context of major sporting events.

CAWN wants to promote global responses to the trafficking of women: policies and actions guided by the findings of evidence-based research exploring the impact of global trade agreements, structural adjustment and austerity measures, and the labour practices of transnational corporations on women's economic rights, migration patterns and trafficking. We'd love to hear what you think; drop us a line to [campaigns@cawn.org](mailto:campaigns@cawn.org) to share your views with us or to publish them in our blog.

San salvador, 20 de Junio del 2013

Amis amigas de la colectiva y demas amigas: y amigos:

Quiero darles las gracias xque siempre mean estado dando apoyo y sin ustedes creo que no hubiera aguando al estar en el hospital

Tambien darles las gracias por todas las acciones que hicieron por mi vida.

Esta situacion asido muy dificil sin su apoyo nolo hubiera podido lograr

Espero que mi ejemplo sirva para que otras mujeres no pasen por lo que yo supe.

y estoy muy contenta porque ya voy a estar con mi hijo y con mi familia.

bueno esto es todo lo que les queria decir y con estas palabras de agradecimiento me despido.

Atentamente.

Beatriz:

Letter of gratitude from Beatriz thanking those who fought for her life.



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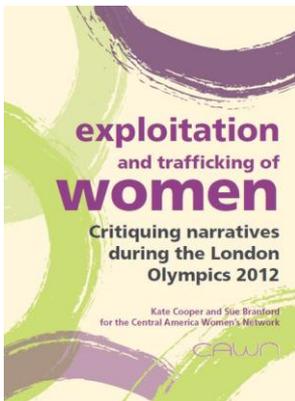
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## OUR ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Updates, shout-outs, past and upcoming activities and more**

### Recent events and publications

**New report: Exploitation and trafficking of women: Critiquing narratives during the London Olympics**



[Our latest report](#) was commissioned to inform CAWN's work around the role of civil society and the media in shaping public understanding of the different forms of exploitation experienced by women, in particular migrant women, in the context of major sport-

ing events. The study draws up recommendations based on the experience of the London Olympics that can be applied to other forthcoming major sporting events.

CAWN believes that the problem of trafficking and exploitation of migrant women is a global problem requiring a global response. Policies and actions to address this problem should be guided by the findings of evidence-based research exploring the impact of global trade agreements, structural adjustment and austerity measures, and the labour practices of transna-

tional corporations on women's economic rights, migration patterns and trafficking of women.

['Exploitation and Trafficking of Women'](#) calls for more robust narratives that recognize the complex and multi-faceted nature of the problems linked to trafficking and migration and an analysis that takes account of all the intersecting issues that affect migration and security issues, prostitution and sex-work and issues of international organized crime.

Print copies are available on request; email us to [info@cawn.org](mailto:info@cawn.org) to get one posted to you. The report is also [available in Portuguese](#).

**Analysis of the First Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Conference On Population and Development, by RESURJ, DAWN, YCSRR And IWHC**

From August 12-15<sup>th</sup> 2013, governments of Latin America and the Caribbean came together in Montevideo, Uruguay, to hold the [first Regional Conference on Population and Development](#) with the theme of Full integration of population in sustainable development with equality and human rights: key to the Programme of Action of Cairo beyond 2014.



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Realizing Sexual and Reproductive Justice (RESURJ), Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (YCSRR) and the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), brought together a group of 35 young feminist activists working on human rights, sexuality, reproductive health, young people and youth participation, indigenous peoples, violence against women, and comprehensive sexuality education from Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Barbados, Jamaica, Belize, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Colombia and Paraguay. This diverse group of women and men were brought together specifically to influence the negotiated outcome document of the Conference. Priorities were to make visible the deficit of implementation on

sexual and reproductive health and rights in the region, particularly for those in marginalized situations such as indigenous and afro descendant girls and women, adolescents, sex workers, women living with HIV, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, migrants and refugees.

[More](#)

### The IACW launches new blog

The Inter-American Commission of Women has launched its new bilingual blog, [DialogoCIM](#). Check out their new post "Negotiating Oppression: Conciliation in cases of Domestic Violence", which aims to create users discussion on this topic.

## Upcoming events and publications

**Not even to save a woman's life: free screening of documentary *El Salvador: 'Life at any price'* followed by panel discussion and a Q&A session.**

Experts on reproductive rights from Amnesty International, International Planned Parenthood Federation and CAWN will join a panel discussion and Q&A session after the screening of the documentary.

*Time and date:* Wednesday, 2nd October at 6.30 pm

*Venue:* The Human Rights Action Centre, 25 New Inn Yard, EC2A London.

Book your tickets [here](#).

Contact [campaigns@cawn.org](mailto:campaigns@cawn.org) for more information

**Speaker tour - *The marginal among the invisible: women in the informal economy*. 31st October to 12th November 2013.**

When we think about employment we generally focus on formal jobs, thus rendering millions of workers invisible. Many workers are self-employed in small unregistered businesses or wage-earners in cleaning, catering, commerce and other sectors of the informal economy, where economic activities are not regulated nor protected by the State.

