



ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISM THEMATIC WORKING GROUP ON
GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN
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Concept Note

Asia-Pacific Regional Seminar in preparation for CSW 60

“Transformative financing for the achievement of the gender equality by 2030”

18 - 19 February 2016, Bangkok, Thailand

1. Background

On 25 September 2015, at the UN summit, governments united behind an ambitious agenda that features 17 new sustainable development goals (SDGs) and 169 targets that aim to end poverty, combat inequalities and promote prosperity while protecting the environment by 2030. The new sustainable development agenda builds on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), aims to complete what the MDGs did not achieve, and go much further, addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality and the universal need for development that works for *all* people. Governments further recognized that the achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) is a *pre-condition* for the achievement of the SDGs by 2030. A far reaching standalone goal on the achievement of GEWE (SDG 5) was agreed to and gender equality targets were included in multiple SDGs. The SDGs were developed based on unprecedented consultation with civil society and are seen to be the most extensively owned goals the world has agreed to since World War II.

In the Asian and Pacific Region, the persistence of gender inequality, compounded by other inequalities, was highlighted in the 20-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action conducted at the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review (17-20 November 2014, Bangkok), convened by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in cooperation with UN Women. As reflected in the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment adopted at the Conference, Governments were committed to the following:

- Strengthening institutions and in particular parliaments and national women’s machineries
- Increasing financing
- Enhancing accountability (including through data and statistics and CSO engagement)
- Forging stronger partnerships
- Strengthening regional cooperation

This emphasis on increased financing and investments is reinforced by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda from the Third International Conference on Financing for Development held in July 2015, the Asia-Pacific High-Level Consultation on Financing for Development held on 29-30 April 2015 (Jakarta) and the SDGs which call for "significant increase in investments to close the gender gap and strengthen support for institutions in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women at the global, regional and national levels.”

The Political Declaration on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing+20), adopted at CSW 59 in March 2015, urged Member States to accelerate its full and effective implementation, with monitoring and accountability, and set the deadline of 2030 for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. Now as the international community moves towards implementing the 2030 Agenda, the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW60) will provide an important opportunity to generate momentum towards achieving gender equality and women's rights and empowerment.

The Commission on the Status of Women will hold its 60th session on 14 - 24 March 2016 in New York. The priority theme for this session is **women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development**, in the context of the twentieth anniversary commemoration and global review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) (E/CN.6/2015/3), the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD), and the post-2015 agenda and sustainable development goals document, Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda).

In preparation for the sixtieth session of CSW, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and ESCAP, in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific UN Regional Coordination Mechanism's Thematic Working Group on Gender (TWG-GEEW), will organize an Asian and Pacific Seminar focusing on transformative financing mechanisms for the achievement of gender equality by the year 2030, reflecting on the commitments made towards the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment in the SDGs, the BPfA and other normative frameworks. The Seminar will be held on 18-19 February 2016 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand.

2. Objectives

The **overall objective** of the Seminar is to bring together Asian and Pacific Members States, multi-lateral and bi-lateral partners in the Asia and Pacific region, practitioners and technical experts to explore state-of-the-art research and analysis, identify good practices and lessons learned and develop independent policy recommendations on *"financing and investment mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment in the Asia Pacific Region"*.

Expected Outcome: The outcome of the Seminar will be a report, containing a summary of the discussion and recommendations. The report will be made available at the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, on the website of UN Women and ESCAP, as well as those of other UN agencies and stakeholders as may be applicable.

3. Participants

The Seminar will bring together experts and practitioners from a variety of fields, including academia, government (ministries of finance, planning and NWM's), civil society and United Nations or other regional and international organizations. In selecting the experts, the criteria of geographical balance will be taken into consideration as will the objectives of the meeting.

4. Dates and Venue

The Seminar will take place on 18-19 February 2016, at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok.

5. Organization

- The Seminar will be jointly convened by UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and ESCAP, in collaboration with members of Asia-Pacific UN Regional Coordination Mechanism Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (TWG-GEEW)
- The Seminar will be conducted in English and all documentation will be in English.
- The Seminar will comprise plenary and working group sessions.
- Presentations by practitioners and technical experts in plenary will create the framework for discussions.
- Small working groups will be formed to discuss specific issues/themes and draft concrete policy and programme recommendations targeted at various stakeholders. The recommendations of working groups will be reviewed and finalized in plenary.

6. Provisional Agenda

- A. Opening of the meeting
- B. SDGs and transformative financing for gender equality and women's empowerment
- C. Where are the resources: Domestic revenue collection
- D. Where are the resources: Official Development Assistance
- E. Where are the resources: Private sector funding
- F. Innovative sources of financing
- G. How does expenditure matter?
- H. Strengthening accountability for Gender Equality Financing.
- I. Finalization of key recommendations from the Seminar.
- J. Closing of Meeting