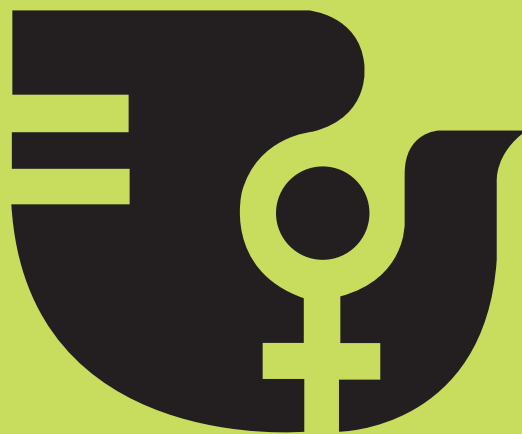


**Outcome Document of
the Asia-Pacific High-level
Intergovernmental Meeting to
Review Regional Implementation of
the Beijing Platform for Action
and Its Regional and
Global Outcomes**



**BANGKOK
DECLARATION ON
BEIJING+15**

BANGKOK DECLARATION ON BEIJING+15



Introduction

The Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) is an agenda for women's empowerment. Building on the strategies and priority areas identified at previous United Nations conferences on women, it covers twelve critical areas of concern. Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action has been reviewed every five years.

The Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and Its Regional and Global Outcomes was held in Bangkok from 16 to 18 November 2009 to review implementation of the Platform for Action fifteen years after its adoption. The theme of the Meeting was "Accountability and Implementation: Making Change Happen through the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action." It was organized by ESCAP in partnership with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

The Bangkok Declaration on Beijing +15, adopted by the Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting, reaffirms the commitment of countries in the region to implement the Platform for Action¹.

While progress has been made in a number of areas, key areas of concern highlighted in the Declaration included: the impact of the economic crisis on women; the low level

¹ The following countries attended the Meeting: Afghanistan; Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; China; France; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Kiribati; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Palau; Philippines; Samoa; Singapore; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Tuvalu; United States of America; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam.

of representation of women in politics; the need to close wage and employment opportunity gaps between men and women; high ratios of maternal mortality; violence against women; human trafficking and laws that discriminate against women.

The Declaration also called upon the secretariat of ESCAP to continue its support to member States for implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and to continue to play a coordinating role as well as to provide members, upon request, with technical assistance to strengthen their capacity to mainstream a gender perspective and a rights-based approach in all programmes, through such mechanisms and processes as gender budgeting, gender auditing, sex-disaggregated data and monitoring and performance indicators.

**BANGKOK
DECLARATION
ON BEIJING+15**



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We, the Representatives of the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, meeting in Bangkok from 16 to 18 November 2009 for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and Its Regional and Global Outcomes, organized as part of the Asia-Pacific regional preparatory process, adopt the following declaration:

Reaffirming the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action², adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly³, 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,

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,

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 Declaration⁴,

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

² Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

³ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Special Session, Supplement No.1 (A/S - 23/13).

⁴ See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

on women, peace and security and other relevant United Nations resolutions,

Also recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁵ the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,⁶ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,⁷ the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination,⁸ the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,⁹ the Convention on the Rights of the Child,¹⁰ and other relevant human rights instruments,

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

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 United Nations partners in the advancement of women and gender equality as a means to promote sustainable and inclusive development in the region;

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, through, among other things, the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism;

⁵ General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

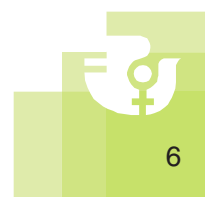
⁶ See General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

⁷ See General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

⁸ See General Assembly resolution 2106 (XX) of 21 December 1965.

⁹ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

¹⁰ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1577, No. 27531.



Expressing concern that:

- (a) 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;
- (b) 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, which increases their vulnerability to discrimination;
- (c) Women continue to bear the major responsibility for unpaid work, particularly care giving 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;
- (d) While gender parity has been achieved by some countries in girls and women's education, there is still a substantial need for progress in large parts of the region;
- (e) Improvements in girls and women's education have not been systematically translated into greater economic opportunities for many women in the region, and women on average are paid considerably less than men and underemployed;
- (f) 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;

- (g) While there has been some welcomed progress in increasing women's representation in politics, through, among other things, 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 per cent target representation level established by the Economic and Social Council;
- (h) 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;
- (i) 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 and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV treatment for both men and women remain below the global average;
- (j) Despite strong progress by some countries in the region in combating trafficking in persons, particularly women and girls, trafficking continues to be prevalent in the region;
- (k) Not all countries in the region are parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- (l) 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;
- (m) 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;

- (n) 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;
 - (o) 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;
1. We, the Representatives of the members and associate members of ESCAP, 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.
 2. In making this reaffirmation, we commit to the following concerted actions:
 - (a) To intensify efforts towards 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;
 - (b) To promote active mainstreaming of a gender perspective, among other things, 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;

