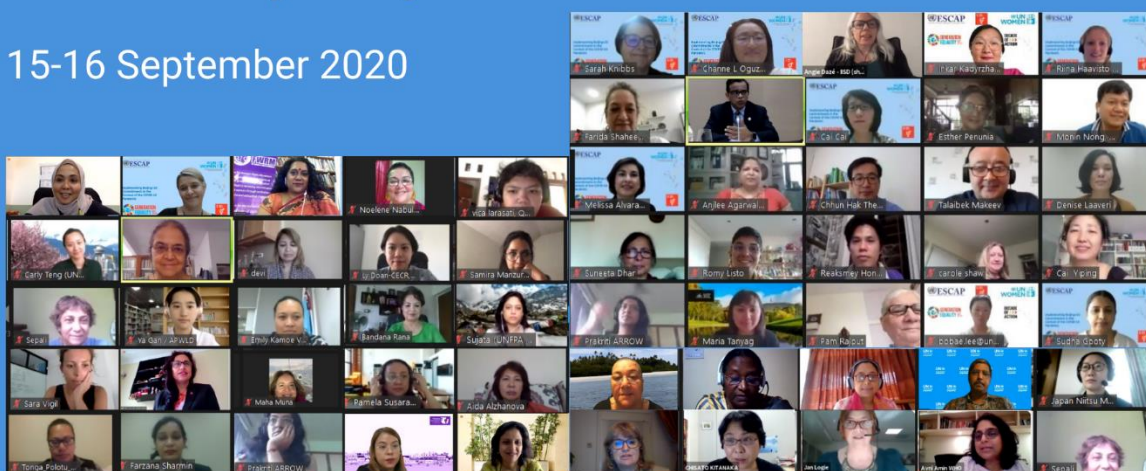


**United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)**

**15 – 16 September 2020**

## Meeting Report

15-16 September 2020



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## Introduction

The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action remains the most comprehensive and progressive blueprint for achieving gender equality to date. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reinforces its ambitions, through advancing Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+25 Review was convened by ESCAP and UN Women in late 2019 to review progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals. More than 600 participants from 54 countries and 166 civil society organizations attended the Conference which culminated in the adoption of the Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment - a comprehensive set of commitments and actions on region-specific issues that can move forward the gender equality agenda over the next 5 years.

With its adoption, countries in Asia and the Pacific committed, *inter alia*, to ensuring women's economic empowerment and the integration of women into the formal economy. Governments agreed to take appropriate measures to implement these commitments.

The implementation of these commitments has been negatively impacted by the emergence and stronghold of the COVID-19 pandemic. Within this context, women are often caregivers for both children and older persons and may therefore suffer from both financial and health-related impacts as they struggle to balance productive and reproductive roles during the on-going crisis. In a region where most women are engaged in vulnerable or informal employment and/or businesses, many working mothers have little recourse to social protection to support public health measures such as school closures. Evidence is also emerging to suggest that violence against women and girls has increased, while the availability of relevant services and support to address these issues, including essential social and other health services including sexual and reproductive health services, is decreasing.

## Objectives

The objectives of the virtual Expert Group Meeting (EGM) were two-fold: to (a) facilitate the exchange of knowledge, good practices and lessons learnt with respect to the progressive implementation of Beijing Platform for Action, including in the context of COVID-19 pandemic; and to (b) develop key recommendations for priority actions to advance the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review<sup>1</sup>, which was adopted by the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+25 Review in November 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> The [2019 Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review](#) committed governments in the region to, *inter alia*, "recognize the need to accelerate efforts to reduce and redistribute the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work shouldered by women of all ages". It also "strongly condemned all forms of violence against all women and girls" and further stressed the "urgent need to address intersectional barriers and the underlying gender inequalities prevailing in many countries as well as gender-based violence and discrimination against all women and girls". The Declaration specifically called for action including through enacting and enforcing laws and regulatory frameworks in this regard. Finally, the Declaration committed governments in the region to, *inter alia*, "scale up efforts to accelerate the transition of women from informal employment to formal employment, including access to decent work, education and training, improved wages, social protection and quality childcare" and to "take measures to facilitate the financial inclusion and financial literacy of women

The virtual EGM facilitated the exchange of knowledge, good practices and lessons learnt by stakeholders in the progressive implementation of Beijing+25 commitments within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will discuss all three dimensions of inclusive and sustainable social development, namely the socio-economic, political and environmental dimensions.