The Central American Women's Network presents

## Not even to save a woman's life

Wednesday 2 October, 2013, 6.30pm, Human Rights Action Centre.

Free screening of *El Salvador: 'Life at Any Price'*.

A documentary about the impact of a law in El Salvador that bans abortion in all circumstances, including rape, foetal abnormality and even when a mother's life is at risk.

Experts on reproductive rights from Amnesty International and International Planned Parenthood Federation will join a panel discussion and Q&A session after the screening.

Email [campaigns@cawn.org](mailto:campaigns@cawn.org) to book a place.

There will be some unreserved places on the night.

Entrance is free - donations to the CAWN are welcome.  
The Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA.

As unjust trade regimes and structural adjustment become commonplace, the dimensions of the informal economy is growing across the globe, including in the UK and other European countries. In some sub-Saharan African countries the informal economy is estimated to be as high as 90% of the



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total workforce. Women are overrepresented among workers with non-standard employment arrangements and have indeed joined the informal economy in large numbers.

CAWN, along with partners War on Want and Frauensolidaritat, have invited two women leaders from the Nicaraguan [Movement of Working and Unemployed Women Maria Elena Cuadra](#) (MEC) and from the [Malawian Union for the Informal Sector](#) (MUFIS) to tour the UK, including Manchester, Glasgow and London, and Austria (Vienna). They will share their experience of organising women domestic workers, street vendors and home-based workers.

Keep an eye on [CAWN's website](#) for details of the stops on the tour trail. We hope to see you there!

### New internship vacancy at CAWN

CAWN is currently accepting applications for a new internship vacancy. [Find more details here](#). The deadline to submit applications (to [campaigns@cawn.org](mailto:campaigns@cawn.org)) is 2 October. Short-

listed candidates will be invited to an interview on 3 October.

### Global Contest: End Gender Discrimination Now! Call for submissions until October 15th

Gender at Work, the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), BRIDGE, Gender Society and Policies Area, and Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales – FLACSO Argentina announce the launch of a global competition: *End Gender Discrimination Now!* Around the world, organizations have developed Gender Equality, Equal Opportunity, Diversity or other policies and strategies – from revising national-level constitutions to instituting company-level equal pay policies — to pave the way to more inclusive, more just and more equitable organizational cultures.

But we know that policies alone do not generate change. We want to hear your experiences and stories for making change happen. And we're also interested in what didn't work.

[More](#)

## CALLS FOR SOLIDARITY AND ACTION

### Calls for international feminist solidarity from Honduran and Mexican feminists translated by CAWN

#### Honduras: Ongoing threats against the community of La Nueva Esperanza

On 25 July 2013, the continuous presence of armed security guards in the community of La Nueva Esperanza, in the department of Atlántida, threatening and intimidating the local population, resulted in the temporary kidnapping of two

international human rights defenders, Mr Daniel Langmeier and Ms Orlane Vidal.

Both are working for the [Proyecto de Acompañamiento Honduras](#) - PROAH (Honduras Accompaniment Project), an organisation which aims to prevent or alleviate situations of risk for human rights defenders in Honduras.

For the previous two months armed security guards have been present, in the community La Nueva Esperanza, in the employment of a local mining project owned by Lenir Pérez, the owner of the corporation Minerales Victoria, which was set up without due consultation and against the wishes of the community.

[More](#)

#### Honduras: Killing Of Indigenous Environmental Rights Defenders, Ms María Enriqueta Matute, Mr Armando Fúnez Medina,





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### and Mr Ricardo Soto Fúnez

The three belonged to various tribes of the Tolupán indigenous people, from Locomapa, in the Yoro zone, and had been involved in a peaceful protest against a local antimony mining operation and the construction of a hydroelectric dam in their indigenous zone.

On 25 August, María Enriqueta Matute of the San Francisco Campo community, Armando Fúnez Medina of the Las Brisas tribe, and Ricardo Soto Fúnez of the Cabeza de Vaca 1 tribe, were reportedly participating in a peaceful sit-in protest in San Francisco Campo, blocking the main road to Locomapa together with some 150 other Tolupán indigenous people. The protesters refused to let any traffic through. Around 5pm, the protesters were approached by two men known locally, who after a short exchange of words opened fire on the three human rights defenders. It is reported that Armando Fúnez Medina and Ricardo Soto Fúnez died on the spot, while María Enriqueta Matute ran to her nearby home, where she was tracked down by the gunmen and was fatally shot. Reports indicate that to date, the police have not yet opened any form of investigation procedures into the killings.

The roadblock involved several indigenous communities in the area and had been in place since 14 August 2013. However, the indigenous local residents of the region have been organising social protest for the past four years, since an antimony mining operation started up in the region. In addition to this, a large hydroelectric dam is currently under construction and the inhabitants have had their traditional community lands seized by local landowners. None of the large-scale development projects engaged in the required prior consultation with the local population. In July

2012, the community sent an open letter to the Minister for Justice and the Secretary for Indigenous Affairs about a timber magnate in the area, whose forestry operations had resulted in death threats and arbitrary arrests of members of the community who voiced their opposition to the mining and forestry operations.

