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Item 3 (g) of the provisional agenda*

**Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary
structure of the Commission, including the work of
the regional institutions: social development**

Report of the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review was convened by ESCAP, in cooperation with UN-Women, in Bangkok from 17 to 20 November 2014. The Conference was comprised of a senior officials segment, which was held on 17 and 18 November 2014, and a ministerial segment, which was held on 19 and 20 November 2014.

More than 700 representatives of governments, civil society and the United Nations system were present at the Conference, including those from 47 members and associate members of the Commission. This high attendance reflected the priority accorded by the members and associate members of the Commission to issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Convened in pursuance of ECOSOC resolution 2013/18 on regional preparations for the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and the 20-year review of progress in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Conference had the following objectives:

(a) to assess progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific since its adoption at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995;

(b) to review forward-looking policies to address challenges in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in Asia and the Pacific, and means of accelerating implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the post-2015 era;

(c) to consider and adopt the Asian and Pacific regional input for the 2015 global review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The Conference adopted, by consensus, the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

ESCAP members and associate members identified — through the Ministerial Declaration — priority actions for advancing achievement of gender equality in the Asia-Pacific region, including through (a) strengthening institutions;

* E/ESCAP/71/L.1/Rev.1.

(b) increasing financing; (c) enhancing accountability; (d) forging stronger partnerships; and (e) strengthening regional cooperation. They also urged the global community to include a stand-alone goal on gender equality and mainstream gender across all goals in the development agenda beyond 2015. ESCAP members and associate members further agreed to convene a regional intergovernmental conference in 2019 to review further progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Ministerial Declaration as adopted by the Conference.

In accordance with established practice, the report of the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review is submitted to the Commission for consideration and endorsement.

The Commission may wish to share experiences on national efforts to strengthen the above-mentioned five priority areas to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and provide guidance to the secretariat in identifying areas that could benefit from regional cooperation.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	3
II. Proceedings.....	18
A. Review of the progress and remaining challenges in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific	18
B. Consideration of the draft outcome document of the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review	19
C. Review of forward-looking policies to address challenges in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in Asia and the Pacific, and opportunities for accelerating implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the post-2015 era.....	19
D. Other matters	23
E. Adoption of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, including the Asia-Pacific regional input for the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women on the 20-year review of progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.....	24
F. Adoption of the report of the Conference.....	24
G. Closing of the Conference	24
III. Organization	24
A. Objectives	24
B. Attendance.....	24
C. Senior officials segment	27
D. Ministerial segment	28
E. Special events	29
Annex List of documents	31

I. Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

I. Preamble

1. *We, the Ministers and representatives of members and associate members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, assembled at the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review, held in Bangkok from 17 to 20 November 2014,*

2. *Reaffirming* the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,¹ adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, and the outcomes of subsequent reviews, in particular that the advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are matters of human rights and a condition for social justice and therefore should not be seen only as women's issues, and that gender equality, the full realization of women's and girls' human rights and the empowerment of women and girls are prerequisites for inclusive and sustainable socioeconomic development and just societies that accord personal, political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security to all peoples,

3. *Reaffirming also* the central importance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women² for realizing substantive equality between all women and men in Asia and the Pacific by ensuring the implementation of measures to address discrimination against women and girls in all its forms and the equal access and opportunities of women and men in private, political and public life, encompassing education, health, marriage and family relations, nationality, property rights, employment, legislation and economic and social life,

4. *Reaffirming further* the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,³ the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women,⁴ the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,⁵ and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, as well as other international instruments relating to human rights, which are deemed to be universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, and of the equal rights of men and women in their diversity and emphasizing the responsibilities of all States to protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction of any kind, such as sex, gender, race, colour, ethnicity, language, marital status, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, birth, disability, HIV and AIDS, as well as occupational, migrant, legal or other status,

5. *Recalling*, where appropriate, the international covenants and conventions promoting the equal rights of all women and men, particularly the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,⁶ the International Covenant on Civil and Political

¹ *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.

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378; and United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2131, No. 20378.

³ General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

⁴ General Assembly resolution 48/104.

⁵ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

⁶ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 660, No. 9464.

Rights,⁷ the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,⁸ the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,⁹ the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families¹⁰ and International Labour Organization Convention No. 189 concerning decent work for domestic workers,

6. *Recalling also* the Convention on the Rights of the Child,¹¹ and the arising obligation to respect and ensure the rights of girls without discrimination of any kind,

7. *Recalling further* the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples¹² and the requirement to take effective measures to ensure the continuing improvement of the economic and social conditions of indigenous women and girls, and full protection from all forms of discrimination and violence,

8. *Recalling* the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol,¹³ which devotes an article to the rights of women and girls with disabilities,

9. *Recalling also* the commitments of General Assembly resolutions 48/108, 49/161, 51/69, S-23/2, S-23/3, 55/71, 58/147, 59/167, 60/1, 62/134, 64/145, 66/128, 66/129, 66/130, 66/216, 66/288, 67/144, 67/148, 67/226, 68/137, 68/139, 68/146, 68/191 and 68/227 to realizing the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women,

10. *Recalling further* Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1612 (2005), 1820 (2008), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2117 (2013) and 2122 (2013), on women, peace and security, and the importance of ensuring the protection, rights and well-being of women and girls in all phases of conflict and in post-conflict settings, the equal participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution, and in reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts, the inclusion of female ex-combatants in disarmament and demobilization programmes, the prosecution of those who commit crimes against women and girls and the requirement for reparations commensurate with the crimes inflicted on women and girls,

11. *Recognizing* that climate change and related impact have a range of implications felt most acutely by segments of the population already vulnerable owing to geography, sex, gender, indigenous or minority status, or disability,

⁷ General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI).

⁸ See General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex; United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 999, No. 14668; and General Assembly resolution 63/117, annex.

⁹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1465, No. 24841.

¹⁰ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2220, No. 39481.

¹¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531; United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2173, No. 27531; and United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2171, No. 27531.

¹² General Assembly resolution 61/295, annex.

¹³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2515, No. 44910; and United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2518, No. 44910.

12. *Noting* the outcomes of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which urged States to tackle critical remaining challenges to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment through a transformative and comprehensive approach and called for gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights of women and girls to be reflected as a stand-alone goal and to be integrated in the targets and indicators of all goals of any new development framework,

13. *Acknowledging* regional commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, particularly the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific,¹⁴ the Bangkok Declaration for Beijing+15,¹⁵ the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific¹⁶ and Commission resolutions 157 (XXXI), 203 (XXXVI), 249 (XLII), 46/6, 51/7, 52/3, 53/2, 57/3, 61/10, 66/9, 67/9 and 69/13,

14. *Noting* the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the ASEAN Region,¹⁷ the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Elimination of Violence against Children in ASEAN,¹⁸ the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution,¹⁹ the SAARC Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia,²⁰ the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration,²¹ the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2012-2015),²² and the Revised Pacific Platform for Action on the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality 2005 to 2015,²³

15. *Taking note* of the diversity of women and recognizing that gender-based discrimination occurs in and of itself and that it is often linked to other forms of inequality related to such factors as age, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, health, disability, class, social origin or occupation, as well as migrant, legal or other status, and that the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination can compound experiences of injustice, social marginalization and oppression,

16. *Recalling* that women engaged in the defence of human rights must be protected and that Governments have a duty to guarantee the full enjoyment of all rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights by women working peacefully in a personal or organizational capacity for the promotion and protection of human rights,

¹⁴ E/CN.6/1995/5/Add.1.

