

POST CONFERENCE DEVELOPMENTS

After the conference, the National Secretariat continued with the efforts to carry forward the campaign, and to take stock of the future course of action. The Core Group met at Action India and came out with the following:

1. National PWDVA Campaign Steering Committee (NPCSC) - This body will have representatives from organizations involved in the issue from each State. This national body is being set up to support and take forward the campaign for the effective implementation and enforcement of the PWDVA with its Secretariat PWDVA presently housed at Action India, New Delhi.

The NPCSC will be responsible for developing, reviewing and coordinating campaign strategies and national-level advocacy and policy level actions, national-level lobbying and resource mobilization for the campaign. The NPCSC will also coordinate the overall planning and management of the forthcoming National Conferences on PWDVA. It is proposed that this body will meet at least three times a year (and if possible more frequently). Since this is an apex body, representatives should ideally be decision-makers in their own organizations. As a principle, meetings of the NPCSC will be self-funded, with members paying for their own travel and stay.

2. Campaign Secretariat- This unit will be responsible for information-sharing, managing the e-discussion group and convening meetings of the NPCSC. The Secretariat will act as the bridge between the NPCSC and the State-level networks, and will also be the nodal point for lobbying with the GOI and central ministries and be responsible for documentation and maintenance of archival records of the Campaign. It was unanimously agreed that Action India should continue to host the Campaign Secretariat for this year until the next National Conference. A detailed TOR for the Secretariat could be drawn up at the first meeting of the NPCSC, which could be convened in the next two to three months and a mid-term review of the functioning of the Secretariat can be carried out by the NPCSC or any other body.

3. For the next Annual and Third National Women's Conference, a Conference Planning Committee (CPC) will be set up at least 10-12 months ahead of the Conference. The planning process could also begin with a regional meeting much before this. The CPC then takes the following responsibilities in addition to those decided at the meetings of the NPCSC.

- The responsibility for organizing different sessions could be shared out, with different organizations taking charge of each session – planning / identifying speakers etc
- Sub-groups could be formed to look after different aspects such as media, session management, reporting and documentation.
- Some practical suggestions for better management of the process, such as preparation of briefs for speakers and chairpersons, formats for reporting and ensuring effective translations, were also discussed.

4. State-level Core Groups - These are composed of representatives of local organizations and are platforms for joint action at the local level, sharing of resources and State-level advocacy and lobbying. The State Core Group is also the body that could nominate representatives to the NPCSC. Such Core Groups have already been formed in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. At Delhi, the Conference Core Group, possibly with the addition of some other organizations is likely to become the Delhi State Core Group.

Members and state partners are urged upon to initiate the process of constituting State Core Groups at the earliest and start tracking the implementation of the PWDVA in each state. We cannot let the pressure go down at any cost. Let's build on the campaign. We have to focus on state and regional networking through these core groups.

State level actions / Civil Society's follow up:

The conference has marked a step ahead in the national campaign on domestic violence and all concerned stakeholders have become more serious in making the law successful. Based on the responses received by the Secretariat these are some of the state / regional activities going on to ensure effective implementation. Some of the positive *ongoing activities* are:

- DIR Index model adopted by Andhra Pradesh police being used by other states as a model
- Four fresh cases under PWDVA has been filed in Tamil Nadu
- In Delhi, almost 350 cases have been filed so far under the PWDVA
- Nineteen NGOs from small towns in South India had a meeting in Tamil Nadu to discuss the ways to use the PWDVA in their areas.
- PATH and UPVAN- a network of NGOs organized meeting in UP with the Secretary WCD for immediate appointment of protection officers and registration of service providers.
- Training session on domestic violence organized at NIPPCCED for NGO workers from 26 districts of UP.
- AALI, SAHYOG, HUMSAFAR and other NGOs in UP held a demonstration on the evening of 8th March and distributed pamphlets publicizing the PWDVA
- Representatives of the NGOs Suraksha and PATH have had several meetings with the Secretary of WCD, UP to discuss implementation issues.
- People's Watch organized a meeting with WCD minister and law minister of Orissa and handed to them the memorandum regarding the implementation of the Act
- MSKPP from Chattisgarh carried out a signature campaign on 8th March 2007 demanding immediate and effective appointment of protection officers, registration of service providers and dissemination of information on PWDVA.
- Meetings with several government functionaries including the Finance minister has been held in Goa.

Media Coverage

Our media expert consultants, Anjali Deshpande and Sujatha Madhok worked relentlessly to come up with press releases at the end of each day. These releases were sent out to as many press and media contacts as possible. We also had some media friends participating at the Conference itself.

The Conference reporting found place in the Hindu on 23rd February 2007 (also annexed at the end) and the news item can be read at: <http://www.thehindu.com/2007/02/23/stories/2007022315540400.htm>.

The Women Features Services also came up with a featured article titled “Hurdles Plague Domestic Violence Law” by Nitin Jugran Bahuguna and the brief of this is as follows: “Four months after the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 has come into effect, women leaders feel there is a long way to go before the law is effectively implemented. The government does not have the people to handle the cases that come up under the Act; state governments are dragging their feet; there are budget crunches. In addition, there aren’t enough judges (and even fewer who are gender-sensitive) to handle the cases. It seems like it will be a while until this law provides the protection it was designed for. Even now, politically there is no conviction in this Act and without sustained pressure from women’s groups on the government it can be sabotaged.” The full article can be read after accessing it from WFS office vides reference number WFS Ref: INDG219.



Finally, The PWDVA represents a watershed for women’s rights. It is a single window clearance law with multiple options available to women. PWDVA guarantees substantive justice to women with in international framework of human rights (CEDAW). It is therefore important that it is not wasted in administrative apathy. The civil society, NGOs, women rights groups and concerned citizens wish to partner in rendering all possible help to the implementing agencies in making the PWDVA work. But we cannot replace the government / state and political and administrative commitment of both central and state government is required. The campaign to implement the new law is determined to ensure the success of the law to meet its intended objective of eliminating domestic violence in India.