### [Take action](#)

### **Panamá: Urge UN Special Rapporteur to Recommend Reform to Protect Indigenous Communities**

On July 20, 2013, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples James Anaya met with community representatives in the Ngäbe-Buglé territory in Panama to learn firsthand about the human rights threatened by the Barro Blanco hydroelectric dam.

The Barro Blanco dam is registered under the Clean Development Mechanism, a carbon offsetting scheme established under the UN climate framework. The CDM has no standards for human rights or indigenous rights, nor does it have a way for communities that are negatively affected by CDM projects to register complaints.

Mr. Anaya will present a report with his findings and recommendations on the issues examined during his mission, including the human rights violations against the indigenous people affected by Barro Blanco.

[Take action](#) to urge Special Rapporteur Anaya to include in his report recommendations to the CDM and to the Panamanian government to respect human rights for development projects that generate social and environmental impacts, with particular attention to indigenous rights.

## NEWS AND ANALYSIS

### News from external sources and analysis by CAWN supporters and members

#### Armed conflict and violence against women

##### **IACHR Condemns Murder of Judge in Honduras**

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) condemns the murder in Honduras of Mireya Efigenia Mendoza Peña, a trial court judge

in El Progreso, Yoro, and undersecretary of the “Asociación Jueces por la Democracia” [“Judges for Democracy” Association], which works to defend Honduran magistrates and judges.



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According to information the Commission has received, on July 24<sup>th</sup> 2013, Mireya Efigenia Mendoza Peña was leaving a shopping centre in her SUV when she was killed by multiple gunshots fired by two hit men on motorcycles. According to information reported by the National Human Rights Commission, her death brings to 64 the number of legal professionals who have lost their lives under violent circumstances since January 2010.

As the IACHR stated in its [Second Report on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas](#), if States fail to guarantee the security of their judges and magistrates against all types of external pressures, including reprisals directly targeting judges and their families, the exercise of judicial functions may be gravely affected, frustrating the free development of the judicial function and impeding access to justice for victims of human rights violations.

The murder of Mireya Efigenia Mendoza Peña has been publicly condemned in statements by different organisations, between them [CLADEM](#) and the [Honduran Women Defenders Network](#), asking the Honduran government to protect women human rights defenders and take action against aggressors.

[More](#)

### **Nicaragua: Supreme Court rules Law against Violence toward Women (Law 779) constitutional**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2013, the Nicaraguan Supreme Court issued a unanimous ruling declaring that Law 779, the Integral Law against Violence toward Women was constitutional. The Court rejected four separate challenges saying that the law complied with all requirements in the constitution and other previous legislation on the subject. The special courts created by the law have also been established in compliance with the constitution, the Supreme Court said. National Assembly Deputy Carlos Emilio Lopez, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Women, Children and Family, praised the decision saying that it would help to “eradicate the delay in justice which has negatively affected women.” Those who had opposed the law said that it would continue to privilege women over men and violate the principle of equality before the law.

At the same time, the Court proposed that mediation, not included in the law as originally passed by

the National Assembly, be allowed for less serious violations and first time offenders. Law Professor Arbel Medina said that he favoured mediation, noting, “It is contradictory that the law permits mediation between people who do not know each other but not between couples who have shared a lifetime together.” However, the Network of Women against Violence immediately responded that mediation would put women in a position of vulnerability. Johana Arcia of the Maria Elena Cuadra Women’s Movement said, “Mediation has been in many cases the anteroom to a woman becoming part of the statistics on femicide.”

On 26<sup>th</sup> august 2013, the Supreme Court sent to the Assembly a proposal to amend Law 779, noting that it is not congruent with Law 260 which establishes the possibility of mediation. The proposed amendment would allow mediation if the victim “freely agrees” in cases where there is no serious violence or intimidation. Sandinista representative to the Central American Parliament - Doris Tijerino, Chief of the Sandinista Police in the 1980s, said that she opposed the amendment because it is difficult for a woman to go through mediation with a man who has been violent towards her.

Meanwhile, the National Police reported that 32 new women police stations had been opened and Government Communications Coordinator Rosario Murillo announced that by the end of October, there would be women police stations in all the country’s municipalities.

### **Central American women seek refuge from violence in Nicaragua**

An increasing number of women from other Central American countries are going to Nicaragua, usually with young children, to seek refuge. An estimated eight women each day are seeking refugee status in Nicaragua from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, the so-called Triangle of Violence. “Francisca,” a 38-year old mother of three, fled to Nicaragua after her small businessman husband was killed by gangs demanding protection money. She went to Nicaragua where, she stated in her own words “my children will be protected by the State, something that won’t happen in my country”. She also said that in Nicaragua she can get good work and free healthcare and education for her children. While most of the refugees are women between 25 and 55 years of age,



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there is also an increase in the number of unaccompanied juveniles entering the country. Assistance is provided by the government and by the Nicaraguan Council of Protestant Churches (CEPAD), which is the agency in Nicaragua affiliated with UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR).

