

# WAMA Newsletter

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## Women in Action on Mining in Asia

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Welcome to the latest edition of the WAMA newsletter. In this issue, we delve into the recent United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) and insights from indigenous and women's groups responding to the summit's outcomes. As we share updates and stories from the WAMA network, we aim to shed light on the challenges and narratives of women as they pioneer gender-just climate solutions amidst the global push for "just transition."

We emphasize that the climate crisis is not "gender neutral" and disproportionately affects women and girls, magnifying gender inequalities and posing distinct threats to their well-being. Across our network, we witness the acute climate risks faced by indigenous women and their communities, who, despite these challenges, remain at the forefront of ecological stewardship and conservation efforts.

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*A woman tending to her kitchen garden in Panna, India*



# KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM COP28

## Ambiguity and Criticism Surround COP28's Fossil Fuel Transition Call

The COP28 summit in Dubai concluded with a call for “a fair and equitable” [transition away from fossil fuels](#), without explicitly using the term “phaseout.” This commitment, included in the first-ever [global stocktake](#), has drawn criticism from climate-vulnerable countries, especially developing nations, who argue that it undermines principles of equity and climate justice. They have also highlighted the [absence of concrete commitments](#) on financial support for the transition.

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## Loss and Damage Fund - Initial Pledges Fall Short

The summit began with the world agreeing to operationalise the [Loss and Damage Fund](#) designed to provide financial assistance to countries most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. However, pledges made so far by developed nations most responsible for the climate crisis fall [way short of what is needed](#).

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## Declaration on Climate and Food

Over 150 countries signed the [Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action](#). Acknowledging that sustainable agriculture is a part of responding appropriately to climate change, the declaration aims to scale up adaptation to reduce the vulnerability of farmers, promote food security and nutrition, strengthen the integrated management of water in agriculture and food systems.

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## Declaration on Climate and Health

Over 120 countries approved the [Climate and Health Declaration](#) to address the critical intersection between climate change and global health. It calls to achieve “benefits for health from deep, rapid, and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, including from just transitions, lower air pollution, active mobility, and shifts to sustainable healthy diets.”



*Representational Image  
(Pic Credit: Steve Buisinne from Pixabay)*



# NET ZERO TARGETS & PLEDGES



## Bangladesh

Net Zero Target: Not Specified  
Tripling Renewables Pledge: Yes  
Declaration on Climate and Food: Yes  
Declaration on Climate and Health: Yes  
Gender-Just Transition Partnership: Yes



## Cambodia

Net Zero Target: 2050  
Tripling Renewables Pledge: No  
Declaration on Food and Agriculture: Yes  
Declaration on Climate and Food: Yes  
Gender-Just Transition Partnership: No



## India

Net Zero Target: 2070  
Tripling Renewables Pledge: No  
Declaration on Climate and Food: No  
Declaration on Climate and Health: No  
Gender-Just Transition Partnership: No



## Indonesia

Net Zero Target: 2060  
Tripling Renewables Pledge: No  
Declaration on Climate and Food: Yes  
Declaration on Climate and Health: Yes  
Gender-Just Transition Partnership: No



## Mongolia

Net Zero Target: Not Specified  
Tripling Renewables Pledge: No  
Declaration on Climate and Food: Yes  
Declaration on Climate and Health: Yes  
Gender-Just Transition Partnership: Yes



## Nepal

Net Zero Target: 2045  
Tripling Renewables Pledge: No  
Declaration on Climate and Food: Yes  
Declaration on Climate and Health: Yes  
Gender-Just Transition Partnership: No



## The Philippines

Net Zero Target: Not Specified  
Tripling Renewables Pledge: No  
Declaration on Climate and Food: Yes  
Declaration on Climate and Health: Yes  
Gender-Just Transition Partnership: No



## Thailand

Net Zero Target: 2065  
Tripling Renewables Pledge: Yes  
Declaration on Food and Agriculture: Yes  
Declaration on Climate and Food: No  
Gender-Just Transition Partnership: No

## STATEMENTS

Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA)



### An Urgent Call for Gender Just Climate Finance

“We must recognise the climate leadership of the self-led groups of women, girls, trans and intersex within the Indigenous, Afrodescendant and rural communities that have been structurally excluded and silenced as the world grapples with climate change.”

