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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Regional Implementation of the  
Beijing Platform for Action and Its Regional and Global Outcomes

16-18 November 2009

Bangkok

**Outcome Document of the Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to  
Review Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action at Fifteen  
Years, and Its Regional and Global Outcomes**

**BANGKOK DECLARATION FOR BEIJING +15**

**1. We, the Representatives of ESCAP Member and Associate Member States, met in Bangkok from 16-18 November 2009 for the High Level Intergovernmental Meeting to review implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action organized as part of the Asia Pacific regional preparatory process, and adopted the following declaration at the meeting:**

2. Reaffirming the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the outcome of the twenty-third session of the General Assembly, and deeply convinced that the Beijing Declaration is an important contribution to the advancement of women worldwide in the achievement of gender equality which must be translated into effective actions by all States, the United Nations system and other relevant organizations;

3. Affirming that gender equality and the promotion and protection of the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all are essential to advance development, peace and security;

4. Acknowledging the call for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, as set forth in the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

5. Also recalling Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000, 1820 (2008) of 19 June 2008, 1888 (2009) of 30 September 2009, and 1889 (2009) of 5 October 2009 on women, peace and security and other relevant UN resolutions;

6. Also recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant human rights instruments;

7. Noting the participation of civil society organizations in the preparations for the Asia Pacific Review of Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action;

8. Commending the Executive Secretary of ESCAP for re-establishing the Regional Coordination Mechanism's Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women which has contributed to enhanced coordination and coherence among regional UN partners in the advancement of women and gender equality as a means to promote sustainable and inclusive development in the region;

9. Welcoming the proposed changes in the United Nations gender architecture to support progress on gender equality and women's empowerment at the global level, and noting the need for the new global entity to cooperate closely with ESCAP at the regional level, including through the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism;

*Expressing concern that:*

10. While the region has established itself as an economic powerhouse and experienced rapid economic growth, inequalities have grown in many countries and women have disproportionate representation among the poor, and this has been exacerbated during the recent financial crisis;

11. While women make strong economic contributions, they also comprise the majority of temporary, low paid, and low-skilled workers in the region, often working without any form of social protection and increasing their vulnerability to discrimination;

12. Women continue to bear major responsibility for unpaid work, particularly caregiving work and this contributes to weaker labour market attachment for women, weaker access to social security benefits and less time for education/training, leisure and self-care and political activities;

13. While gender parity has been achieved by some countries in girls and women's education, there is still substantial need for progress in large parts of the region;

14. Improvements in girls and women's education have not systematically translated into greater economic opportunities for many women in the region, and women on average are considerably paid less than men and underemployed;

15. Factors such as culturally ingrained son preference, sex-selective abortion, female infanticide, the disproportionate impact of malnutrition on girls, early marriage, child prostitution and the commercial sexual exploitation of children continue to undermine the rights of girls and limit their potential;

16. While there has been some welcomed progress in increasing women's representation in politics including through quotas or reserved seats for women in a number of countries, there continue to be low levels of women's representation in politics, and few countries in the region have reached the 30% target representation level established by ECOSOC;

17. Some parts of the region have unacceptably high rates of maternal mortality and there has been a lack of progress in the region on women's reproductive health and rights;

18. There has been an alarming rise in new HIV infections among women from spouses and intimate partners in the region, and that the regional coverage of anti-retroviral drugs (ART) and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT) treatment for both men and women remain below the global average;

19. Despite strong progress of some countries in the region to combat trafficking in persons, particularly women and girls, trafficking continues to be prevalent in the region;

20. Not all countries in the region are parties to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);

21. Discriminatory practices, violations of women's and girl's rights and impunity – especially with regard to violence – persist in countries of the region, and enactment and implementation of domestic laws to address discrimination and violence against women should remain a priority;

22. While information and communication technologies (ICTs) have brought considerable benefits to women in the region, women still lack equal access and these technologies have also aided the proliferation of pornography and sexualized, disparaging and violent imagery of women on the internet, and are creating new forms of exploitation of women, including its use in facilitating and organizing the trafficking of women and children;

23. While women are largely responsible for natural resource management in the household, they have been excluded from developing, planning and implementing environmental policies when women are in fact, together with children and the elderly, among the most vulnerable to the consequences of climate change;

24. While women living in countries in conflict or post-conflict situations have special needs and play an important role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, they are still underrepresented in decision-making in conflict and post-conflict situations;

**25. We, the Representatives of ESCAP Member and Associate Member States reaffirm our commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty third special session of the General Assembly.**

**26. In making this reaffirmation, we commit to the following concerted actions:**

27. To intensify efforts toward the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty third session of the General Assembly and to overcome obstacles encountered in their implementation;

28. To promote active mainstreaming of a gender perspective, inter alia, in the design, implementation and evaluation of regional, national and local policies and programmes, including the development of gender analysis tools for the effective monitoring and assessment of gender gains and gaps;

29. To strengthen the role of national machineries and other institutional mechanisms that work toward the advancement of women and gender equality, including through definite commitment of financial and other appropriate assistance, and ensuring adequate and appropriate staff and resources;