¹⁵ E/ESCAP/66/14 and Corr.1 and 2.

¹⁶ Commission resolution 69/13, annex, appendix 1.

¹⁷ Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Jakarta, 30 June 2004.

¹⁸ Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Bandar Seri Begawan, 9 October 2013.

¹⁹ South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, Kathmandu, 5 January 2002.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Pacific Islands Forum, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 30 August 2012.

²² www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/Pacific%20Regional%20Action%20Plan%20on%20Women%20Peace%20and%20Security%20Final%20and%20Approved.pdf.

²³ Second Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Women, Nadi, Fiji, 20 August 2004.

17. *Noting* that non-governmental organizations, women's organizations and centres for women's studies, feminist groups and women academics have played a catalytic role in the promotion of the human rights of women through grass-roots activities, networking and advocacy and need encouragement, support and access to information from Governments in order to carry out these activities,
18. *Affirming* that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is fundamental to achieving human rights and for equitable, gender-responsive, inclusive and sustainable development for the benefit of all persons and societies,
19. *Recognizing* the diversity of women in all societies and that the most disadvantaged women are in need of specific measures to improve their status and access to productive resources,
20. *Reaffirming* the critical and equal role of women and men in the family, a basic unit of society, and the consequent importance of promoting the well-being of both families and societies; and, as such, acknowledging that the upbringing of children requires the shared responsibility of parents, women and men, and society as a whole and that maternity, motherhood and parenting must not be a basis for discrimination nor restrict the full participation of women in society,
21. *Recognizing* the contribution of families to sustainable development, including the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals for all women and girls, and that gender equality and women's empowerment improve the well-being of both families and societies, and, as such, stress the need for elaborating and implementing family policies aimed at achieving gender equality and women's empowerment and shared responsibilities between women and men in the family, and at enhancing the full participation of women in society, while being aware that in different cultural, political and social systems, various forms of the family exist, as contained in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,
22. *Recognizing also* that, since 1995, significant progress has been made in Asia and the Pacific towards the realization of equality between women and men, girls and boys, across the multiple sectors and domains of individual, social, political and economic life,
23. *Acknowledging* that, despite the existence of multiple international and regional instruments for the promotion of equality between women and men, and notwithstanding the advances that have been made towards equality, discrimination and prejudice against and oppression of women and girls persists,
24. *Acknowledging also* that the goals set and commitments made in the Beijing Platform for Action have not been fully achieved and implemented across all 12 critical areas of concern, namely poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, the economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights of women, the media, the environment and the girl child,
25. *Affirming* that full attainment of the goals, objectives and actions set out in the Beijing Platform for Action requires strengthening and reforming institutions, increasing financing, bolstering monitoring and evaluation, enhancing accountability, forging stronger partnerships and strengthening regional cooperation, also considering the differential situation of Asia-Pacific States, in particular the vulnerabilities faced by small island developing States and other countries at risk from climate change,

II. Renewing political commitment

26. *Reaffirm* our commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the recommendations arising from subsequent reviews and lessons learned, and thereby commit to address the remaining implementation gaps and to address new and emerging challenges to and opportunities for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Asia and the Pacific;

27. *Condemn* all forms of discrimination against diverse groups of women and girls and commit to strengthening action and investment in addressing the multiple and overlapping forms of gender inequality, disempowerment and discrimination;

28. *Commit* to creating an enabling environment to empower and substantively improve the situation and status of all women and girls by addressing the social determinants and root causes of gender inequality, violence and discrimination, including through measures that expand the rights and opportunities of women and girls and measures that remove barriers to their full participation in social, economic and political life in accordance with, among others, the obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as appropriate;

29. *Also commit* to initiating, developing, strengthening, monitoring, reforming, implementing and evaluating legislation, strategies, policies, programmes, rules and regulations, and budgets that support the empowerment of women and girls and the achievement of gender equality across Asia and the Pacific, encompassing all 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action, along with emerging issues and challenges;

III. Consolidating gains in the Asia-Pacific region

30. *Recognize*, in recommitting to the objectives and actions of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, that gains have been made in realizing gender equality and the empowerment of diverse groups of women and girls and that challenges remain in eliminating all forms of direct and indirect discrimination against women and girls, noting in particular the 12 critical areas of concern and challenges that have emerged since 1995;²⁴

Women and poverty

31. *Note with appreciation* overall reductions in the proportion of women and girls living in extreme poverty and improvements in food security for women and girls across Asia and the Pacific, related to, among other factors, the implementation of social protection measures, including employment, education and livelihood schemes that target women, and the introduction and enforcement of legislation that targets women and paves the way for equal rights, in accordance with national legislation, to inheritance for women and men and for girls and boys;

32. *Express concern*, however, at the persistent feminization of poverty, with an increase in the absolute number of individual women and girls living in hardship and surviving on \$1.25-\$2.00 per day and women and girls facing discrimination in and exclusion from ownership, equal and shared control,

²⁴ The basis of section III is findings from preliminary analysis of information provided by Governments through the Asia-Pacific regional survey of progress in implementation of the Platform for Action and through their national review reports.

and management, of land and other assets and access to economic resources, particularly in rural, remote, geographically isolated, hard-to-reach and depressed areas and among diverse and vulnerable groups of women and girls, including migrant women, indigenous women, women and girls with disabilities, widowed women and women heads of households, single women, divorced women, internally displaced women and girls and older women;

Education and training of women

33. *Acknowledge* significant progress in relation to primary school enrolment rates, which have reached gender parity in virtually all countries in Asia and the Pacific. We also acknowledge efforts across the region to increase the enrolment and retention of girls and women in secondary and tertiary education, and to increase rates of female literacy and participation in vocational training and career tracking;

34. *Express concern*, however, that, despite such gains, girls are more likely to be out of school than boys at the secondary level, females are less likely than males to continue their formal education and are more likely to be illiterate, and subject streaming on the basis of gender stereotypes persists, as does the reinforcement of discriminatory and prejudicial gender stereotypes in teaching curricula, among teachers and in textbooks, noting that the advancement of women and girls' education is not leading to improved economic outcomes;

Women and health

35. *Acknowledge* the substantial reductions in the maternal mortality ratio in Asia and the Pacific, which has declined by almost 62 per cent in the last two decades, and note increases in female life expectancy at birth, calorie intake and the provision of health services, including those pertaining to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights;

36. *Note with concern*, however, that the overall incidence of maternal mortality in the region remains high, including among adolescents; that there is limited access to skilled birth attendants, prenatal and postnatal care, family planning services and information, and emergency obstetric and newborn care; and that inadequate management of complications arising from unsafe abortion continue to contribute to a significant proportion of maternal deaths, and that significant differentials persist in maternal mortality ratios in countries in the region. We also note the need for greater progress in relation to the respect, promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights for all, including access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services, access to age-appropriate, comprehensive evidence-based education for human sexuality, and the removal of legal, structural, economic and social barriers, including considering the review and repeal of laws that punish women and girls who have undergone abortions. We further note the need to end child, early and forced marriage and unwanted pregnancies among women and girls in the region. We further note the need to halt the rise in new HIV infections among women and girls by addressing the sociocultural, economic and legal factors that contribute to vulnerability to infection, to strengthen awareness on HIV and to expand coverage of measures to prevent and treat HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, through scaling-up nationally driven, sustainable and comprehensive responses to achieve broad multisectoral coverage for prevention, treatment, care and support, with the full and active participation of people living with HIV, key populations and civil society, while ensuring confidentiality and informed consent. We also note the rise in non-communicable diseases among women and girls, and the need to ensure that universal health

services are accessible to all women and girls, regardless of their age, occupation, country of origin, socioeconomic, disability or other status;