[Full statement](#)

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The Women and Gender Constituency



### The End of the Era of Fossil Fuels is Here, but the Fight for Climate Justice Remains

“It should not have taken this many years to call for a transition away from fossil fuels. While critical, this outcome, full of false solutions and dangerous distractions, threatens any hope of keeping 1.5 alive and undermines the very survival of people on this planet.”

[Full release](#)

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ACT Alliance



### COP28 Delivers Disappointing Results

“Climate justice should go hand in hand with gender justice. In Indonesia, there were more than 3,000 disasters in 2023, overwhelmingly hydro meteorological disasters. These disproportionately affect women, girls and people with disabilities. Funding for loss and damage should reach them before it’s too late.”

[Full release](#)

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Amnesty International



### COP28 Agreement Falls Short of Safeguarding Human Rights

“The outcome leaves loopholes allowing fossil fuel producers and states to continue with business as usual, and so falls short of what is needed to protect the rights of billions of people facing climate harms.”

[Full statement](#)

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## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' PERSPECTIVES

### Only Fraction of Climate Funds Reaching Indigenous Communities: Report

At COP28, a global alliance representing Indigenous Peoples released a report highlighting flaws in global funding, revealing that only a small fraction of the allocated funds actually reach the communities conserving some of the world's most biodiverse forests.

[Source](#)

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### Little Achieved for Indigenous Groups at COP, Delegates Say

At COP28, over 300 Indigenous delegates were in attendance, but many were reportedly left disheartened by the event's outcomes. The final agreement notably lacked inclusion of Indigenous rights and excluded an Indigenous representative from the board of the newly established loss and damage fund.

[Source](#)

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### Indigenous Women Have a Message for Leaders: Look at What We're Doing. And Listen

At COP28, Indigenous women emphasized the importance of frontline communities sharing their best practices at the climate talks, while also advocating for a more inclusive summit that fully integrates them into the global dialogue. They stressed the necessity of having women from Indigenous communities at the negotiation table, highlighting that these women hold valuable solutions and are actively implementing them on the ground.

[Source](#)

## NEWS

### Philippines: IPs Protest Proposed Mineral Reservation in Maguindanao del Sur

The Lambangian and Teduray indigenous communities in Maguindanao del Sur, Philippines, staged protests against the proposed establishment of a 3,566-hectare mineral reservation within their ancestral domain claim. This reservation, currently in the process of approval by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, includes Mt. Kulayan and Mt. Dakeluan, which are sacred sites for the indigenous peoples.

[Source](#)





## Chakma Community Calls for Sanctions over Killing of Indigenous Leaders in Bangladesh

A prominent India-based organization representing the Chakma community has called upon the United Nations and the United States to impose sanctions on four Bangladesh Army officers allegedly linked to the extrajudicial killing of four indigenous community leaders in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). In addition to the deaths of the four leaders, concerns have also been raised regarding the disappearance of three others following their abduction.

[Source](#)

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## West Papua Tribe at Risk of Losing Homeland After Court Ruling

The Awyu tribe, consisting of approximately 20,000 members whose livelihoods depend on the land, recently lost a legal battle against PT Indo Asiana Lestari (PT IAL), a palm oil firm operating in West Papua. The court upheld the firm's concession permit, paving the way for potential clearing of over 39,000 hectares of Indigenous forest land.

[Source](#)

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## Protesters Opposing Iron Mining Arrested in Maharashtra

At least 21 people, including prominent Adivasi leaders, who had been taking part in a protest against mining in Surajgarh hills of India's Maharashtra, were reportedly arrested by the state police. Local residents have been protesting for over eight months in opposition to six proposed iron mines, which they feel will harm their sacred lands, ecosystem and livelihoods.