### **Arbitrary detention of sex workers in Panama**

*Translated and adapted by CAWN*

On July 23, a group of sex workers were violently detained by the police in Panama City. They were then taken to a health centre, where they were, compulsively and without their consent, tested for HIV. This operation was commissioned by the Ministry of Health, the Panama National Police and the judge of the Misdemeanour Court.

All the colleagues who were working there were arrested and taken to the health centre, in order to be tested for HIV. Members of *Mujeres con Dignidad y Derecho de Panamá* [Women with Dignity and Rights of Panamá] made their voices heard to

the authorities of the health centre and prevented them to conduct medical tests without the consent of the sex workers.

After such assault to their dignity, security forces carried colleagues to the Immigration shelter, where they were fined by a Misdemeanour judge for working in a building where "decent families live". This shows another abuse of power by Panamanians public officials; since 2008, sex workers cannot be fined because of their work. After discussing with the competent authorities, the workers were able to reduce the value of their fines. The customers were also fined.

[Redtrasex](#) denounces and repudiates these acts of intimidation and violence against sex workers and considers them to show clear infringement of sex workers' human rights, which they suffer every day, and the vulnerability sex workers have regarding the abuses they experienced at the hands of security forces and who state: "we demand our rights to security and integrity. We are subjects of rights; we deserve to be treated with dignity and integrity as women".

## Reproductive and Abortion Rights

### **Nicaragua, the Abortion Ban, and the Government's "Battle against Maternal Deaths"**

*Jennifer Kennedy is a freelance journalist. She has spent time living and working in Central America but is now based in the UK where she is studying for a journalism qualification.*



Nicaragua is "winning the battle against maternal deaths" according to a new Ministry of Health (MINSA) report released in July. According to government statistics the number of maternal deaths in Nicaragua has dropped significantly since 2005 with 50.6 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2012 compared to 84.47 per 100,000 in 2005.

Those in support of Nicaragua's new abortion law suggest that these new figures show that the law has had no negative impact upon maternal health.

The controversial law came into effect in 2008 after amendments to the Penal Code began in 2006. The new law prohibits all abortions, even when a woman requires a therapeutic abortion to save her life or when a woman has become pregnant as a result of rape.

Prior to the ban, therapeutic abortion had been legal in Nicaragua for more than 100 years and many international bodies, such as the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), expressed concern that the new law would be detrimental to the health of pregnant women and girls. National and international women and human rights groups have since been campaigning for the government to repeal what has been described as a "draconian" law.

Back in 2010, the Nicaraguan government also released statistics which appeared to show a dramatic



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decrease in maternal deaths. The data was called into question by several Nicaraguan non-governmental organizations.

Francis Bustos, an independent clinical pathology researcher, told the Inter Press Service (IPS) that the figure quoted by the government “seems hard to believe.” Juanita Jimenez from the Autonomous Women’s Movement (MAM) also said “There has been strong international pressure to reinstate therapeutic abortion, and one way or another the government is seeking to improve its image (with this new data).”

Another women’s rights activist, Fátima Millón, from the Central American organisation Network of Women Against Violence (RMCV), also had her doubts, telling IPS “The government generally tells lies, hides and manipulates figures when it doesn’t want them to become public knowledge, so I doubt that it’s true.”

The latest statistics from the World Health Organization (WHO) are from 2005 and it puts the maternal death rate at 170 per 100,000 live births. An estimated figure for 2010 from the Mortality Inter-Agency Group, which is made up of data from the WHO, The World Bank, The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF, and the UN Population Division Maternal, puts the maternal death rate at 95 per 100,000.

But maternal mortality statistics can be unreliable and maternal death is often under-reported. Nicaragua’s country report to United Nations Economic and Social Council in 2008 admitted that although it was making progress in recording maternal mortality, MINSA recognized “that maternal deaths are under-recorded” and that “In some cases, this is because deaths occur at home and are not reported.”

Amnesty International’s 2010 report on the abortion law maintains that poor quality data means maternal mortality trends are difficult to measure in Nicaragua and “This is compounded in a situation where abortion is criminalized and stigmatized, making it impossible to account for deaths resulting from unsafe abortions.” The criminalization of abortion in Nicaragua encourages women to seek clandestine alternatives, thus avoiding the public healthcare system altogether. Furthermore, doctors and other healthcare professionals, fearing prosecution, are less inclined to keep accurate data related to abortion and the treatment of other obstetric complications.

However, the relationship between unsafe abortions and maternal mortality is well established. According to the WHO, 13 per cent of pregnancy related deaths worldwide are attributed to complications due to unsafe abortions and the Central America Women’s Network’s (CAWN) report on maternal health, published in September 2012, states that this is the leading cause of maternal deaths in the country.