Violence against women

37. *Applaud* the introduction of new and comprehensive legislation, policies, action plans and initiatives in many countries in the region to prevent violence against women and girls, to protect women and girls from multiple forms of violence, to provide a range of multisectoral services and support for survivors of violence and to prosecute perpetrators of violence;

38. *Express deep concern*, however, at the unacceptably high rates of all forms of violence against women and girls in the region, including sexual, gender-based, intimate-partner and ICT-related violence, among others; at the non-enforcement of laws, discriminatory legal provisions, delays and gender insensitivity in law enforcement; at the impunity experienced by some perpetrators of violence against women and girls; and at the targeting of specific groups of women, including single women, older women, indigenous women, vulnerable women, migrant women, widowed women, impoverished women, women and girls with disabilities, women living with HIV and AIDS, and sexually exploited women and girls; and at the particular forms of violence against women and girls, including female infanticide, honour crimes, child, early and forced marriage and labour, trafficking in women and girls, beating and killing of women accused of sorcery, dowry-related violence, female genital mutilation and other harmful practices;

Women and armed conflict

39. *Acknowledge* efforts across the region to address the differential impact of armed conflict on women and girls, compared with men and boys, including nuclear testing and unexploded ordnances, and to reinforce the important and positive role of women in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts, in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and in the development and implementation of subregional and national action plans on women, peace and security, including conflict resolution and peacebuilding awareness-raising, education programmes, the provision of services to women and girls affected by armed conflict and long-term holistic support to and rehabilitation of women who have experienced armed conflict;

40. *Also acknowledge* that rape and sexual violence during armed conflict and war is a serious human rights violation, which has negative and long-term physical and psychological consequences on women and their families, and we note that women remain underrepresented in leadership and decision-making positions in armed conflict, transition and post-conflict situations and stress the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security and the need to increase their role in decision-making, including in reconstruction and rebuilding efforts and stress the importance of the participation and involvement of women in peace and security and increasing the role of women in this area. We also note that the vast majority of countries in the Asia-Pacific region have not developed normative frameworks to ensure the protection of women and girls in times of armed conflict and in post-conflict settings, their participation in armed conflict resolution and prevention, and peacebuilding, the prosecution of perpetrators of human rights abuses against women and girls, including sexual violence, extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances, the provision of relief, reparations and recovery in long-term programmes, initiating gender-sensitive policies for female-headed households, including the reintegration of female ex-combatants, and the provision of restorative justice to combat impunity;

Women and the economy

41. *Note with appreciation* the development of programmes and initiatives to promote non-discrimination, and equal rights, opportunity and treatment of women and men in the world of work, including the introduction and strengthening of legislation addressing equal pay for work of equal or comparable value, maternity entitlements, equal access to and ownership of land, property and other assets, protection from harassment and support for vocational training and women's entrepreneurship, as well as the introduction of incentives to increase women's active participation in the labour force to promote sustained economic growth. We also recognize the efforts made across the region to strengthen the legal and policy frameworks that govern migration and seek to protect migrant women workers and members of their families and women workers in the informal economy. We also recognize the need to provide convenient access to loans and other services of private lending institutions;

42. *Express concern*, however, that the economic participation, especially formal and decent employment, of women remains disproportionately low in many parts of the region and has remained between 62 and 65 per cent of male employment since the early 1990s. Women continue to bear primary responsibility for unpaid work, particularly domestic and caregiving work, and comprise the majority of temporary, low-paid and low-skilled and informal workers in the region, often working without any form of social and legal protection. We note that there is an urgent need to value, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work by prioritizing universal social protection policies. We further note the lack of basic labour rights, including the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. We note the enduring gender pay gap, vertical and horizontal segregation and the barriers that women face in accessing, owning and controlling property and financial assets. We also note that migrant women, particularly those who are undocumented, remain vulnerable to exploitation and abuse and that there is an urgent need to establish and strengthen institutional frameworks and mechanisms designed to eliminate demand for trafficking and for effective protection and empowerment of migrant women workers in countries of origin, transit and destination. In promoting women's economic empowerment, we recognize the need to strengthen efforts to achieve equal employment opportunities, to support women entrepreneurs, to increase the representation of women in leadership positions in the private sector, to support work-life balance and to address restrictive gender stereotypes, to strengthen efforts to achieve equal employment opportunities that enable women to realize their full potential and to achieve their career and family aspirations, such that diverse groups of women are able to realize their rights and full potential;

Women in power and decision-making

43. *Welcome and encourage* progress in increasing the representation of women in public governance bodies through, among others, temporary special measures, such as gender targets that have resulted in greater numbers of women parliamentarians and senior public servants in Asia-Pacific countries, along with affirmative action measures in the public and private sectors that seek to redress institutional discrimination, including at the local level;

44. *Observe with concern*, however, that the regional proportion of female parliamentarians remains lower than the global average, and that gains in female representation in national parliaments have not led to substantial

increases in female representation among decision-makers in local and corporate governance;

Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

45. *Commend* the countries in the Asia-Pacific region for establishing stand-alone national machineries for the advancement of women and girls. We acknowledge and reinforce their central role in advancing the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, particularly when mobilized to support multisectoral, whole-of-government approaches to address the root causes of discrimination and gender inequality;

46. *Recognize*, however, the need to strengthen the leadership, mandates and status of national machineries for the advancement of women within our government structures, accompanied by increased human, financial and technical resources to support our commitment to achieving gender equality and ensure the realization of human rights of women and men, girls and boys, so that they may fully and freely exercise all of their human rights. We also recognize that the responsibility for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is shared by all government institutions and thus there is a need to generate political will, raise awareness and resources, develop capacity and establish institutional mechanisms, and evaluation strategies, where necessary, to mainstream gender equality in the work of all government ministries, departments and offices from the national to the local level;

Human rights of women

47. *Applaud* the almost universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by the countries in Asia and the Pacific in support of human rights for all women and girls, and note both national legislative measures to protect and promote equal rights for women and men and initiatives to increase the legal literacy of all women and girls;

48. *Are alarmed*, however, by the continued violation of the rights, including reproductive rights, of women and girls, and of defenders of the human rights of women and girls, in Asia and the Pacific, evident in the prevalence of violence against women and girls, discriminatory practices within judicial and law enforcement systems and persistent discrimination and gender stereotyping, which reinforce the subjugation of women and restricts their ability to fully and freely engage in all aspects of social, political and economic life. We reiterate the importance of considering universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol and the need to introduce and/or strengthen national legislation, in accordance with the state party obligations under the Convention, where appropriate. We also encourage consideration of the ratification and effective implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime²⁵ and its Protocols, particularly the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children²⁶ and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;²⁷

²⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2225, No. 39574.

²⁶ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2237, No. 39574.

²⁷ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2220, No. 39481.

