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**Dr Meera Velayudhan**  
President

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General Secretary

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The Indian Association for Women's Studies (IAWS) deeply mourns the loss of Prof Ilina Sen who has been part of the IAWS and women's studies movement since its inception late 1970s and early 1980s. Ilina's Ph.D thesis in late 1970s from Jawaharlal Nehru University, on the 'Declining Sex Ratio in India' was based on her field experiences among Adivasis in Hoshangabad in Chattisgarh. Ilina presented her findings and field experiences at the IAWS National Conferences in Mumbai in 1981 and Trivandrum in 1984, bringing into the emerging women's studies, perspectives and collective wisdom from the most marginalized communities- the Adivasis, their constitutional rights to land and forest resources. Ilina's book "A space within the struggle: women's participation in peoples' movements" reflected her life-long emphasis on rights of women in all spheres of life, in people's organizations and trade unions.

During 1980s and 1990s, Ilinadi (as she was affectionately addressed by the young activists) was a unifying force among various mass movements in Madhya Pradesh that culminated in formation of united front Mahila Manch that addressed issues of women industrial workers, farmers, forest dwellers and democratic rights of the marginalized people. Ilinadi had a great understanding of cultural issues and played pivotal role in initiating Cultural Front of Chattisgarh Mines Workers Association. She was an accomplished singer of songs of the people's movement.

As a known feminist activist in South Asia, Ilinadi was part varied civil society conversations and progressive movements in South and South East Asia, always stressing on the need to move beyond middle class activist spaces and stand by the oppressed, women in particular.

Accompanying IAWS through its journey in women's studies, Ilina was elected as the President of IAWS (2011-14). It was a time of great personal stress for her as her husband, Dr Binayak Sen was imprisoned and in poor health. Ilina was at that time head of the Women's Studies Centre at Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Vishwavidyalaya at Wardha (Maharashtra) and was the convenor of IAWS 13<sup>th</sup> National Conference. In February, 2014, Ilina presided over IAWS 14<sup>th</sup> National Conference in Guwahati. Ilina's Presidential speech at Guwahati remains in our memories as she ended her speech with the song: Bread and Roses, energizing all participants at the conference with its theme "Equality, Pluralism and the State: Perspectives from the women's movement". Ilina had since then, despite her ill health, continued her association with IAWS and is the Chair, Archives Committee of IAWS and other recent activities. Ilina valiantly fought against all adversities with dignity, grace and courage of conviction. We will miss Ilina.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Ilina's family, Dr. Binayak Sen, Pranhita, Aparajita and to her mother.

Dr Meera Velayudhan  
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