30. To take effective action toward the creation of an enabling environment at the national level by ensuring the participation of women on an equal basis with men at all levels of decision-making necessary to ensure the full participation of women in all spheres of life;
31. To undertake full and effective action for the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, recognizing that gender equality is a goal in its own right and central to all other goals;
32. To promote joint responsibility of men and boys with women and girls in the promotion of gender equality, including in areas such as domestic and caring work and responsibilities, and addressing stereotypical attitudes and behavior;
33. To implement economic policies that are designed and monitored with the full and equal participation of women within the overall framework of achieving sustainable development and ensure poverty eradication programmes, especially for women in particular during periods of economic hardship;
34. To strengthen or establish accountability mechanisms that promote gender responsiveness in national policy-making, planning and public expenditure management through financial allocations and public spending which effectively advance women's economic, social, political and cultural rights;
35. To intensify support for statistical capacity building efforts on the generation of gender statistics and to provide timely, reliable and disaggregated data by sex, ethnicity, age and location and the development of methodologies for the collection and processing of these gender statistics; And to ensure that gender statistics inform policy and programme decisions and effectively monitor and assess gender gains and gaps;
36. To contribute to collaborative approaches and strategies aimed at protecting and promoting the rights and welfare of women workers, in particular women in the informal sector, rural women, and migrant workers;
37. To address the persistent discrimination and serious human rights violations against female migrants;
38. To strengthen the provision of and ensure equal access to adequate, affordable and accessible public and social services, including education and training at all levels, as well as to all types of permanent and sustainable social protection/social security systems for women throughout their life cycle, and supporting national efforts in this regard;
39. To enhance women's entrepreneurial potential by providing them with access to and control over resources, including knowledge and skills training, trade opportunities and technologies;
40. To review and as appropriate, revise national policies, programmes and legislation to ensure high-quality, affordable and accessible health care and services for all women, taking into account the diverse needs of women, and to undertake key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, paying particular attention to achieving the specific benchmarks to reduce maternal mortality, to increase the proportion of births assisted by skilled attendants, to provide the widest achievable range of safe and effective family planning and contraceptive methods and to reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS;

41. To intensify efforts to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls, provide protection to the survivors, investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence against women and girls, and engage men and boys, as well as community and faith-based organizations, in eliminating violence against women;
42. To elaborate and ensure that capacities and resources are available to implement multi-sectoral national strategies to eliminate violence against women, including measures to combat all forms of trafficking in women and girls;
43. To address and develop measures to combat ICT-related violence and exploitation of women;
44. To include a gender perspective and harness the active participation of women in the development of ICTs;
45. To ensure the protection of women and girls, in particular against sexual violence, during and after armed conflicts, in accordance with the obligation of States under international humanitarian law and international human rights law;
46. To ensure the equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution;
47. To mainstream a gender perspective in environmental, disaster management and climate change adaptation programmes;
48. To ensure that women's needs and knowledge of natural systems be used in the development, planning and implementation of environmental policies, including adaptation strategies;
49. To strengthen agricultural policies and mechanisms to incorporate a gender perspective, and in cooperation with civil society, support farmers, particularly rural women, with education and training programmes, as well as to strengthen information dissemination to them that would enable their access to services and resources for improving productivity;
50. To consider ratifying or acceding to, as a particular matter of priority, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, limit the extent of any reservations, and withdraw reservations that are contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention or otherwise incompatible with the relevant treaty;
51. To promote, protect, and respect all human rights and fundamental freedoms of women, including through the full implementation of obligations under all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
52. To continue efforts to repeal laws and eradicate policies and practices that discriminate against women and girls, and to adopt laws and promote practices that protect their rights and promote gender equality;

53. To increase partnerships with civil society and the private sector for the promotion of gender equality, and to support the role and contribution of civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations and women's organizations, in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session;

54. To review regularly further implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and in 2015, to bring together all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, to assess progress and challenges, specify targets and consider new initiatives as appropriate twenty years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action;

55. To strengthen regional and subregional dialogue and cooperation among Members and Associate Members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific as well as other relevant stakeholders on policy options and issues crucial to the region and for conveying the regional voice of Asia Pacific in global processes;

**56. Request the Executive Secretary of ESCAP making effective use of the existing resources and mobilizing additional voluntary resources as necessary to:**

57. Strengthen ESCAP's role in supporting Members and Associate Members in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and the recommendations of the Asia-Pacific High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action at Fifteen Years;

58. Mainstream gender dimensions into all subprogrammes under the ESCAP programme of work;

59. Provide technical assistance to Members and Associate Members upon request to build national capacity to mainstream a gender perspective and a rights-based approach in all programmes, including through mechanisms and processes such as gender budgeting, gender auditing, sex-disaggregated data and monitoring and performance indicators;

60. Support Members and Associate Members in ratification/acceding to and/or implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

61. Mobilize the Asia Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism to further develop mechanisms and plans to promote action to combat violence against women and trafficking in women and children, including a coordinated regional response and follow-up activities on the Secretary-General Campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women;

62. Strengthen ESCAP's coordination role as the Chair of the Regional Coordination Mechanism in serving to achieve further synergies on the advancement of women and gender equality among UN entities in the region;

63. Submit this outcome document to the 54<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women and for the consideration of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the ESCAP Commission.