Women and the media

49. *Note* that measures have been taken to foster equitable access to and use of information, communication channels, media and information and communications technology (ICT), including education and training programmes, and media programmes that address the needs, concerns and interests of women and girls, and promote balanced and non-stereotypical portrayals of them. Associated with those measures, we further note that more women and girls are being empowered through “connection”, which supports their right to freedom of expression and to challenge gender stereotypes, share opinions and ideas, build knowledge and access information. We also note the increasing media and digital literacy of women and girls, which is critical to their being full and active agents in social and public life;

50. *Express concern*, however, that women and girls continue to have less access than do men and boys to media and ICT, to hold fewer decision-making positions in the fields of media and ICT and to have less influence in the governance and development of media and ICT. Women continue to be subjected to harassment, stalking and violence online and to be in receipt of messages and images that reinforce oppressive and prejudicial gender stereotypes. We note that Internet and mobile phone service providers have an important responsibility in ensuring the safety and privacy of women and girls. We are also concerned that, despite advances made, the media, at times, promotes discriminatory, degrading stereotypical portrayals and portrayals of negative practices of women that are detrimental to the rights, interests and empowerment of women;

Women and the environment

51. *Note with grave concern* the significant gap between the aggregate effect of mitigation pledges by parties in terms of global emissions of greenhouse gases by 2020, and aggregate emission pathways consistent with having a likely chance of holding the increase in global average temperatures below 2°C or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels;

52. *Are encouraged*, nevertheless, by international, national and regional initiatives and commitments to address the disproportionate and slow onset of the impact of natural disasters and climate change on women and girls, to promote the mainstreaming of gender in policies on disaster risk reduction and sustainable development and to support the equal access and control of men and women to clean and renewable energy sources, safe drinking water and sanitation, and technologies in a region that is particularly vulnerable to the impact of climate change and disasters, resulting in increased displacement, cross-border migration, relocation and forced human mobility;

53. *Express concern*, however, that women continue to face disproportionate barriers to the equitable ownership, control of and access to natural resources and land. We are also concerned about the impact of the actions of extractive industries and multinational corporations on women's rights to land and natural resources. Moreover, the environmental knowledge and skills of women, including indigenous and rural women, are often disregarded, and women continue to be underrepresented in decision-making bodies that design, implement and evaluate environmental policies and programmes, including those related to climate change, disaster risk reduction and management. We reaffirm the need for more extensive mainstreaming of gender, including the equitable consideration of the needs and vulnerabilities of women and men, girls and boys, in relation to climate change and natural disasters. We encourage concrete global efforts to address

the impact on women and girls of climate change and disasters, including protecting them from abuse, exploitation and displacement, taking into consideration the fundamental rights of women and girls;

The girl child

54. *Commend* the countries in Asia and the Pacific for their universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and their participation in associated initiatives for developing and strengthening legal frameworks for the protection of the rights of girls and boys and for fostering the holistic development of each child. We also note progress in such areas as the reduction of the infant and under-5 child mortality rates, malnutrition and teenage pregnancies and progress in ending impunity for harmful practices against girls;

55. *Are deeply concerned*, however, about the continued violation of the rights of the girl child, child-sex ratio imbalance, the prevalence of child, early and forced marriage, and teenage pregnancies in some parts of the region and the greater value attached to boys than to girls, as evident in the preference for sons, female infanticide, higher rates of malnutrition among girls than boys, lower rates of school attendance of girls, and the trafficking and serious exploitation of the girl child, including for labour exploitation, child labour or sexual exploitation. We recognize the need to provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services to girls;

56. *Recognize* the urgent need to provide universal access to comprehensive youth-friendly health services, including youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, non-communicable diseases education, as well as age-appropriate comprehensive evidence-based education on human sexuality, which is essential for women to be able to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, HIV and sexually transmitted infections, and child, early and forced marriages. We recognize also the urgent need to remove legal, regulatory and social barriers to youth-friendly services;

IV. Moving forward: measures to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the era beyond 2015

57. *Commit*, in recognizing the gains that have been made towards achieving the goal of gender equality, along with persistent and newly emerging challenges, in reaffirming the necessity of achieving the strategic objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for the full achievement of human rights and equitable, inclusive and sustainable development for all persons, and in building upon and strengthening policies, legislation, strategies, programmes and actions that have effectively contributed to the advancement of gender equality, and taking into account national priorities and circumstances, to the following:

Strengthening institutions

(a) To strengthen our public institutions to remedy the structural and underlying causes of gender inequality, particularly to strengthen the capacity of parliaments to promote gender-responsive legislation that would support full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action and to strengthen the human and financial capacity of our national machineries for the advancement of women to work in cooperation with other State organs to fully and effectively implement the Platform for Action;

(b) To remove legal and policy barriers and take positive measures to change discriminatory social norms and attitudes concerning women's decision-making and autonomy in all aspects of their lives, including health, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, family life, finances, education and employment, and to ensure access of women and girls to justice and legal redress;

(c) To bolster the status and mandate of our national machineries for the promotion of gender equality, the protection of women's rights and the advancement of women, in accordance with national circumstances, which, if not established as separate ministries, can be located within a central policy-coordinating ministry or agency;

(d) To finance our national machineries for the advancement of women to fully and effectively realize their mandates, taking into account national circumstances;

(e) To develop the capacity of our national machineries for gender equality and the advancement of women such that there are adequate and appropriate staffing, and technical and financial resources;

(f) To institutionalize gender mainstreaming throughout all public institutions, including Governments and parliaments, by establishing accountability mechanisms and measures for mainstreaming gender, and integrating gender equality into the design, implementation and evaluation of policies, legislation, programmes, plans, public expenditure processes and other measures;

(g) To incorporate the diverse needs and circumstances of all women and girls into gender-responsive policies and programming, from the national to the local level, including the intersectionality of gender and disability;

(h) To pursue all measures for increasing the participation and leadership of women and adolescent girls in accordance with national legislation in decision-making positions, with the aim of achieving their full and equal participation with men at all levels of Government;

(i) To increase awareness of gender, gender-equality, women's human rights and women's empowerment issues among policymakers and public servants in all State institutions in order to strengthen political commitment and capacity to address, in a coordinated and convergent manner across all sectors, the root causes of gender inequality and the specific needs and interests of women and girls, inclusive of the elimination of all forms of discrimination;

(j) To stress the strengthening of other accountability mechanisms beyond the national women's machinery, such as human rights commissions and ombudsmen, which can enhance the effectiveness of the national women's machinery through coordination with other monitoring institutions;

(k) To strengthen coordination and achieve synergies across government ministries and agencies that are responsible for the implementation of the Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other relevant international instruments that address gender concerns;

Increasing financing

(l) To finance multisectoral measures for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, reflective of the renewed commitment to fully implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific, and towards this end ensure appropriate levels

of resources to the United Nations system, and in particular UN-Women, so as to enable them to support such implementation;

(m) To avoid duplication and optimize the scarce resources by coordination on programmes on gender equality and the empowerment of women with the programmes on the rights of women and girls with disabilities and the girl child;

(n) To explore possibilities to establish and strengthen mechanisms for multi-year and targeted financing of initiatives addressing the 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action;

(o) To enhance and diversify the sources of financing for the achievement of gender equality, women's human rights and the empowerment of women and girls, including through domestic resource mobilization, official development assistance, taxation of financial transactions, private sector investment and the engagement of philanthropic foundations;

(p) To encourage gender analysis of macroeconomic policies and trade agreements to make sure that they do not perpetuate gender inequalities, and do offer equal opportunities for women and men;

(q) To implement, oversee and evaluate effective gender-responsive planning and budgeting to promote efficient, effective and equitable public sector budgetary spending;