With one of highest rates of teenage pregnancy in the world, the abortion ban is especially disastrous for adolescent girls. According to data from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), between 2000 and 2012, 22% of maternal deaths were teenagers. The likelihood of developing complications that require therapeutic abortions is increased in adolescent girls. One complication includes cephalo-pelvic disproportion, which is often seen in girls who have not reached physical maturity and is evident when the pelvis is not wide enough to allow the fetus through. Data from MINSA indicates that pre-eclampsia and the ingestion of poison were the leading causes of adolescent maternal mortality between 2007 and 2008.

The abortion law is adversely affecting the health of pregnant women and girls. It is also criminalizing them. Many women and girls, some of whom were raped, now face prosecution. Victims become criminals. Adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable with more than half of all rape cases in Nicaragua involving victims under the age of 18, and according to national police records, from 2008 2010, 79 women were charged with having an illegal abortion. 32.87 per cent of these women were under 18 years old.



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Girls, some as young as 9 years of age, are being compelled to become mothers, or they risk a dangerous and illegal abortion, which could either kill or criminalize them. Both poor girls and women are disproportionately affected by the law. Ana Maria Pizarro as a Nicaraguan women's rights activist and member of Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network has said "the anti-abortion policy was particularly cruel given the poverty of the majority of women, the lack of information about sex and reproduction, and the fact that Nicaragua has one of the highest levels of adolescent pregnancy in Latin America."

Despite taking step towards reducing maternal deaths and improving family planning services, the abortion law contradicts a body of medical evidence that clearly demonstrates a relationship between maternal deaths and unsafe abortions. The government claims that it is successfully combating the country's high maternal death rate, but in country where there is poverty, lack of accessible health services and a ban on abortion under any circumstance, death during childbirth remains a stark reality for many vulnerable women and girls.

### Women's Economic Rights

#### Rural women in Honduras launch campaign to generate commitments by presidential candidates

*Translated by CAWN*

As part of the November 2013 elections , rural women across the country launched the campaign "Let's harvest justice for rural women", to highlight the problems of access to land, credit and technical assistance experienced by 2 million rural women living in Honduras . The aim of the campaign is to create commitments by the 8 presidential candidates in favour of rural women.

The campaign, integrated by 14 rural, cooperative, indigenous and Garifuna women's organisations, mention that 86 per cent of women in rural areas do not possess land titles, and only 11 per cent of the state's budget to promote agriculture go to these women .

According to the FAO and the World Bank, women represent 43 per cent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries; however, they face a gender gap that denies them access to basic resources, such as land and education, to increase production in the field.

"Women suffer to ensure the livelihoods of our children. We sow so there is food, and go with the man to work fields. Most women finish making breakfast and taking care of the house before heading out to work, and that effort is not valued, it's invisible", says Edith Villanueva, small coffee producer in Marcala, La Paz.

It is estimated that more than 1.4 million rural



women can cast their votes in 2013, which represents 30% of the electorate in the country.

"In the current electoral campaign, all sectors are trying to draw the attention of the future authorities, and we are doing so. This is a very strong clamour that emerges from the inequality that we, the 2 million rural women, face. We are a very important electoral mass and we will not remain invisible, we will not vote for candidates who ignore us", said Leoncia Solórzano, one of the spokespersons of the campaign on behalf of Garifuna women.

George Redman, Oxfam director and member of the agencies for food sovereignty in Honduras, said "the candidates must ensure support for rural women, who produce most of the world's food, but who remain invisible to public policies and support programs", and he added that "if women had the same rights to land, resources and opportunities as men, they could increase the country's agricultural output by 30 per cent".

As a solution to the problems faced by rural women, the campaign proposes legislation reform to ensure access to land to women on equal terms with men, and the compliance of these laws;



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access to credit for agricultural investment, since women often have restricted access to the market or get smaller loans than those granted to men; and technical assistance, among other tools, to improve the land and their crops.

### **Honduras: Statement on dismissal of *maquila* workers by CODEMUH (Honduran Collective of Women)**

[Translated by CAWN](#)

Alert to the working population of the *maquiladora* industry and to consumers in North America and Europe:

We denounce to the national and international public opinion, especially the consumers in North America and Europe, the Honduras subsidiary of HANES CHOLOMA, HBI® and the transnational HANESBRANDS INC for the dismissal of 11 women workers with occupational health problems, recognised by Professional risk dictums from the Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS).

We denounce the complicity of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (STSS) for their practices that violate the law, and the *maquiladora* HANES CHOLOMA, HBI®, as it is the second time they have used a labour inspector to dismiss 11 workers through regional inspectorate acts, to avoid giving termination letters. This situation, which is illegal, was made known to the regional labour authorities, who promised CODEMUH and the workers concerned that these events would not be repeated. The central authorities are also aware of the practices of Hanes, and their inaction has allowed illegal dismissals to continue.