The recommendations for priority actions was directed towards (a) ESCAP member states, cf. their commitments to the 2019 Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review; (b) civil society organizations; (c) private sector actors and (d) UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, cf. their respective mandates to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The virtual EGM also provided an opportunity to explore potential partnerships as well as identify synergies to be harnessed, between efforts by stakeholders to advance the empowerment of all women and girls across the Asia-Pacific region.

## Outcomes

The outcome of the virtual EGM will inform the work of ESCAP and UN Women in supporting Asia-Pacific countries in implementing the Asia-Pacific Beijing+25 review outcome - Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review.

The key recommendations were expected to identify, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, both opportunities and challenges to achieving the ambitions of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and key gender-related SDGs, starting with SDG 5.

The virtual EGM brought together more than 60 experts and professionals working towards the realization of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 and other gender-related SDGs, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Participants included government representatives and policy makers; representatives of civil society organizations and private sector, and representatives of relevant UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes; and other stakeholders across Asia and the Pacific.

## Modality/structure of event

The EGM was convened virtually on the Zoom platform. It adopted an interactive format in order to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, good practices and lessons learnt. Participants shared their own observations/experiences on the respective substantive thematic focus areas and contributed to the development of key recommendations.

The virtual EGM consisted of five sessions. The first session introduced the outcome of the Asia-Pacific Beijing+25 Review through presentations on the "Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review" and placed the subsequent discussions within the context of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.

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and their equal access to formal financial services, in particular for women entrepreneurs, to start, run and expand their businesses throughout the supply chain".



The following sessions addressed key gender issues, including women's economic empowerment, violence against women as well as women and environmental sustainability. These sessions integrated perspectives on the overall socio-economic response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on women, including the ways in which the pandemic has exacerbated the disproportionate amount of unpaid care and domestic work carried out by women and girls; translated into lost livelihoods and incomes, and increased incidences of violence against women and girls, among others.

The objective of the final session was to articulate key recommendations for priority actions to implement the Beijing+25 outcomes, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Welcome remarks

Welcome remarks were delivered by Dr. Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Ms. Sarah Knibbs, Deputy Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

**Dr. Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)** welcomed all participants and provided an overview of the key outcomes and priorities of the Beijing+25 Asia-Pacific Declaration in context to the COVID-19 pandemic. Women's economic empowerment and violence against women and girls are among some of the key areas of concern in the region. The topics were discussed in detail during Sessions 2 and 3. Countries in the region continue to have a wide gap between male and female labour force participation rates. Further, women's labour force participation in the region has declined from 55 per cent in 1995 to 50 per cent in 2018. The COVID-19 pandemic is further contributing to insecure employment and loss of jobs as the majority of women are engaged in informal work. Women's continued burden of unrecognized and unpaid care work is also an important area of concern and needs to be addressed with gender-responsive policies along with targeted changes in negative gender stereotypes. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, violence against women and girls, especially domestic and intimate-partner violence, has increased across the region. ESCAP is supporting the implementation of Beijing+25 Asia-Pacific Declaration and 2030 Agenda. ESCAP's three key areas in their analytical and capacity building work include economic empowerment, leadership and gender statistics.