(r) To develop dedicated funding mechanisms and/or programmes to support the work and to enhance the capacities of organizations that support the leadership development and full participation of women in all levels of decision-making and across all sectors;

(s) To encourage international financial institutions to review and revise policies, procedures and staffing to ensure that investments and programmes benefit women and thus contribute to sustainable development, and encourage the Bretton Woods institutions, the United Nations, as well as its funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, to establish regular and substantive dialogue, including dialogue at the field level, for more efficient and effective coordination of their assistance in order to strengthen the effectiveness of their programmes for the benefit of women and their families;

(t) To encourage the private sector to further contribute to the achievement of gender equality and the advancement of women and girls, inclusive of the promotion of the participation of women in the private sector;

(u) To develop and strengthen mechanisms and tools for results-based tracking of financial allocations and expenditure for the achievement of gender equality, women's rights and the empowerment of women and girls, inclusive of gender audits, gender reviews and the publishing of information on public sector expenditure and public-private investments;

Enhancing accountability

(v) To create and strengthen accountability systems for full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action in national policymaking, planning and public expenditure, along with commitments pertaining to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the gender-related goals of the global development agenda beyond 2015;

(w) To enhance reporting and information sharing between government institutions and with parliament, civil society and public and private sectors in support of local and national coordination, transparency and accountability for gender-equality results;

(x) To enhance efforts towards releasing government budgets as public documents that are transparent and accessible to all citizens and support the engagement of civil society and women's organizations in tracking and monitoring government budgets and budgetary outcomes;

(y) To support the engagement of women, women's and young women's organizations and other civil society actors in national and local decision-making bodies and processes for promoting women's rights and achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

(z) To strengthen national statistical offices and systems to produce, analyse and disseminate reliable and comparable gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other relevant categories, in a timely manner, through increased financial and technical investment, and strengthen the capacity of policymakers to interpret and use available data for evidence-based policy, programming and planning decisions and to monitor progress in the implementation of the Platform for Action;

(aa) To integrate a gender perspective into the production and dissemination of official statistics, including with the support of multilateral and bilateral development agencies at the request of national Governments, guided by the core set of gender indicators recommended by the Statistical Commission;²⁸

(bb) To establish nationally appropriate, measurable targets and indicators, taking into consideration international and regional agreements on gender statistics, to review and assess the application of our renewed commitment to fully and effectively implement the Platform for Action;

(cc) To develop and strengthen participatory and inclusive monitoring, evaluation and reporting on progress and results in the implementation of the Platform for Action, encompassing policies, strategies, resource allocations and programmes for gender equality at the national and local levels;

(dd) To strengthen the communication of gender equality policies and programmes in formats and languages accessible for diverse groups of women and girls, with a wide range of levels of ability and literacy;

Forging stronger partnerships

(ee) To create and strengthen inclusive and mutually accountable partnerships for the full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action at the regional, national and local levels, engaging Governments, parliaments, the United Nations system, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia, educational and research institutions, the private sector, organizations of employers and workers, the media and other relevant actors;

(ff) To strengthen coordination and consultation mechanisms with civil society groups, including women's organizations, on key policy, programme and budget issues, and enhance the role and contribution of civil society in the design, implementation and evaluation of measures pertaining to the Platform for Action and gender-equality results;

(gg) To strengthen the engagement of the private sector, including through public-private partnerships, in the full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action;

²⁸ See E/CN.3/2013/10.

(hh) To encourage and support the United Nations in delivering as one, inclusive of regional coordination mechanisms, for the development and delivery of programmes, technical support, capacity-building and other measures for the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender-equality results and to strengthen UN-Women's role in leading, coordinating and promoting accountability of the United Nations system for gender equality and women's empowerment;

(ii) To support and scale up North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation as a strategic means of strengthening partnerships through which the sharing of knowledge and information, the development of capacity and the implementation of programmes and projects can enhance effective implementation of the Platform for Action;

(jj) To strengthen communication, coordination and cooperation among diverse government entities aimed at enhancing the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in development programmes and in gender equality policies and programmes;

Strengthening regional cooperation

58. *Request* the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, in cooperation, as appropriate, with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and other concerned United Nations entities:

(a) To accord priority, in the programme of work of the secretariat, to the full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action and the present Declaration;

(b) To strengthen regional and subregional dialogue and cooperation between members and associate members of the Commission to support multisectoral policies, strategies, programmes and best practices in coordinated and consultative implementation of the Platform for Action;

(c) To provide ESCAP members and associate members with support, upon request, in the implementation of the Platform for Action and the present Declaration at the regional and national levels;

(d) To facilitate regional cooperation, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation and the sharing of best practices among member States in the implementation of the Platform for Action and the recommendations arising from subsequent reviews, including the recommendations contained in the present Declaration;

(e) To ensure, through the Regional Coordination Mechanism, the integration of the outcomes of the Conference in the regional development agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Group;

(f) To strengthen coordination with regional civil society through, inter alia, the regional civil society engagement mechanism;

(g) To convene a regional intergovernmental conference in 2019 to review regional progress by ESCAP members and associate members in the further implementation of the Platform for Action and in the implementation of the present Declaration;

(h) To submit the outcome of the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review to the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, as the Asia-Pacific regional input;

(i) To submit the outcome of the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its seventy-first session for its consideration;

59. *Urge*, as the global community is crafting the new development agenda beyond 2015, all States and all other stakeholders to urgently tackle the critical remaining challenges to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through a transformative and comprehensive approach, and for gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls to be reflected as a stand-alone goal and to be integrated through the targets and indicators into the goals of any new development framework, based on the results of the negotiations of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

II. Proceedings

A. Review of the progress and remaining challenges in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific

1. The Conference had before it the document entitled "Review of the progress and remaining challenges in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific" (E/ESCAP/GEWE/1).

2. Statements were made by the representatives of the following ESCAP members: Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; India, Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Kazakhstan; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; and Russian Federation.

3. The Conference took note of the findings of the regional analytical review of progress, remaining challenges and priority areas for action in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The regional analytical review comprised an Asia-Pacific regional survey conducted by ESCAP and national review reports submitted by members and associate members to ESCAP and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). Some 40 ESCAP members and associate members completed the regional survey and 34 members and associate members submitted national review reports.

4. The Conference noted that the findings indicated significant progress made by the region in implementation of the Platform for Action, particularly in relation to strengthening gender equality in national Governments and governance, addressing violence against women and girls, and promoting the leadership and political participation of women.

5. The Conference also noted that challenges remained to the full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action. The regional-level challenges related to policy and legislative gaps; lack of commitment to the adoption of gender equality-related policies and legislation; inadequate communication, coordination and capacity impeding the mainstreaming of gender; insufficient technical and financial resources, especially for the national women's machineries; lack of understanding of, and appreciation for, gender equality among politicians, policymakers and public servants; and the broadening and strengthening of the application of gender-responsive budgeting.

6. The Conference affirmed its continuing commitment to achieving gender equality, to women's human rights and to the empowerment of

women, as well as to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Conference also noted progress by many countries in achieving the gender-related goals and targets of the Millennium Development Goals. In particular, many delegations highlighted achievements in relation to the: (a) education of women and girls, with particular reference to gender parity in primary school enrolment; (b) economic empowerment of women and related opportunities for women to combine domestic and employment-related responsibilities; (c) reduction of poverty levels; (d) enhancement of the political participation of women; (e) improvements in women and girls' health, as noted in reductions in maternal mortality rates and increased life expectancy; (f) increased awareness of and attention to the elimination of violence against women and girls; and (g) mainstreaming of gender across Government, as reflected in national policies, legislation, action plans and service provision.