We denounce the Minister of Labour, Jorge Bográn Perdomo; the President, Porfirio Lobo Sosa; and the President of the National Congress, Juan Orlando Hernandez, for the violation of human rights enshrined in labour normative and of International Conventions and Declarations signed by the Honduran State.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) considers that the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and to fair and favourable employment conditions should be a priority and responsibility of States. The Convention calls on States parties to take all appropriate and effective measures to eliminate

discrimination against women, whether by public or private actors, committed by any person, organization or company. There has also been violation of Chapter V, Article 128, number 6 of the Honduran Constitution.

The CEDAW considers that States should be held responsible for private violations if they do not act with due diligence to prevent these violations of rights or if they fail to investigate and punish acts of public violence. They should issue effective legal measures, including penal sanctions, civil remedies and compensatory provisions to protect women against all kind of violence, from violence and abuse in the family, sexual violence, to harassment in the workplace; States should take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or companies.

We hold responsible the authorities for the damage caused to the workers of Hanes Choloma, HBI®, victims of labour and dismissed in evident illegality and discrimination for suffering from occupational diseases caused by poor work conditions. The authorities are responsible for all harms, body or psychological injuries, emotional suffering, illegal reduction of wages and disparagement of fundamental rights suffered by the workers and their families, because it is their complicity which has allowed them to lose their only source of income.

We make a call on social movements and national/international human rights organizations, and especially on consumers, to show solidarity with the workers that are victims of labour, in their struggle to make their human rights be respected.

"STOP the Workplace Violence" Jobs Yes, but with Dignity!

*Hanesbrand Inc. is a multinational clothing company based in the US, with branches in European countries like the UK, France and Spain. It owns different brands: Hanes, Champion, Leggs and Wonderbra, among others. The multinational self-congratulates for its commitment to sustainable production and social justice, holding itself to "the highest ethical standard" in the workplace. CODEMUH's statement shows a reality that is not like this picture. This is true not only for Honduras, but also for other countries.*



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*Hanesbrand Inc. (as well as Levi's) heavily lobbies to maintaining its high profits. In 2011 a cable (later made public by Wikileaks) [demonstrated how the US administration had lobbied Haiti's](#)*

*[government](#) to prevent the minimum wage from increasing from \$ 0.31 to \$ 0.62 per hour, a measure that had been passed by the Haitian Parliament in June 2009.*



### **The new aid architecture: Issues for gender equality in Nicaragua**

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The Paris Declaration (PD) on Aid Effectiveness of 2005 is the central document of what is referred to as the new aid architecture. It is considered an historical international consensus towards establishing a more coherent approach to managing and delivering aid. But this non-binding declaration focuses primarily on establishing effective money management systems to deliver and monitor aid and not on achieving development goals or ensuring a positive impact in the lives of those that aid intends to benefit. Since the first review of the PD in 2008, numerous civil society organisations have argued that while effective money management systems are necessary in making aid more effective, their establishment does not necessarily translate into effective outcomes. If aid money is to have a positive impact, the term 'effectiveness of aid' needs to be broadened to include not just good financial procedures but also the achievement of development aid goals.

The Paris Declaration does refer (vaguely) to the Millennium Development Goals and to the inclusion of 'cross-cutting issues such as gender equality' but assigns no indicators to ensure these are taken into account. Of particular notoriety is that the PD has been gender blind, with no mention of human rights (including women's human rights) despite commitments under international agreements such as the Vienna Declaration, and the Convention on all forms of Discrimination against Women, to mention a few. This is despite a constant flow of evidence that the current neoliberal economic system underpinning the aid model has distinct impacts on men and women, and that the impact on women is generally negative, with few exceptions (Visvanathan, 2011). If gender related aid goals are to be fulfilled under the new aid agenda, progress towards their achievement must involve the use of gender sensitive indicators and approaches. The latest review of the PD held in Busan (2012) offers some hope as the language regarding gender equality and human rights is now part of the newly established (and still evolving) 'Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation'.

But how is the implementation of the new aid agenda influencing the achievement of gender equality?

The new aid architecture has generally been characterised by the reprioritisation of aid money towards short-term, easier to measure, economically focused programmes (the Aid for Trade programme, and the proliferation of micro-credit schemes are some examples). Donor countries increasingly channel aid money through national governments and less direct support is given to civil society organisations (in both the global north and global south). These types of organisations now have to undergo competitive bidding processes that do not allow for long-term sustainable programmes to be devised in collaboration with the ultimate beneficiaries of aid. This goes against bottom-up approaches where development priorities are defined by the people and against gender based approaches where democratic participation is so important to comprehensive planning. As CAWN's 2008 report succinctly puts it: "The focus on results is transforming the attention from long- to short-term measurable changes. The advancement of gender equality and the challenge of violence against women requires long-term



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programmes addressing issues of power, access and control over resources that are essential for women's empowerment and women's poverty alleviation" (CAWN, 2008: 8).