[Source](#)

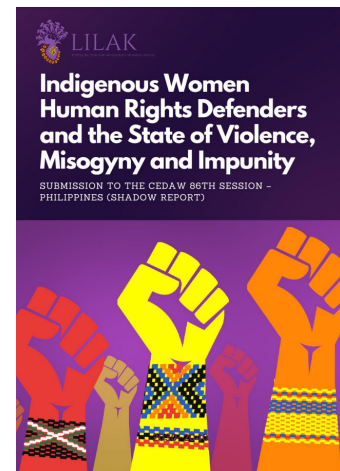


# UPDATES & STORIES FROM WAMA MEMBERS

## Indigenous WHRDs and the State of Violence, Misogyny and Impunity

LILAK, a collective of women human rights activists and feminists from the Philippines, submitted a shadow report to the 86th session of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), highlighting the different forms of attacks and discrimination against indigenous women human rights defenders as they assert and defend their rights to land, food, against gender-based violence and for meaningful participation in political processes.

[Full Report](#)



## The NTFP-EP Declaration for Peoples and Forests

Responding to worsening global crises and the uptick in diverse solutions being provided to the international community by governments, civil society, and the private sectors, NTFP-EP has released the Declaration for Peoples and Forests as a show of solidarity and affirmation within the network and with their partner Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities across South and Southeast Asia.

[Full Statement](#)

## WAMA at the Global Thematic Social Forum

WAMA recently engaged in impactful discussions and advocacy efforts at the Global Thematic Social Forum on Mining and the Extractive Economy (TSF-Mining). This forum provided a platform for diverse



(Pic Credit: TSF-Mining 2023)



Indigenous and Local communities, groups, and civil society to unite and amplify the voices of those affected by extractivism on a global scale.

Recognizing the critical importance of community autonomy, TSF-Mining 2023 centered its discussions around the themes of the “Right to Say No” and the “Nexus of Climate Justice, Just Transition, and Extractives.” The forum aimed to bolster the campaign for communities to assert their right to determine their own development path and reject the forceful imposition of extractive projects.

In line with our commitment to gender equality and the protection of women’s rights, WAMA advocated for the adoption of a gender policy during the forum. We urged participants to pledge their commitment to upholding women’s human rights and preventing any form of sexual harassment in the workplace.

[TSF-Mining 2023 Declaration](#)

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## Need for Reform in Conservation Policies

The Nepal National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) visited Chitwan national park upon a complaint filed by the Indigenous Women’s Legal Awareness Group (INWOLAG) on a wildlife attack death of a young indigenous man who was collecting Nigrow (a vegetable) on the borders of the buffer zone. Compensation was denied to the family on the grounds that the body was found inside the national park. The tragic death led to the wife of the deceased committing suicide, leaving behind two minor children at the hands of ageing grandparents.

Nepal’s [guidelines for relief from wildlife damages](#) are complicated procedures for the local indigenous people to get their grievances redressed. Therefore, the indigenous communities are demanding for amendment of the guidelines and the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act itself. All across the Asia region, WAMA members have been sharing similar cases of conflicts and tragedies in protected areas and call for a review of the conservation policies being pursued by states and financed by international financial institutions and northern governments in the name of addressing the climate crisis.

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*Rhinos at Chitwan National Park*  
(Pic Credit: Ma\_Frank from Pixabay)

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*Women regenerating their forest in San Vicente (Source: facebook.com/macatumbalencbfma)*

## Gender-Just Climate Solutions: A Women-Led Journey in Palawan

In San Vicente of the Philippine province of Palawan, the [Macatumbalen Community Based Forest and Coastal Management Association](#) (CBFMA #29) has been quietly but effectively spearheading climate solutions that are not only gender-just but also holistic and sustainable.

