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Third Issue of the WAMA Newsletter

by Women in Action on Mining in Asia



Proudly presenting to you third issue of the WAMA newsletter. In the past few months, groups under WAMA have taken forward their efforts of creating dialogue between companies, governments and communities on the issue of gender and mining at local, national and international levels. Thus with the occasion of International Women's Day this month, we celebrate the struggles and spirit of the indigenous women we work with, who are fighting for their land and resource rights and a better, equal and sustainable future.

LOCAL UPDATES

1. Legal Workshop at Bhaladiya Panchayat of Udaipur District, Rajasthan, India (February 2019)

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A legal workshop was organised by Dhaatri, SETU and Adivasi Ekta Parishad in Nevatalai village, Udaipur district, where legal advocates Ramesh Nandwana and Manoj Chaudhary led a discussion with women from the affected communities around Zawar zinc mines in Udaipur. This was a follow up of the GIA process held in these villages earlier, in order to train women on legal strategies for filing complaints on the ongoing environment violations in their villages. Important environmental laws such as Forest Rights Act 2006 and PESA, which provide safeguards to indigenous communities towards protecting their lands and forests, were discussed in detail. At the end of the workshop, a discussion was taken to file a Public Interest Litigation on the case of water and air pollution. Women who attended the workshop also spoke out about cases of domestic violence within their villages, to understand what legal resolution can be followed.

2. Public Meeting with Vedanta-Hindustan Zinc Limited at Zawar Mines, Udaipur district, Rajasthan, India (February 2019)



gathered around for a public meeting in front of the Vedanta office on Feb 5th 2019. Their reason for gathering is to demand redressal from the company for the violations on ground and impact on communities. In this regard, they presented a few demands related to providing water services, and regarding employment of local people in the mines. Vedanta agreed to work on 3 of 7 demands presented, and released a list of employees working with them. They also have started working on laying a pipeline and a water tank in one of the villages as a result after the meeting. The leaders have taken subsequent meetings in the villages to spread awareness among the women in the communities regarding the environment violations taking place, document the narratives of the affected women, and strengthen their on-ground mobilisation.