Under the Paris Declaration framework, each country is responsible for developing their own measures of effectiveness to suit their local contexts and priorities. At the same time, they are supposed to conform to the expectations of the International Financial Institutions (IMF and World Bank) who ultimately approve their national plans and poverty reduction strategies. The national plans and strategies remain controversial because, besides being subject to the final approval of the IMF and the World Bank, in most cases they are not always the result of a democratic process involving national parliaments, the wide array of civil society organisations (including feminist and non-feminist women's organisations in all their diversity), and other sectors. This, not only erodes the first principle of the Paris Declaration 'Ownership' (which stipulates that a consultative process should be followed including these actors), but also allows for narrow economically focused interests and values to prevail in national plans and poverty reduction strategies.

In the case of Nicaragua, a country with very high levels of violence against women, issues of women's labour exploitation, human trafficking (of mainly women and children), femicide, and the criminalisation of abortion, one would presume that gender issues are high in the aid agenda. But while the Nicaraguan government says it is committed to gender equality, its unique socio political trajectory reveals a very complex and sometimes contradictory landscape for gender equality goals, and for the measurement of positive results.

On one hand, the current government of Daniel Ortega declares itself to be anti-neoliberal, very people centred and fostering a participatory democracy with commitments to increasing women's participation in decision making (PNDH, 2012-2016). Nicaragua has also been part of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) since 2007, which postulates gender as a cross cutting issue, and which explicitly claims to be built by the people. There is evidence that Nicaragua has implemented gender-sensitive participatory budgeting in many instances. So in this sense, the country is following a mixed strategy by committing to the OECD-led (hegemonic- neoliberal) aid effectiveness agenda as well as to the anti-neoliberal, more gender aware ALBA. On the other hand, the country has seen a surge of anti-feminist groups, which, together with the Church and after bi-partisan support in 2006, were able to secure the criminalisation of abortion in legislation.<sup>1</sup> President Ortega has long had uneasy and mainly antagonistic relations with experienced feminist and women's rights organisations and with other key areas of civil society.<sup>2</sup> Considering this problematic relationship between the government and women's organisations, if a participatory approach involving women (in all their diversity) is so important to the production of progressive gender sensitive indicators and policies and for fostering ownership over national plans, how reliable are Nicaragua's aid effectiveness indicators for gender equality results?<sup>3</sup> To complicate matters, various international donors have withdrawn their support altogether from Nicaragua citing concerns over corruption, and clientelism as reasons for this decision. News point to progressive gender equality programmes reaching only selected groups. Sadly some of the donors that have left are those who had shown greater commitment to supporting women's organisations working on women's hard issues, like the protection of their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

How can Nicaragua defy the neoliberal model, and fulfil its commitments to aid effectiveness while simultaneously delivering gender equality results without the full participation of its most relevant civil

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<sup>1</sup> Nicaragua's total ban on abortion represents a breach to its commitments to international treaties such as the Convention on all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) and the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, amongst others. Unsafe abortion has been described as the leading cause of maternal deaths in the country.

<sup>2</sup> This partly stems from the overwhelming support women's groups offered to the President's step-daughter who publically accused him of sexual abuse back in the late 1990s.

<sup>3</sup> The People's Councils are meant to provide the necessary input to determine government's priorities but concerns about their legitimacy and limited membership have resulted in divisions and animosity.



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society members for this end – all the while violating its international commitments to women's human rights- remains a challenge for that country. What is clear is that the new gender-blind aid architecture, coupled with a very divisive political country context, present serious obstacles for the full realisation of gender equality in Nicaragua. Women's organisations working on long-term 'difficult to measure' issues (e.g. sexual and reproductive health and rights and VAW, for example) continue their work under severe funding and political constraints while the women of Nicaragua persist in their fight for emancipation.

### WOMEN'S STRUGGLES

**Honduras: Human rights defenders Berta Cáceres, Tomás Gómez and Aureliano Molina, members of COPINH, receive court decision**

[On 12 September 2013 human rights defenders Berta Cáceres, Tomás Gomez and Aureliano Molina appeared in court](#) charged with usurpation of land, coercion, and causing more than \$3 million in damages to DESA, a hydroelectric dam company. Berta Cáceres is also facing separate charges of illegally carrying arms "endangering the internal security of Honduras". Berta Cáceres is the general co-ordinator of *Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Indígenas Populares* – COPINH (Civic Council of Popular Indigenous Organisations). Tomás Gómez Membreño and Aureliano Molina are also members of COPINH.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> August 2013, it was announced that the [court resolution](#) gave a preventive detention for Berta Cáceres, a probation for Tomás Gómez and Aureliano Molina, and the eviction of the Río Blanco settlement that blocks the building of the new dam.

[More](#)

**Guatemala: Women organisations issue Statement in support for anthropologist and journalist Irma Alicia Velásquez Nimatuj.**

[Translated by CAWN](#)

The Women Human Rights Defenders' National Network of Communication and Urgent Action in Mexico and the Mesoamerican Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders, condemn the smear campaign, carried out by Ricardo Méndez Ruiz Valdés and the Foundation against Terrorism, against the renowned human rights defender, known for her work accompanying genocide victims in Guatemala: the anthropologist and K'iche` Guatemalan journalist, Irma Alicia Velásquez Nimatuj.