- (c) To strengthen the role of national machineries and other institutional mechanisms that work towards the advancement of women and gender equality, through, among other things, definite commitment of financial and other appropriate assistance, and ensuring adequate and appropriate staff and resources;
- (d) To take effective action towards 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;
- (e) 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 is central to all other goals;
- (f) 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 care-giving work and responsibilities, and addressing stereotypical attitudes and behaviour;
- (g) 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;
- (h) To strengthen or establish accountability mechanisms that promote gender responsiveness in national policymaking, planning and public expenditure management through financial allocations and public spending which effectively advance women's economic, social, political and cultural rights;

- (i) 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;
- (j) 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;
- (k) To address the persistent discrimination and serious human rights violations against female migrants;
- (l) 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;
- (m) 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;
- (n) 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 Development¹¹, paying particular attention to achiev-

¹¹ Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

ing 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;

- (o) 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;
- (p) To elaborate and ensure that capacities and resources are available to implement multisectoral national strategies to eliminate violence against women, including measures to combat all forms of trafficking in women and girls;
- (q) To address and develop measures to combat ICT-related violence and exploitation of women;
- (r) To include a gender perspective and harness the active participation of women in the development of ICTs;
- (s) 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;
- (t) 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;
- (u) To mainstream a gender perspective in environmental, disaster management and climate change adaptation programmes;



- (v) To ensure that women's needs and knowledge of natural systems are used in the development, planning and implementation of environmental policies, including adaptation strategies;
- (w) 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 the dissemination of information to them that would enable them to access services and resources for improving productivity;
- (x) 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 Protocol¹², 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;
- (y) To promote, protect and respect all human rights and fundamental freedoms of women, through, among other things, the full implementation of obligations under all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- (z) 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;
- (aa) 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

¹² United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 2131, No. 20378.

and women's organizations, in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly;

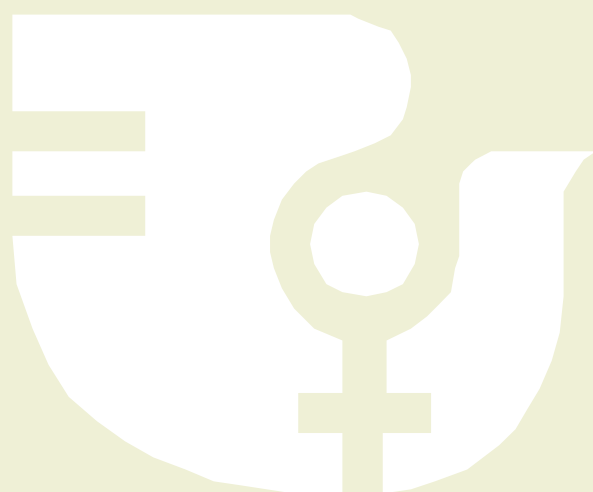
- (bb) To review regularly the further implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and, in 2015, to bring together all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, to assess progress and challenges, specify targets and consider new initiatives as appropriate twenty years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action;
 - (cc) To strengthen regional and subregional dialogue and cooperation among members and associate members of the Commission as well as other relevant stakeholders on policy options and issues crucial to the region and for conveying the regional voice of Asia and the Pacific in global processes;
3. Request the Executive Secretary of ESCAP making effective use of the existing resources and mobilizing additional voluntary resources as necessary to:
- (a) Strengthen the role of ESCAP 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 and Its Regional and Global Outcomes;
 - (b) Mainstream gender dimensions into all subprogrammes under the ESCAP programme of work;
 - (c) Provide members and associate members, upon request, with technical assistance to build national capacity to mainstream a gender perspective and a rights-based approach in all programmes, through, among other things, mechanisms and processes, such



as gender budgeting, gender auditing, sex-disaggregated data and monitoring and performance indicators;

- (d) Support members and associate members in ratification/acceding to and/or implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- (e) 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's Campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women;
- (f) Strengthen the coordination role of ESCAP as the Chair of the Regional Coordination Mechanism in serving to achieve further synergies on the advancement of women and gender equality among United Nations entities in the region;
- (g) Submit the present outcome document to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-fourth session and to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for consideration at its sixty-sixth session.

*Adopted on 18 November 2009
Bangkok*



Copies of this publication may be obtained from:

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The Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and Its Regional and Global Outcomes was held in Bangkok from 16 to 18 November 2009 to review implementation of the Platform for Action fifteen years after its adoption. It was organized by ESCAP in partnership with UNIFEM. The Meeting adopted the Bangkok Declaration on Beijing +15, which reaffirms the commitment of governments in the region to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and to take concerted action to achieve equality for women across the twelve critical areas of concern identified in the Platform for Action. The Declaration also sets out how countries can realign their policies to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and calls upon ESCAP to strengthen its role in promoting gender equality in the Asian and Pacific region.