At the recent [COP28 side event on Gender-Just Climate Policy and Finance](#), the women-led organization shared their inspiring story. Since 2002, they have taken on the responsibility of replanting and managing 1,850 hectares of local forests under the Community-Based Forest Management Program introduced by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Their collaborative conservation efforts, working closely with the community, government agencies, and other organizations, have not only protected the ecosystem but also promoted sustainable forestry, agriculture, and fisheries practices.

The community's forest faces threats from climate change and illegal activities like logging, impacting the agroforestry and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) on which the local livelihoods depend. Consequently, women's earnings are affected, forcing them into debt.

In response to these challenges, the women took the initiative to conduct tree planting, expand their forest areas, and promote sustainable livelihoods. Moreover, they have not hesitated to take direct action against illegal loggers, seizing over 30 chainsaws till date and assisting in the prosecution of violators. Their proactive approach not only strengthens women's involvement in forest protection but also creates actionable solutions to the climate-related difficulties they face.

Looking ahead, the group is actively advocating for a better CBFM bill to ensure consistent government support for forest restoration in partnership with communities. By sharing their experiences, they emphasized the need for accessible financing and decision-making processes for community-based organizations, recognizing their vital role in addressing climate change.



## Relief for Sangihe Residents as Mining Permit is Revoked

In a significant victory for the residents of Sangihe Island, Indonesia, in their battle against large-scale industrial gold mining on their small island, Indonesia's Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources complied with the [Supreme Court ruling](#) in September 2023 and [revoked the operating permit](#) of Tambang Mas Sangihe (TMS), the subsidiary of Canadian company Baru Gold.

This triumph follows the relentless efforts of the coalition group [Save Sangihe Island \(SSI\)](#), composed of civil society organizations and island residents, who have been at the forefront of the fight to protect the residents' living space and the island's safety from the destructive impact of mining activities.

Sangihe Island, spanning 736 sq km, is categorized under [Indonesian law](#) as a small island and is protected from mineral exploitation under regulations concerning the management of coastal and small islands.

The Islanders have pursued their cause through legal avenues, peaceful protests, and impactful awareness [campaigns](#). Their resistance stems from the understanding that Sangihe, located within the ring of fire and bordered by the Philippines, is particularly susceptible to natural disasters such as tsunamis and earthquakes if its natural resources and living space are compromised by mining activities.

The residents of Sangihe Island rely on the island's natural resources for their livelihood, including agricultural activities on the land and fishing resources along the coastal areas. The preservation of these resources is crucial to their way of life and the overall sustainability of the island.



*Degraded land on the island (Source: SSI)*







*A woman plucking eggplants from her kitchen garden*

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## **Adivasi Women Champion Sustainable Solutions for Community Well-Being**

In the periphery of the Panna Tiger Reserve in central India, Adivasi women are leading the charge in restoring their community's well-being through innovative use of local resources. Despite facing challenges such as limited forest access, scarce livelihood opportunities, inadequate nutrition, economic distress, and occupational health issues due to mining, these women are devising creative solutions for sustenance.

Optimizing the resources at their disposal, they have established flourishing kitchen gardens by revitalizing their homesteads and repurposing abandoned house sites. Village wells have been equipped with solar pumps to support the gardens and meet their daily needs. The fresh harvest not only caters to their own requirements but the surplus produce is also shared with neighbouring villages at affordable prices. Moreover, these nutritious greens are included in food kits for Silicosis and TB patients, providing them with essential supplementary nutrition.

Along with the modern medicines, the vegetables grown by the women and traditional home remedies prepared using local forest resources are collectively aiding patients in managing their ill-health and hunger. In recent months, as many as 12 TB patients in these villages have successfully completed their medication course and are on the path to recovery. The women deeply value their natural resources and are effectively leveraging them to safeguard the well-being of their community. These efforts underscore the women's pivotal role in implementing sustainable solutions to drive positive change in their distressed communities.

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