This campaign, which has affected various critics of the violence, inequality and impunity in Guatemala, has focused on Velásquez Nimatuj, after the publication of an article dated 8<sup>th</sup> July, which exposes that behind the Foundation against Terrorism are political players who wish to run Guatemala as it was run from 1954 to 1996 (a bloody and disgraceful period of genocide during the 20<sup>th</sup> century). The Foundation includes members of the military, the capitalist elite and foreign investors who regard Mayan communities and leaders, mestizos and Ladinos as enemies, because they demand the State's compliance with national and international legislation to respect decisions in their territories.

In this article, Irma Alicia maintains that Ricardo Méndez Ruiz Valdés and his investors cannot get rid of their opposition using the brutality they have previously employed, nor exterminate their enemies' lives by committing genocide and crimes against humanity with impunity and State support. So this is why they resort to publications that promote smear campaigns and the social, national and international lynching of leaders, professionals, and human rights defenders and organisations.

This attack against the K'iche` Guatemalan anthropologist and journalist seeks to annihilate the



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critics who continue to denounce impunity, genocide, racism, militarism and the various forms of violence that men and women suffer in Guatemala, as well as the havoc that transnational companies are wreaking in indigenous territories and communities.

We stand in solidarity with Irma Alicia Velasquez and her tireless fight for justice in Guatemala. We demand that the Guatemalan State ensures the integrity of the human rights defender Irma Alicia Velásquez Nimatuj and punishes those responsible for the smear campaign against her.

### **Guatemala : Statement In Solidarity With defenders of Monte Olivo , Cobán Alta Verapaz, for the murder of two children.**

*[Translated by CAWN](#)*

*Red de Defensoras de derechos humanos de Guatemala* [The Network of Women Human Rights Defenders in Guatemala] condemns the murder of David Estuardo Pacay Maaz, aged 11, who died at noon today [August 26] after being shot on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> of August by an employee of the company Santa Rita.

The child was the son of Marcelina Maaz Chen and Jose Antonio Pacay, residents of the community of Monte Olivo, Alta Verapaz, to whom we express our solidarity and support, for experiences now such a terrible loss.

We also express our solidarity with the family of Ageo Isaac, aged 13, who was shot by the same employee and is now in a critical state\*.

We demand the authorities to promptly investigate and clarify the facts and to arrest the intellectual and material authors of such atrocious crime.

We condemn that this occurs in a context of harsh criminalisation and repression against defenders of the body, land and natural resources.

We express our support with the community leaders of Monte Olivo, who have experienced constant harassment and intimidation since the company Santa Rita has attempted to settle in the area.

We hold the State responsible for any attacks that David Chen, community leader, may suffer, who was the victim of a kidnapping attempt some weeks ago; it was precisely while he was being looked for that the children were attacked.

We urge the authorities that this murder cannot become part of the high rate of impunity in our country.

The *Red de Defensoras* denounces the tactic of attacks against sons and daughters of Human Rights Defenders.

Guatemala , August 26, 2013

*\*Tragically, Ageo Isaac García died days later, after being moved to Guatemala City in a critical condition. [The IACHR has raised its concerns about the treatment this community has received, the murder of the two children and the constant threats to human rights in the region.](#)*

## CAWN'S PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

**This section features partners and other organizations we work closely with**

### **Frauensolidarität**

Based in Austria, [Frauensolidarität](#) provides information, education and public relation services about women in Africa, Asia and Latin America as well as global power-relations, from a feminist point of view. Frauensolidarität contributes with its work to enhance the enforcement of women's rights and promotes a world free from sexism, racism and homophobia.

As an organization based in development-policy, Frauensolidarität is in active dialogue with women's movements from the south, thus uniting and strengthening action by networking.

CAWN and Frauensolidarität are working together on a project launched in October 2011 which will run until September 2014 titled: Women's rights, social inclusion and the media., which aims to increase public awareness about women's rights and to respond to demands from woman's



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organisation to strengthen communication and solidarity between women in the EU and countries in the South (in this case in Southern Africa and Central America).

### Malawi Union for the Informal Sector (MUFIS)

After the liberalisation of the Malawian economy during the early 1990s, Malawians were left to scratch a living from the informal economy selling whatever goods they can, from clothes, shoes, groceries and hardware items, cooked and uncooked foods, fruits and vegetables, second

hand clothes, and spare motor parts. Many were also forced into informal small-scale agriculture producing and selling what they can to make a living.

[MUFIS](#) was established in 2001 in Malawi to represent the growing number of informal economy workers. Working together with existing street vendor and market trader organisations, it aims to provide a national platform for informal economy workers. MUFIS has set up branches all over Malawi representing informal workers, particularly market traders, street vendors and informal tea growers.

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