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Gender Equality and Economic Security for Peace



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The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) spelt out by the international community and adopted by world leaders in 2015 are noble ones and attempt to cover a much wider and deeper range of issues that affect and will continue to affect humanity well into the future.

There has certainly been much discussion on the goals and the role of women in achieving them. This is a conversation that has been taking place globally and at all levels of governance. There is even a dedicated goal – goal 5: Gender Equality – to address the issues of gender in sustainable development. However, we may not have learnt enough from our experiences with the SDGs' predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially when we start looking at gender equality.

For one, funding gaps for the SDGs remain rather wide in some parts of the world as it was in the MDGs. For example, according to a recent report this month, in the *Asharq Al-Awsat*, a premier pan-Arab daily newspaper, Islamic countries suffer nearly a trillion-dollar gap in funding for the SDGs. According to the article, the gap pre-

vents these countries from addressing infrastructural shortfalls in working towards the SDGs but it would not be a far stretch to assume that the gap also hinders the operationalising of programmes for women and gender equality.

The issue of insufficient funding is a similar one faced when trying to achieve the MDGs. For gender equality in particular, this was further compounded by limited vision as to what was needed and the lack of political will. Although trying to achieve the MDGs did result in more girls receiving an education and more women being able to start small businesses and standing in local elections, there is still quite a way to go to achieve any form of parity. As a matter of fact, UN Women predicts that it will take about 50 years to achieve political parity and around 80 years before women can compete on equal terms with men in economic participation. It is hoped that the SDGs will be able to address this by widening the scope of the goals and their respective targets. This was certainly done as we have moved from eight MDGs to 17 rather specific SDGs. But the legacy of ineffectual action seems to haunt goal 5, that of

equality for women and girls, funding being one of them. Without strong political will and the financial resources to back it up, we may be paddling upstream again, this time without oars and with larger numbers and greater complications thrown in, such as climate change, civil conflicts and mass movements of people.

Closer to home, in Southeast Asia, we seem to be making some headway in gender issues, especially when connections are being made between gender equality and peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG goal 16). With the launch of the Women for Peace Registry (AWPR) in December 2018 and the plan for a three-part training – the first being in mediation and reconciliation with a focus on the sustained involvement of women held last month – by the ASEAN Institute of Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR), there seems to be some very important connections being made, which are vital for the realisation of SDGs in ASEAN member states. The peaked interest in the region on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, stemming from

UN Security Council Resolution 1325, is also a very welcome addition to discussions on gender equality and peace.

However, we must guard against the critique of not “putting our money where our mouth is.” There needs to be greater support for widening knowledge on gender issues in the region and this needs to be backed by sufficient and sustained funding. But funding should not only be targeted at research programmes. We should also look into funding projects that help women achieve forms of financial independence. Discussions around the AWPR, AIPR and WPS do not give enough focus to the economic insecurities of women. Women as peace builders, the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, the success in female radicalisation or even de-radicalisation for that matter, all in some way depend on forms of economic security and financial freedom for women. Therefore, we must try and make connections explicit between SDG goal 5 and goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. Encouraging entrepreneurs, creating

jobs specifically for women, and abolishing forced labour, sexual exploitation and human trafficking among other exploitative activities are key to integrating women fully and productively into the economic systems of member states, thus promoting decent work for all.

March 8 was International Women’s Day. One way of appreciating this day is to come to an understanding that the realisation of the SDGs is dependent on effective and equal partnership of women. There needs to be a concerted effort to understand and appreciate that there is very little moving forward if we do not make these all-important connections.

