



**Asia-Pacific High-level Meeting  
for the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women**

**High-Level Roundtable**

**09:50 - 12:00 hours, Friday, 23 February 2018, Bangkok**

**DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE**

**Background**

In accordance with its multi-year programme of work (2017-2020), the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62) will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 12 to 23 March 2018. Representatives of Member States, United Nations (UN) entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world will attend the session.

CSW62 will consider “*Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls*” as its priority theme, and “*Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women (agreed conclusions of the forty-seventh session)*” as its review theme.

To assist the Commission in its deliberations, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) Regional Bureau for Asia & the Pacific and other members of the UN Regional Coordination Mechanism’s Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (TWG-GEEW), will convene an **Asia-Pacific High-Level Meeting for CSW62** on its priority theme, at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Bangkok, Thailand on 23 February 2018.

Rural women and girls in Asia and the Pacific continue to face persistent structural barriers that prevent them from enjoying their human rights and achieving their full potential. Adequate standard of living, land rights and land tenure security, food security and nutrition, violence and harmful practices, health care and sexual and reproductive health, quality education, and resilience and preparedness to climate change, disasters and conflicts are among the main cross-cutting challenges faced by rural women and girls in the region. These have been identified as priority areas for action by the UN Secretary-General Report to CSW62.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the ongoing transformation of agro-food systems, changing demographics, the negative impacts of climate change and degradation of ecosystems, increasing

demands on land and water resources and threats of natural disasters affect countries and their farmers, forest-dependent communities, small scale fishers, pastoralists, and indigenous peoples, among whom women and girls are particularly affected.

While playing key roles in rural economies, well-being and reproduction of households and communities, rural women and girls suffer from multiple forms of discrimination that affect their access to and control over land and other productive resources; access to services, information and technology; to adequate, safe and nutritious food; to adequate standard of living, social protection and decent employment; and to decision-making, voice and participation. The triple burden of productive, care and community work contributes to rural women and girls' time poverty. Gender inequalities are further compounded by intersecting social differences in identity, age, status, ethnicity, religion and socio-economic status and exacerbated by patterns of unsustainable and inequitable growth.

In line with the goals and spirit of the Sustainable Development Agenda, this is also a time of unprecedented opportunities for transformative change where gender equality and sustainability can mutually reinforce each other. Strengthening, refining and designing public policies and investments is key to unlocking the potential of such a transformative agenda that puts gender equality, and the empowerment of rural women and girls centre stage.

Strengthening, refining, designing, implementing and monitoring gender-transformative public policies, investments and initiatives is key to unlocking the potential of such a transformative agenda that puts gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls centre stage. This will require stronger commitment to partnership and cooperation at all levels and by all actors as envisaged in SDG 17 – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

The roundtable will provide high-level representatives from national women's machineries and ministries of rural development and agriculture in Asia and the Pacific with an opportunity to share their experiences, good practices and lessons learned in advancing the rights of rural women and girls, while highlighting key recommended action/'means of implementation'.

## **Objective**

The session will discuss the priority theme of CSW 62, namely "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls", while aiming to ensure specific country level good practices are discussed, as well as and key recommendations related to "means of implementation" are put forward.

## **Panellists**

*Chair:* **H.E. Joeli Cawaki**, Assistant Minister for Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Office, Fiji

*Panellists:*

- **Hon. Mr. James Marape**, Minister for Finance and Rural Development, Papua New Guinea
- **H.E. Ms. Delbar Nazari**, Minister of Women’s Affairs, Afghanistan
- **Ms. Laura Menezes Lopes**, Secretary of State for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, Timor Leste
- **Mr. Muhammad Mahmood**, Secretary Agriculture, Government of the Punjab, Pakistan
- **Ms. Mahmuda Sharmeen Benu**, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Bangladesh
- **Ms. Toyam Raya**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Nepal (TBC)

**Format**

Panellists will be invited to discuss the above theme. Taking into consideration the specific needs of rural women and girls in Asia and the Pacific, panellists will share examples of policies, legal reforms, governmental set ups, institutional innovations and partnerships that have contributed to gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls in their countries.

The session will be interactive and moderated to facilitate the exchange of experiences among the panelists as well as engagement of the audience in order to capture key recommendations to take forward.

09:50 – 09:55 (5 mins)	<b>Introduction of panellists</b>  Moderator introduces the session and the participating panelists.
09:55 – 11:00 (65 mins)	<b>Discussion with the panellists</b>  Panellists will receive two questions, the first will be a request to address key issues of priority concern in their countries as related to the empowerment of rural women and girls and reflect on the country’s successes and obstacles still remaining for rural women and girls.  After all panelists have spoken to the above, a second question to the panelists will focus on key recommendations in relation to the “means of implementation” to advance gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls in Asia and the Pacific.
11:00 – 12:00 (60 mins)	<b>Country interventions</b>  The chair opens the floor to interventions from government representatives.

## Contact Persons

Janneke van der Graaff – Kukler  
Regional Strategic Planning and Coordination Specialist  
UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific  
Tel: +66 (0)2 228 2584  
Email: [janneke.kukler@unwomen.org](mailto:janneke.kukler@unwomen.org)

Clara Mi Young Park  
Gender Rural and Social Development Officer  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific  
Tel: +66 (0)2 697 4000 ext.4261  
Email: [clara.park@fao.org](mailto:clara.park@fao.org)