3. Leadership Training on Women and Natural Resource Rights in Mandvi, Gujarat (February 2019)

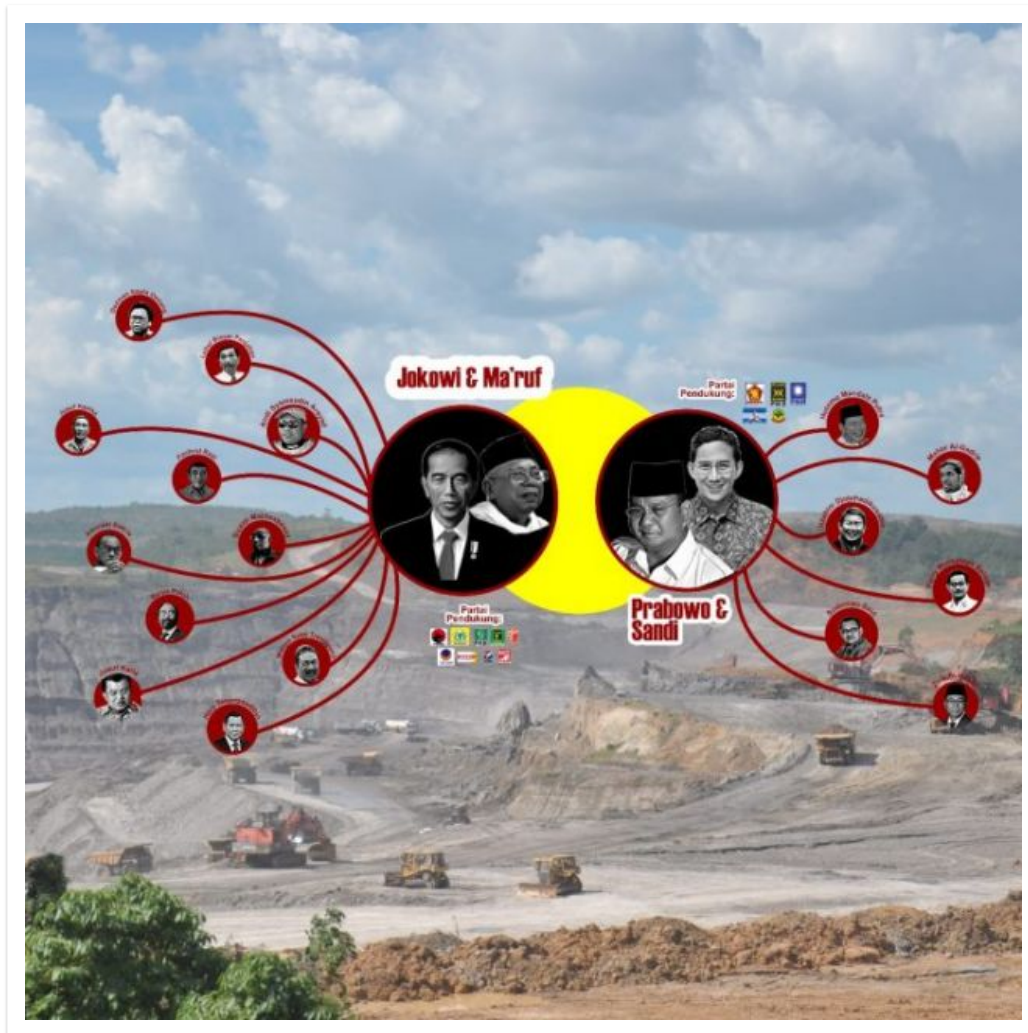


As a part of the Leading From the South programme supported by FIMI-AYNI, Dhaatri, SETU and Adivasi Ekta Parishad are initiating a project working on resource rights of indigenous women. In this regard, this project aims to work with 20 women activists from 8 states of India, in order to strengthen women's leadership in local campaigning, advocacy and dialogue with customary institutions. In doing so, it wishes to define a broader understanding of feminism and women's movement in India, that integrates the natural resource rights of indigenous women, and works towards addressing the vulnerabilities faced by them.

An induction leadership training meeting was thus held in Mandvi, Gujarat from 8th-10th February, 2019 to guide the participating women leaders towards deciding the issues they are going to be working on, and strategising a work plan for the next 10 months. Among the participating groups, women leaders from Chattisgarh and

will be impacted due to Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor, which is touted to be the largest infrastructure project in India, funded by Japanese investment and Asian Development Bank.

4. Release of Report on Mining Oligarchy and Elections in Indonesia (February 2019)



With the elections around the corner in Indonesia, JATAM released a report called 'Mining Oligarchy Behind the 2019 election' on February 11, 2019. This is a detailed report that delves into the connections between mining companies and politicians. They have found that many of the main electoral candidates have been involved in mining business, own mining corporations or are stakeholders, who also abused their power by controlling policies to ease mining expansion. Funding for the elections has also come in via the mining industry, which according to JATAM is also an indicator that the upcoming election will have mining as its focus, with efforts to increase the amount of mining investments and curb environmental laws and procedures that come in the way. It further looks into the business and political relations with regard to the mining industry in Indonesia, specially with new mining interests operating in the small islands and coastal areas. Through this report,

5. Workshop on Mining Investments in Small Islands and Coastal Areas of Indonesia (February 2019)



On February 20 2019, JATAM held a workshop on the expansion of mining and extractive industry in small islands and coastal areas of Indonesia, at the JATAM office. According to the research conducted by JATAM, there are about 152 mining concessions in small island states, such as in Pulau Bunyu, Pulau Gebe and Pulau Gei, and thus multiple concessions on one small islands. Mining in such ecologically sensitive areas has a massive impact on the environment, seizes people's livelihoods and is abound with human rights violations. The purpose of conducting this workshop was to disseminate knowledge on the concessions given out, discuss the ongoing violations and also to expose the owners, financiers and others actors involved behind mining companies in small islands and coastal areas.

6. Asserting Community Command Over Resources: Seventh General Assembly of Mines, Minerals and People in Dabbanda, Vishakapatnam, India (March 2019)



The seventh general assembly of the Mines, Minerals and People (mm&P), held in Dabbanda, Vishakapatnam from March 1-3, 2019 saw participating human rights defenders, academics, journalists and students "pledge" for securing the rights of the indigenous communities for sustainable development, with a focus on illegal mining, women and children affected due to mining, poor implementation of the District Mineral Foundation Fund (DMF), Silicosis, Future Generation Fund, and Business and Human Rights.

Attended by more than 260 participants from 100 organisations representing 21 states of India, it saw participation, among others, of eminent subject experts Roger Moody, Natalie Lowrey (coordinator, Deep Sea Mining Campaign and Yes to Life and No to Mining), Linda Chukchuk (Journalist), BT Venkatesh (Reach Law), Rahul Basu (Goa Foundation).

Women grassroots activists from mining affected areas presented their cases and struggles against the extractive industries. Sadhana Meena spoke about the environmental and social impacts of zinc mining in Zawar region of Udaipur. Munni Hansda spoke about mining in Jharkhand and shared her success story of stopping RPG group from mining in Kathikund region of Dumka district. Kusum Alam shared her struggles in Ghadchiroli area of Maharashtra, where multiple actors-state, Naxals and mining companies are suppressing the local tribal communities.

7. Joint Meeting between Mongolian Women's Fund (MONES) and Oyu Tolgoi Watch (OT Watch) in Ulanbataar (March 2019)



Initial partnership between Mongolian NGOs - Mongolian Women's Fund (MONES) and Oyu Tolgoi Watch (OTWatch) - both of whom are members of the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA) started in 2016, on attending a workshop on mechanisms to lodge complaints into banks and gender policies of banks, specifically organised in Mongolia by Bankwatch, an international development bank watchdog. This ongoing partnership entered a new phase in which MONES grantee organisations, groups, and OTWatch partners staged a joint meeting for the first time from 4th to 6th of March this year, in Ulanbataar.