7. Delegations also highlighted persistent challenges to the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment in Asia and the Pacific, notably the persistence of violence against women and girls; traditional gender roles and gender stereotypes; engagement in political life; emerging environmental issues, including climate change and natural disasters; access to health services, including reproductive health services; and extremism.

8. The Conference identified areas that required concerted action to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, including addressing violence against women and girls; enhancing sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics; promoting universal access to reproductive health and other health services; enhancing women's political participation and decision-making authority; and strengthening national institutions. The Conference also highlighted the importance of cooperation between Government and civil society, as well as Government and the private sector, and the need to consolidate the gains already achieved. The Conference underscored the critical importance of a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment in the development agenda beyond 2015.

9. A statement by the Asia-Pacific Civil Society Steering Committee on Beijing+20 focused on strengthening accountability in relation to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the Asia-Pacific region.

B. Consideration of the draft outcome document of the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review

10. The Conference had before it for its consideration a working paper containing the draft Asian and Pacific ministerial declaration on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. The senior officials endorsed the draft ministerial declaration and decided to forward the document to the ministerial segment of the Conference for consideration and adoption by the ministers.

C. Review of forward-looking policies to address challenges in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in Asia and the Pacific, and opportunities for accelerating implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the post-2015 era

11. The Conference had before it the document entitled "Review of the progress and remaining challenges in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific" (E/ESCAP/GEWE/1).

12. Statements were made by representatives of the following ESCAP members and associate members: Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Cook Islands; Fiji; France; French Polynesia; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kiribati; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru; Nepal; New Caledonia; Pakistan; Palau; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Tuvalu; Uzbekistan; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam.

13. Written statements from the following intergovernmental organizations, specialized agencies and United Nations bodies were shared with Conference delegates: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); International Organization for Migration (IOM); Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); and World Health Organization (WHO).

14. A statement was delivered by a representative of the Asia-Pacific Civil Society Steering Committee on Beijing+20. The statement emphasized the need for accelerated action on gender equality and women's empowerment, which required improved financing and accountability, including through the establishment of measurable targets and indicators. The statement also emphasized the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment to the development agenda beyond 2015, which was under discussion.

15. The Conference reviewed achievements in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, and noted remaining challenges and priority areas for action.

Renewed commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment

16. The delegations reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as a fundamental agenda for realizing gender equality and women's empowerment. The delegations further noted that women's rights and gender equality were important goals, as well as requirements for sustainable development.

Regional progress in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment

17. In reflecting on progress in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in Asia and the Pacific, the Conference identified three common areas in which gains had been made: (a) strengthening of gender equality in Government and governance; (b) addressing violence against women and girls; and (c) increasing the political participation, leadership and decision-making authority of women.

18. Concerning Government and governance, the Conference noted the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the reflection of gender equality in national constitutions, policies, legislation and action plans. The Conference further noted the application of gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting in the government sector, along with the strengthened status and mandates of national women's machineries.

19. The Conference highlighted violence against women and girls as a particular area where legislative gains had been realized. Delegations also noted the increased awareness of violence against women and girls; strengthened prosecution of perpetrators of violence against women and girls that was related to a zero-tolerance response; the application of measures to address particular forms of violence, including domestic violence, sexual harassment and forced and early marriage; and the provision of a range of legal, health and protective services.

20. The Conference noted quantitative increases in women's political participation and leadership, encompassing all levels of Government as well as the public and private sectors, and in the number of women standing for election and holding public office. Women's greater engagement in conflict resolution and peacebuilding was also noted. Gains in that area were, in part, attributed to the application of special temporary measures, such as reservation systems.

21. Many delegations reported on progress in relation to women and girls' health, education and training, and economic empowerment. Improvements were reported in relation to maternal health, mental health, nutrition and food security, and life expectancy, as well as in the provision of health services. Many delegations highlighted the achievement of gender parity in primary school enrolment. Some delegations also indicated achievement of parity at secondary and tertiary levels. Revision of curricula and textbooks, and the integration of gender equality in teacher training were also noted by many delegations.

22. Many delegations linked improvements in the education and training of women and girls to their economic empowerment and to reductions in poverty levels. Many delegations underscored increases in female labour force participation rates; strengthening of women's entrepreneurship; the application of work-life balance measures, including flexible work and parental leave arrangements, alongside provision of childcare and transportation services; greater access to credit and finances; and focused attention on the needs of vulnerable women workers, including women in the informal economy and domestic women workers.

23. Some delegations highlighted the integration of gender into climate change and environmental matters. Certain delegations also highlighted progress in relation to monitoring achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment, including through enhanced sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics.

Remaining challenges to realizing gender equality and women's empowerment

24. While acknowledging gains made, many delegations reported on persistent challenges to the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment in Asia and the Pacific.

25. Several delegations noted impediments to the mainstreaming of gender in the government sector related, in part, to limited awareness, understanding and appreciation of gender equality. Furthermore, there was a lack of technical and financial capacity, as well as sex-disaggregated data.

26. Several delegations also noted that women still constituted a minority of representatives in public office.

27. Serious concern was expressed over the high rates of violence against women and girls, which were exacerbated by insufficient measures to protect women and girls and to prosecute perpetrators of violence against them.

28. Some delegations noted obstacles to the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls, including in relation to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, access to contraception, adolescent fertility, provision of pre- and postnatal care, and nutrition.

29. Some delegations underscored the persistent challenge of retaining girls in school, which had negative implications for their employment prospects. Several delegations noted that, in relation to economic empowerment, women's labour force participation rates were lower than those of men; women tended to own and manage small enterprises; the gender pay gap persisted; women assumed primary responsibility for unpaid care work; and not all women and girls enjoyed an equal right to inheritance.

30. Other hindrances to gender equality and women's empowerment that were noted by some delegations pertained to discriminatory sociocultural norms, restrictive gender stereotypes and roles, and extremism.

31. Some delegations highlighted the specific vulnerabilities of women and girls with disabilities and of migrant women. Regarding women and girls with disabilities, those delegations indicated the need for providing equal access to education and health services, as well as opportunities for economic participation. The importance of extending social protection to migrant women workers, particularly domestic workers, was also emphasized.

Priority areas for action on gender equality and women's empowerment

32. With regard to building on gains made and addressing challenges, the Conference identified the strengthening of institutions and governance on gender equality and women's empowerment as a key area for accelerated action on gender equality and women's empowerment. In that respect, many delegations stressed the need for increasing awareness and capacity to advance gender equality among policymakers and civil servants, including in relation to gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, gender budgeting and monitoring and evaluation, alongside strengthening and harmonizing legislation on gender equality and women's empowerment and bolstering data collection and management systems.

33. The Conference identified the elimination of violence against women and girls as a priority area for action, with specific attention needed to end domestic violence, the abuse of girls in particular, trafficking in women and girls, child marriage and other harmful practices.

34. Many delegations noted areas for accelerated action that included improvements in women's political participation and leadership, and women's economic empowerment, as well as their education, training and health. With respect to women's economic empowerment, many delegations cited measures taken to increase women's labour force participation, including the adoption of work-life balance initiatives, provision of accessible and affordable childcare services and promotion of women's command of economic resources. Some delegations emphasized, in particular, the need to address maternal health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, non-communicable diseases and the promotion of universal access to health services.