Suggested Readings

- Baba Aye, Jasper Goss, Kate Lappin, Michael Whaites, Susana Barria & Veronica Montufar (2018). “Decent work for community health workers in South Asia: A path to gender equality and sustainable development”. *Research paper at regional ‘Women and the Future of Work in the Asia-Pacific’ Conference, Bangkok, Thailand. 31 January – 1 February 2018*. Available online: https://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_616210/lang--en/index.htm
- Suneeta Dhar (2018). Gender and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 25(1), 47-78.
- ILO (2019). “Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work”. Available online: https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/world-of-work-magazine/articles/WCMS_105183/lang--en/index.htm
- Gerardo Zamora, Theadora Swift Koller, Rebekah Thomas, Mary Manandhar, Eva Lustigova, Adama Diop & Veronica Magar (2018) “Tools and approaches to operationalize the commitment to equity, gender and human rights: towards *leaving no one behind* in the Sustainable Development Goals”. *Global Health Action*, 11:sup1, 75-81, DOI: 10.1080/16549716.2018.1463657

CLIMATE SECURITY

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Resilience and adaptation strategies can address the impacts of climate change,

*Doug Irving,
RAND*

26 February 2019

Blueprint for city marine parks

*University of Plymouth,
Science News*

4 March 2019

The world's biggest ship-breaking town is under pressure to clean up

The Economist,

7 March 2019

Degrees tackle climate change crisis and green issues

Jolene Otremba,

South China Morning Post

8 March 2019

Johor Environmental Dept: Chemical fumes in Pasir Gudang came from marine oil waste

Ben Tan,

Malay Mail

8 March 2019

From solar sisters to waste warriors, 5 examples of women taking climate action

*Isabelle Gerretsen,
CNN*

8 March 2019

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Climate security: Making it #doable

Dan Smith et al.,

*The Hague: The Clingendael
Institute*

2019

Action plan on climate change adaptation and resilience: Managing risks for a more resilient future

World Bank,

*Washington, DC: World
Bank*

2019

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Korea Global Adaptation Week

8–12 April 2019

Songdo, Republic of Korea

Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2019

9–11 April 2019

Beirut, Lebanon



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ENERGY SECURITY

NEWS AND COMMENTARIES

Nuclear power always ready for extreme weather

*James Conca,
Forbes*

5 March 2019

Thailand's renewable energy transitions: A pathway to realize Thailand 4.0

*Chen-Sheng Hong,
The Diplomat*

9 March 2019

As Japan's leader, Junichiro Koizumi backed nuclear power. Now he's a major foe.

Simon Denyer,

The Washington Post

10 March 2019

Ramping up the fight for renewable energy

Mindy Tan,

The Business Times

12 March 2019

China's nuclear reactor building spree

Asia Times Staff,

Asia Times

13 March 2019

US and India commit to building six nuclear power plants

Reuters,

The Business Times

14 March 2019



Courtesy of Wikimedia account of Gretchen Mahan and used under a creative commons license.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Negotiating governance on non-traditional security in Southeast Asia and beyond

Mely Caballero-Anthony, New York: Columbia University Press 2018

Resource sharing and joint development in the South China Sea: Exploring avenues of cooperation

Julius Cesar Trajano, NTS Insight No. IN19-01, Singapore: RSIS' NTS Centre 2019

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nuclear Energy Assembly

3-5 June 2019
Washington D.C., US

International Conference on the Management of Spent Fuel from Nuclear Power Reactors 2019

24-28 June 2019
Vienna, Austria

FOOD SECURITY



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Potential disruption of flood dynamics in the Lower Mekong River Basin due to upstream flow regulation

Pokhre Y. et al., Scientific Reports, Vol. 8, No. 17767 2018

A framework for priority setting in climate smart agriculture research

Philip K. Thornton et al., Agricultural Systems, Vol. 167. 2018

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Asia eyes a \$65bn ag-tech transformation

The Wall Street Journal and ANZ International Bank, The Australian 7 March 2019

Xi emphasizes priority of farmland

Sun Tian China News Services (ECNS) 9 March 2019

Commentary: Is Singapore's decades-long shift away from agriculture about to take a U-turn?

Paul Teng, Channel News Asia 10 March 2019

Abu Dhabi approves series of agtech incentives

Asharq al Aswat 12 March 2019

Science and politics: Can research into legislative decision-making help to address food security?

