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

Bangkok, 17-20 November 2014

Agenda item 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**

Draft Asian and Pacific ministerial declaration on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment

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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,

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.

3. *Also reaffirming* 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. *Further reaffirming* 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 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. *Also recalling* 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. *Further recalling* the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples¹² and the requirement to take effective measures to ensure the

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.

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.

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. *Also recalling* 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. *Further recalling* 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,

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

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

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.

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,

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,

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.

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. *Also recognizing* 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. *Also acknowledging* 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. We, the Ministers and representatives of members and associate members of ESCAP, reaffirm our commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the 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. We 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. We 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. We 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. In recommitting to the objectives and actions of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, we recognize 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. We 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. We 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, 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. We 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.

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.

34. We 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 their economic outcomes.

Women and health

35. We 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. We note with concern, however, that the overall incidence of maternal mortality in the region remains high, including among adolescents; that 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. We 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. We 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 labour and marriage, 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. We 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. We acknowledge also 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 note also 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. We 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. We 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. We 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. We 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. We 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. We 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, 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. We 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. We are, however, alarmed 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

Women and the media

49. We 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,

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.

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. We 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. We 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. Nevertheless, we are encouraged 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. We 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. We 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. We are, however, deeply concerned 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. We 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. 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, we commit 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 increase the budgetary allocation, in both absolute and proportional terms, for 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. We 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. As the global community is crafting the new development agenda beyond 2015, we urge 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 standalone 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.