35. Some delegations identified climate change and environmental challenges as an emerging priority area for action that required gender-responsive disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation measures. Some delegations emphasized action on the women, peace and security agenda, including through the development and implementation of national action plans, as a priority in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

Means of accelerating achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment

36. In order to accelerate achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment, many delegations underscored the centrality of a whole-of-Government approach, which required stronger political commitment and institutions, including national women's machineries, intragovernmental coordination and collaboration and technical capacity. Review and revision of legislation that mandated gender equality as a cross-cutting issue was also deemed essential to advancing the status of women and girls, alongside the application of gender-responsive budgeting.

37. Many delegations also emphasized the need for enhanced accountability, requiring monitoring mechanisms, sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics, and increased, adequate and predictable financing, for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

38. Furthermore, several delegations emphasized the importance of recognizing and responding to the diversity of women and girls, including women and girls with disabilities, single women, migrant women, women and girls living with HIV, conflict-affected women and girls, internally displaced women and girls, rural women and girls, young women, older women, indigenous women and girls, and women of varying sexual orientations and gender identities.

39. Many delegations identified government cooperation and partnerships with civil society, including women's organizations and research institutions, and with the private sector as having been key to accelerated action on gender equality and women's empowerment. Several delegations also highlighted South-South, subregional and regional collaboration as important means of realizing gender equality and women's empowerment. The role of regional intergovernmental organizations, development partners and members of the United Nations system was also stressed in this regard.

Centrality of gender equality to development agendas

40. Many delegations stressed the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment to existing and any future development agenda, and the importance of a stand-alone goal on gender equality and the mainstreaming of gender across the sustainable development goals that were currently under discussion by the international community.

D. Other matters

41. There were no other matters addressed by the Conference.

E. Adoption of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, including the Asia-Pacific regional input for the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women on the 20-year review of progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

42. The Conference had before it the document entitled "Draft Asian and Pacific ministerial declaration on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment" (E/ESCAP/GEWE/L.3).

43. The Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment was adopted by consensus on 20 November 2014.

F. Adoption of the report of the Conference

44. The report of the Conference was adopted by consensus on 20 November 2014.

G. Closing of the Conference

45. Closing statements were made by Mr. Enele Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu and Chair of the Conference, and the Executive Secretary of ESCAP.

III. Organization

A. Objectives

46. The objectives of the Conference were as follows: (a) to assess progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific since its adoption at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995; (b) to review forward-looking policies to address challenges in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in Asia and the Pacific, and means of accelerating implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the post-2015 era; and (c) to consider and adopt the Asian and Pacific regional input for the 2015 global review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

B. Attendance

47. The Conference was attended by the following ESCAP members: Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; France; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Kiribati; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Palau; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Tuvalu; United States of America; Uzbekistan; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam.

48. ESCAP associate members: Cook Islands; French Polynesia; Macao, China; and New Caledonia.

49. ESCAP permanent observers: Canada; Germany; South Africa; and Switzerland.

50. Other State: Sweden.

51. United Nations bodies: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; United Nations Capital Development Fund; United Nations Development Group Asia-Pacific; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Human Settlements Programme; United Nations Population Fund; and United Nations Project Office on Governance.

52. Specialized agencies and other organizations in the United Nations system: International Labour Organization; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Health Organization; World Bank Group; and International Telecommunication Union.

53. Intergovernmental organizations: ASEAN Secretariat; Asian Development Bank; Colombo Plan Secretariat; International Organization for Migration; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat; and Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

54. Non-governmental organizations: Aahung; Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development; Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women; Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development; Asia-Pacific Women's Watch; Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha; CARE International; Coalition Against Trafficking in Women – Asia Pacific; Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era; Feminist League; Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women; International Federation of Business and Professional Women; International Council on the Management of Population Programmes; International HIV/AIDS Alliance; International Planned Parenthood Federation, East and South East Asia and Oceania Region; International Planned Parenthood Federation, South Asia Region; International Rescue Committee; International Trade Union Confederation for Asia and Pacific; International Women's Health Coalition; International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific; Isis International; Shirkat Gah - Women's Resource Centre; Soroptimist International; Women for Women's Human Rights - New Ways; Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management; Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights; World Assembly of Youth; and World Young Women Christian Association.

55. Other entities: Abilis Foundation; ACBIT; Action for Health Initiatives; Advocates of Science and Technology for the People; Aksi! for Gender, Social and Ecological Justice; Alliance against Trafficking in Women and Children in Nepal; Alliance of Independent Journalists; Asia Justice and Rights; Asian Institute of Technology; Asian Migrants Coordinating Body; Asian Rural Women's Coalition; Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights; Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organizations; Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability; Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants; Asia Pacific Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS; Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers; Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network; Asia-Pacific Transgender Network; Asia-Pacific Women's Alliance for Peace and Security; Asia Pacific Women with Disabilities United; Asia Safe Abortion Partnership; Asmita Resource Centre for Women; ASEAN Women's Caucus; Association of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Indonesia; Athena Network; Aurat Foundation; Banteay Srei; Beyond Beijing Committee; British Council-Pakistan; Brunei Social Welfare Council; CamASEAN; Cambodian NGO Committee on CEDAW; Center for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population; Center for Education Promotion and

Empowerment of Women; Center for Environmental Concerns-Philippines; Center for Health, Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness; Center for Research on Environment Health and Population Activities; Center for Women's Resources; Centre for Refugee Research; Centre for Social Research; Centre for Women's Research; China Women's University; Chinese Lala Alliance; Coalition of Asia Pacific Regional Networks on HIV/AIDS (7 Sisters); Community Action Centre-Nepal; Comprehensive Health and Education Forum International; Cordaid; Cordillera Women's Education Action Research Center; Development Environment Community Association; Disabled Persons' Association of Bhutan; Diverse Voices and Action for Equality; Dristi Nepal; ECHOsi Foundation; ECPAT International; Employers' Federation of Ceylon; Empower Pak; Enterprise Uganda; Family Planning Association of India; Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka; Fiji Women's Rights Movement; Fokus Women; Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan; Foundation for the Elimination of Violence Against Women "Mitra Perempuan"; Foundation for Women; FRIDA the Young Feminist Fund; Gabriela Philippines; Gabriela Women's Party; Gandhian Unit for Integrated Development Education; Gender and Development for Cambodia; Global Network of Women's Shelters; Goldman Sachs (Asia); Gramin Mahila Srijansil Parivar Lamusangu Sindhupalchowk; Health Promotion and Prevention of Elder Abuse; Honiara Youth Council; Indian Drug Users Forum; Indigenous Women's Network of Thailand; Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association; Institute for Social Development Studies; Institute of Chin Affairs; Institute for Population, Family and Children Studies; Institut Perempuan; International Community of Women Living with HIV; International Domestic Workers Federation; International Institute for Human Rights, Environment and Development; International Network of People Who Use Drugs; International Women's Development Agency; International Women's Rights Project; Justice for Peace Foundation; Karen Network on Culture and Environment; Korean Women Peasant Association; Landesa Rural Development Institute; Legal Support for Children and Women; Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency; Lila Pilipina; Malaysian WARDU — PEKAS Malaysia; Manav Seva Sansthan; MAP Foundation; MARUAH; Milestone, Society for Special Persons; MONFEMNET National Network; Nalta Hospital and Community Health Foundation; Naripokkho; National Coalition Against Gender-based Violence; National Federation of the Disabled-Nepal; National Forum of Women with Disabilities; Nationwide Organization of Visually-Impaired Empowered Ladies; Nepal Disabled Women Association; NGO Committee on the Status of Women; NGO Gender Group; North East Network; Nowshera Especial People Welfare Organization; Pacific Disability Forum; Pacific Youth Council; Pakistan Rural Workers Social Welfare Organization; Pertubuhan Advokasi Masyarakat Terpinggir; Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific; Planned Parenthood Association of Thailand; Positive Women Network of Mizoram; Pourakhi; Rahnuma-Family Planning Association of Pakistan; Radanar Ayar Rural Development Association (Radanar Ayar); Raks Thai Foundation; Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development; Rural Women's Association "Alga"; Saathi; Saaya Association of Persons with Disabilities (Saaya Association); Sampada Grameen Mahila Sanstha; Samsara; SAPA INDONESIA; SERUNI; Shakti Milan Samaj; Sightsavers; SILAKA; Society for Development Action; Society for Health Education; South Asia Women's Watch; Space Allies; Special Talent Exchange Program; Suriya Women's Development Centre; Tewa; University of Health Sciences of Lao People's Democratic Republic (UHS-Laos); University of Hong Kong; Video Volunteers; Visthar; Voice for Change; VSO International; Women Engaged in Action on 1325 (We ACT 1325); Women for Women Forum Nepal; WomanHealth Philippines; Women's Aid Organisation; Women's Alliance of Communities in Transition-South Asia;