Main goal of the meeting was not only to exchange experiences, but also to build partnership among citizens, groups, and organisations working on women's and environmental issues at the local level in order to bring environmental justice on the ground. Environmental organisations were keen to learn more about best practices of certain projects being implemented by women's organisations. They focused on case studies and methodologies of how women in Zavkhan province singlehandedly stopped mining operations in their local area which used water illegally and how women in Baganuur district managed to collectively demand to make information open and transparent for the local citizens and filed a complaint to the World Bank. On the other hand, women's organisations were interested in how environmental groups went about filing public interest litigations and complaint mechanisms.

Participating women's groups analysed and studied issues from the perspectives of how women's rights violations and mining extraction have negative impacts on the lives of local people, in particular on women's lives. The discussions led to an agreement that it is essential and necessary that women's rights and environmental justice NGOs and groups collaborate and partner with each other, because tackling these issues from one angle only is not effective anymore. Working in complementarity would not only help them to discover that there are mining-induced, negative environmental impacts, but also to enable these stakeholders to see both actual and potential risks facing human rights and gender equality in a more holistic

8. International Women's Day Protest Gathering in Philippines (March 2019)



To mark the celebration of the International Women's Day, on March 8th 2019, a protest gathering of indigenous women's groups was organised by LILAK and was led by the indigenous women from Dumagat with the solidarity of indigenous women from Zambales. Several human rights groups also joined the protest- Philippines Human Rights Information Center (PhilRights), Focus on the Global South, Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM), Non-Timber Forest Products-Task Force (NTFP-EP) among others.

During the march, the Dumagat women conducted a symbolic offering of soil, and *mama* or betel nut, which speaks of their connection to the land, and their desire for peace, and harmony with nature, to express their options to the Kaliwa Dam project of Metro Manila Water Sewerage System (MWSS). The Kaliwa Dam which costs PhP 18.724 Billion, will be developed to meet the increasing water demand by consumers in Metro Manila. The construction funds will come from a loan with China. According to Judy A. Pasimio of LILAK (Purple Action for Indigenous Women's Rights), this dam project is part of the Build, Build, Build Program of the Duterte administration. "Without regard to human rights, and the adverse impacts on human lives, especially those of indigenous peoples, this project becomes a part of Duterte's Kill, Kill, Kill program – kill the environment, kill the food sources, kill the communities' way of life."

9. Medical Camp in Udaipur District, Rajasthan, India (March 2019)



A Medical Camp was organised in Bhaladiya Panchayat, Udaipur district on March 10th 2019, to do a general check-up of the people from the affected communities around Zawar Mines. Many of the women who attended came with problems of skin rashes and stomach infections, which could be linked to the contamination of water sources in the area. They were attended to by a doctor, and given the required medicines, free of cost.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

1. Regional Thematic Meeting on Environment Justice, organised by Women's Fund Asia in Sri Lanka (February 2019)



Women's Fund Asia has included 'Environmental Justice' as one of its thematic priorities since 2017. Thus, for its first conference under this thematic, it got together its partners working at the intersection of environment justice, and women and trans rights. The conference was held from 25th-27th 2018 in Chilaw, Sri Lanka, with participants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Philippines. The objectives of this meeting was to strengthen the feminist and environment perspectives of their partners, make connection between their work on women's rights and resource politics, provide a platform for linking and learning, and to inform the WFA strategy on this thematic. During the conference, Dr, Bhanumathi Kalluri from Dhaatri Resource Centre for Women and Children's Rights, facilitated a session on understanding the different power structures and patriarchies. She also gave a presentation on the 'Women and Mining in Asia' network and the strategies followed towards linking our advocacy work from a local to international level.

LATEST NEWS AND RESEARCH

1. Women are now allowed to work in underground mines in India

2. Rio Tinto set for revival of its diamond mine in Madhya Pradesh, India

3. Anti- Vedanta Resistance Movement Leader Lingaraj Azad Arrested

4. Indian government diluted legal provisions for consent from village councils for projects on forest land

5. Release of the National Mineral Policy in India for 2019

In 2018, Dhaatri Resource Centre for Women and Children's Rights submitted their comments on the review of the National Mineral Policy 2008, which you can read [here](#)

6. Telengana High Court asks to pay compensation to silicosis victims

7. Condemnation statement on the police repression by Vedanta's security forces in Lanjigarh, Odisha, India

8. Indigenous Women from India and Indonesia share mining struggles at the First International Indigenous Film Festival in Bhubhaneshwar, Odisha, India

9. Acquisition of the Grasberg Mine in the Papua province by the Indonesian Government and Inheriting of the Pollution Problem

10. Environment commitments in the upcoming Indonesian elections

11. Mesco Gold acquires Mining Licence and sets up Processing Plant in Ratnakkiri province, Cambodia

12. Shift in Mindset from EU on Investor Due Diligence

14. A toolkit prepared by Gaia Foundation and Yes to Life, No to Mining on how mining impacts water sources

15. Banking on Climate Change: A report tracing the investments of banks financing the fossil fuel industry