Pearly Neo, Food Navigator-Asia 12 March 2019

Modi's drive to protect India's sacred cows divides voters

Vrishti Beniwal and Pratik Parija, Bloomberg News 13 March 2019

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Global Food Security Symposium 2019

20-21 March 2019
Washington, DC

3rd Agriculture and Climate Change Conference

24-26 March 2019
Budapest, Hungary



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HEALTH SECURITY



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Implementation of national action plans on non-communicable diseases, Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam
Titiporn Tuangratananon et al., Bulletin of the World Health Organisation, Vol. 97, No. 3 2019

Development of a sweetened beverage tax, Philippines
Frances Claire Onagan, Beverly Lorraine Ho and Karl Kendrick Chua, Bulletin of the World Health Organisation, Vol. 97, No. 3 2019

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

UN warns of 'complacency as measles cases soar worldwide
AFP, Channel News Asia 2 March 2019

World's second man cleared of AIDS virus invigorates quest for cure
Kate Kelland and Julie Steenhuysen, Reuters 6 March 2019

How to make mental health a national priority
Anthea Ong, TodayOnline 8 March 2019

More than 2000 migrants quarantined in US detention centers due to disease outbreaks
Reuters, Channel News Asia 10 March 2019

The largest healthcare company in the US is sounding the alarm on a new kind of emergency room that charges 20 times more than a regular doctor visit
Lydia Ramsey, Business Insider Singapore 9 March 2019

The 'disease' on track to become a bigger killer than cancer
Muiris Houston, The Irish Times 11 March 2019

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Global Congress on Infectious Diseases and Contagious Diseases
17-18 July 2019
London, UK

25th International Conference on Vaccine Design, Production and Safety
22-23 July 2019
Rome, Italy



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HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Humanitarian crises where media is missing in action
Lisa Cornish, DevEx 21 February 2019

Japan wants to boost the use of electric vehicles as a power source during natural disasters
Echo Huang, Quartz 21 February 2019



Courtesy of Flickr account of US Army and used under a creative commons license.

Innovation in Philippine disaster management: Keeping up with the neighbours

Robert Glasser and Paul Barnes,
Australian Strategic Policy Institute (APSI)
1 March 2019

The networkers: Emergency humanitarian internet

Nicole Douglas-Morris,
Positive.News
4 March 2019

ASEAN: Early warning system training ensures long-term sustainability, expands regional and national capacity

PDC
11 March 2019

The dedicated 'flood watchers' of central Viet Nam

Vietnam News Agency,
14 February 2019

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

NGOs & risk: Managing uncertainty in local-international partnerships

Abby Stoddard, Monica Czwaro, and Lindsay Hamsik,
InterAction and Humanitarian Outcomes
2019

Urban profiling for better responses to humanitarian crises

Global Alliance for Urban Crises
2019

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

2019 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

13-17 May 2019
Geneva, Switzerland

2019 Asia Pacific Humanitarian Leadership Conference

22-24 May 2019
Melbourne, Victoria

MIGRATION



Courtesy of Flickr account of ILO Asia Pacific and used under a creative commons license.

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UN chief launches global push against hate speech

AFP,
Channel News Asia
25 February 2019

Singapore reaps literary dividend from migrant culture

Peter Guest,
Nikkei Asian Review
27 February 2019

Towards a post-liberal research agenda in Eurasia

Phillip Lottholz,
OpenDemocracy
27 February 2019

General assembly president stresses 'benefits of migration outweigh challenges', at high-level meeting on international migration, development

United Nations General Assembly,
Reliefweb
28 February 2019

Migration from India soars as businesses plan for life beyond Brexit

Francis Churchill,
People Management
11 March 2019

Speakers: Good governance of labour migration is key

Afroze Jahan Chaity,
Dhaka Tribune
13 March 2019

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The role of inter-state consultation mechanisms on migration in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

UN International Organization for Migration (IOM),
Geneva: IOM
2019

A framework for assisted voluntary return and reintegration

UN International Organization for Migration (IOM),
Geneva: IOM
2018

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call for Papers: IOM Migration Research Series on the links between migration and technology

31 March 2019

Intergovernmental Consultation on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC)

18-19 May 2019
Ghent, Belgium