Women's League of Burma; Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau; Women's Rehabilitation Centre; Women's Studies Center, Chiang Mai University; Women's Voice Empowerment Movement; Youth LEAD.

56. In addition, the Conference was attended by representatives of the Asia-Pacific Regional Advisory Group on Women, Peace and Security.

C. Senior officials segment

1. Opening and duration

57. The senior officials segment of the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review was convened by ESCAP, in cooperation with UN-Women, in Bangkok, on 17 and 18 November 2014.

58. The Conference was inaugurated by Mr. Adul Saengsingkaeo, Minister of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand, who delivered a statement.

59. Statements were also made by: the Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP; the Secretary of the Conference and Director, ESCAP Social Development Division; and the Regional Director, UN-Women Asia and the Pacific Regional Office.

2. Election of officers

60. The Conference elected the following officers:

Chair: Ms. Rosario G. Manalo (Philippines)

Vice-Chair: Ms. Kate Wallace (Australia)

3. Agenda

61. The senior officials adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the senior officials segment:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Review of the progress and remaining challenges in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific.
3. Consideration of the draft outcome document of the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review.

4. Side events

62. The following side events were held:

- (a) A luncheon side event on women and disabilities was held on 17 November 2014. It was organized by ESCAP, in cooperation with the South Asian Disability Forum, the Asia-Pacific Development Center on

Disability, the British Council, the Comprehensive Health and Education Forum International and the Asia-Pacific Women with Disabilities United;

(b) A side event on women and the environment was held on 17 November 2014; it was jointly organized by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community;

(c) A side event on health and human rights of marginalized women and girls was held on 17 November 2014; it was organized by the Asia-Pacific United Nations Interagency Task Team on Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV;

(d) A side event on parliamentary accountability on Beijing+20 was held on 18 November 2014; it was organized by the Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development;

(e) A luncheon side event on women domestic workers was held on 18 November 2014; it was organized by the Regional Coordination Mechanism Thematic Working Group on International Migration, including Human Trafficking;

(f) A special session on ICT, eGovernment and women's empowerment was held on 18 November 2014; it was jointly organized by ESCAP and the United Nations Project Office on Governance;

(g) A side event on gender equality in education was held on 18 November 2014; it was organized by the United Nations Children's Fund;

(h) The Asia-Pacific launch of the Social Institutions and Gender Index by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on 18 November 2014.

D. Ministerial segment

1. Opening and duration

63. The ministerial segment of the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review was convened in Bangkok on 19 and 20 November 2014.

64. The Conference was opened by Mr. Yongyuth Yuthavong, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, who delivered the inaugural address.

65. Her Majesty Ashi Sangay Choden Wangchuck, Queen Mother of the Kingdom of Bhutan, delivered the keynote address on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, focusing particularly on ending violence against women.

66. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP delivered an opening statement.

67. The Executive Director of UN-Women sent a video message to the Conference.

2. Election of officers

68. The Conference elected the following officers:

Chair:	Mr. Enele Sopoaga (Tuvalu)
Vice-Chairs:	Ms. Meher Afroze (Bangladesh)
	Datin Adina Othman (Brunei Darussalam)
	Ms. Ing Kantha Phavi (Cambodia)
	Ms. Meng Xiaosi (China)

Mr. Nandi Glassie (Cook Islands)
 Ms. Maneka Gandhi (India)
 Mr. Heru Kasidi (Indonesia)
 Ms. Tangariki Reete (Kiribati)
 Mr. Erik Kuikerv (Kyrgyzstan)
 Ms. Hala Hameed (Maldives)
 Ms. Hilda Heine (Marshall Islands)
 Ms. Charmaine Scotty (Nauru)
 Ms. Neelam Khadka (Nepal)
 Ms. Baklai Temengil (Palau)
 Ms. Patricia Licuanan (Philippines)
 Mr. Tolofuaivalelei Lei'ataua (Samoa)
 Mr. Suwat Chanitthikul (Thailand)
 Ms. Idelta Maria Rodrigues (Timor-Leste)
 Mr. Alfred Rollen Carlot (Vanuatu)
 Ms. Gulnara Marufova (Uzbekistan)
 Mr. Doan Mau Diep (Viet Nam)

Rapporteur: Ms. Khawar Mumtaz (Pakistan)

3. Agenda

69. The ministers endorsed the agenda, as adopted by the senior officials (see para. 61 above), and adopted the following agenda for the ministerial segment:

4. Opening of the ministerial segment:
 - (a) Opening addresses;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
5. Review of forward-looking policies to address challenges in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in Asia and the Pacific, and opportunities for accelerating the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the post-2015 era.
6. Other matters.
7. Adoption of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, including the Asia-Pacific regional input for the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women on the 20-year review of progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.
8. Adoption of the report of the Conference.
9. Closing of the Conference.

E. Special events

70. The following special events were held:

- (a) A luncheon, which included a side event on women's economic empowerment, was hosted by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP on 19 November 2014;

(b) A side event on rural women, jointly organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and UN-Women, was held on 20 November 2014;

(c) A ministerial round table on accelerating implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific, organized by ESCAP, was held on 20 November 2014;

(d) A special session on eliminating violence against women and girls, organized by the Regional Coordination Mechanism Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, was held on 20 November 2014;

(e) A luncheon side event on women, peace and security, organized by the Regional Coordination Mechanism Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, was held on 20 November 2014.

Annex

List of documents

Symbol	Title	Agenda item
<i>General series</i>		
E/ESCAP/GEWE/1	Review of the progress and remaining challenges in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the Asia and the Pacific	2
<i>Limited series</i>		
E/ESCAP/GEWE/L.1	Provisional annotated agenda	1
E/ESCAP/GEWE/L.2	Draft report of the Conference	8
E/ESCAP/GEWE/L.3	Draft Asian and Pacific ministerial declaration on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment	7
<i>Information series</i>		
E/ESCAP/GEWE/INF/2	List of participants	