

**Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on the Sixty-Eighth Session  
of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68)**

**Priority Theme:** Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective

**6 February 2024 from 09:30 – 15:30**

**7 February 2024 from 09:00- 15:30**

**(Thailand Standard Time)**

**United Nations Conference Centre, Conference Room 3, Bangkok, Thailand**

## Concept Note

### 1. Introduction

The sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 68) will take place from 11 to 22 March 2024 and bring together representatives of member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations from across the world to discuss the priority theme: *Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.*<sup>1</sup>

CSW68 will convene as intersecting crises intensify pervasive, systemic inequalities between and within countries, a result of economic models and social organization that have failed to deliver for people and the planet. These crises are not borne equally, with people living in poverty, especially women, disproportionately impacted. Gendered poverty is rooted in economic, political and social hierarchies, resulting in discriminatory systemic structures, laws and social norms. Intersecting forms of discrimination influences how different women experience poverty. The effects can be seen in unequal access to decision-making power and economic opportunities and are further pronounced by the unequal distribution of care work, the digital divide and the disproportionate effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

Gender-responsive economic and social policies that focus on the realization of the needs and rights of people are central to addressing poverty among women, for instance by utilizing the opportunities for poverty reduction along the climate-care-digital nexus. Resources for the investment in social and physical infrastructure, social protection systems and women's economic empowerment can be pooled through public and private financing mechanisms, ensuring gender mainstreaming in all economic policies and interventions. Strengthened gender-sensitive public institutions can hereby take a leading role in

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<sup>1</sup> The CSW 68 will also discuss the Review theme: *Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (agreed conclusions of the CSW 63).*

promoting gender equality in all spheres, backed by the investment in women’s leadership and political participation and institutional efforts to overcome biases and stereotypes. Overall, the reform of the international financial architecture and its inherent failure to eradicate inequality and gendered poverty calls for a new economic framework that is centered around human rights, promoting the dignity and worth of each person. The CSW68 priority theme, therefore, provides a unique opportunity to reassess the systemic structures that perpetuate poverty among women and find suggested actions to leverage public institutions, gender-sensitive financing mechanisms, and the evolving digital, green, and care economies for building a more equitable future.

The Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation will be jointly convened by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

## 2. Objectives and outcome

The objective of the regional consultation is to provide an interactive forum for ESCAP member States and key stakeholders in Asia and the Pacific to examine ways to accelerate progress on key frameworks including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (in particular the 2019 Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review), the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The consultation will provide an opportunity for both state and non-state actors to take stock of key trends, needs, gaps in policy responses, and good practices, as well as to consider possible areas for joint interventions (policy, programmatic or otherwise), to address gendered poverty, utilize the power of gender-sensitive public institutions and close financing gaps for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Specifically, this regional consultation will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and ideas among state and non-state actors in order to:

- Foster a better understanding of the **systemic structures keeping women and girls in poverty**. These include structural inequalities in the household, labour market, and state institutions, which can be exacerbated by women’s experience of intersectional discrimination.
- Explore **economic and social policies** that focus on the realization of the needs and rights of all, for the eradication of gendered poverty.
- Assess current **financing gaps** for addressing gendered poverty and consider how to create and promote **gender-sensitive financing mechanisms**, both in the public and private sector.
- Explore policy solutions to address digital, green and care transformations can be made gender-sensitive and address women’s poverty.:
- Develop comprehensive frameworks for **strengthened institutions** that have the capacity, resources and mandate to advance women’s human rights and actively respond to the needs of women and girls. Explore how public institutions can be at the core of ensuring gender mainstreaming across all domains.
- Enhance the availability of **comprehensive and accurate data and research**, to inform efforts to advance gender equality and strengthen safeguards and accountability for gendered harms.

- Promote **partnerships to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals**, including Goal 1 on ending poverty and Goal 5 on achieving gender equality.

The outcome of the Asia-Pacific regional consultation for CSW68 will be a set of suggested actions for accelerated progress, in line with the Priority Theme for CSW68. The suggested actions will feed into CSW68 and can inform membership contributions to the Agreed Conclusions.

### 3. Participants

This regional consultation will bring together representatives from ESCAP members and associate members, civil society (representing women and girls from diverse sectors of society), members of academia and/or think tanks, inter-governmental organizations, UN entities, private sector, international financial institutions, and others.

### 4. Modality of event

The regional consultation will be convened in a hybrid format i.e. in-person at the UN Conference Centre premises (Conference Room 3) with the option for online participation via the Zoom platform. It will take place on 6 February 2023 from 9.30 – 15.30 Hours and 7 February 2023 from 9.00 – 15.30 Hours (Thailand Standard Time).

To the extent possible, efforts will be made to ensure that each session will have representation from across the sectors related to the priority theme and geographical representation.

### 5. Contact

Ms. Jessica Murphy, Associate Social Affairs Officer, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP [jessica.murphy@un.org](mailto:jessica.murphy@un.org)

Ms. Denise Lääveri, Strategic Planning and Coordination Analyst, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, UN Women [denise.laaveri@unwomen.org](mailto:denise.laaveri@unwomen.org)

*The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) provides an inclusive intergovernmental platform for governments and other stakeholders in the region to accelerate the implementation of global gender equality commitments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the outcomes of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.*

*ESCAP works to ensure that gender equality is addressed holistically in order to develop forward-looking strategies and contribute to efforts towards gender equality, poverty reduction and economic growth in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.*

*The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of*

*discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and benefit women and girls worldwide.*

*UN Women's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific located in Bangkok, covers a total of 42 countries and exercises its triple mandate and functions at a regional level and in support of UN Women's offices and UN Country Teams in 24 countries across the region.*

## **6. Additional documents**

**Expert Group Meeting background, expert, and observer papers can be found here:**

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw68-2024/preparations/expert-group-meeting>