**Ms. Sarah Knibbs, Deputy Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific** welcomed the participants as a co-convenor for the two-day meeting. Ms. Knibbs provided an overview of the Beijing Platform for Action and highlighted that, to date, no country has achieved gender equality. The world needs transformative action. A recent UN Women stocktaking report has highlighted that progress towards gender equality is faltering and some advances have been reversed. This is only exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. A recent report by UN Women and UNDP reflected that the pandemic is expected to push as many as 47 million women and girls below the poverty line. Women are also facing increased violence, including intimate partner violence in the domestic sphere, sexual abuse, and cyber violence. Women are also working at the forefront of healthcare response. Simultaneously, women are also bearing increased domestic and unpaid care work at home. In many areas, the impact of COVID-19 is compounded by climate-related challenges. In other contexts, there are challenges in

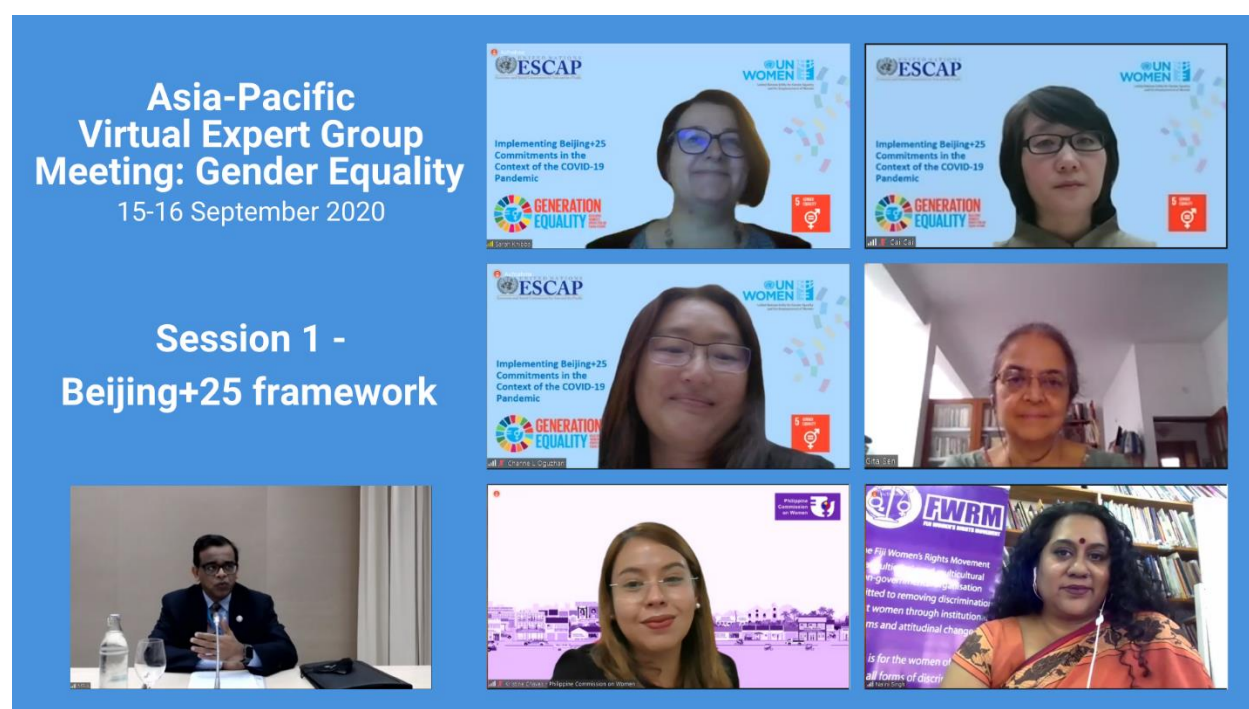




expressions of freedom and the work of civil society organizations and human rights defenders. Ms. Knibbs welcomed all partners in addressing these concerns. She stressed to think about how recent responses – from humanitarian to economic to building solidarity – could be opportunities to build back better for women and girls. The upcoming UNGA will be an opportunity to highlight the need to move the needle on implementation. This includes reviewing nation policies and laws, ways to address social norms and power relations, and prioritizing financing. Ms. Knibbs welcomed diverse voices and emphasized intersectionality.

A short overview of the Expert Group Meeting was delivered by **Ms. Channe Lindstrøm Oğuzhan, Social Affairs Officer, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP**.

## Session 1: Beijing+25 framework



## Context

The 1995 Beijing Conference led the first global commitment to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) set objectives to achieve gender equality in 12 key areas, including poverty, education and training, conflict, and economy. All 189 UN Member States at the time unanimously adopted the BPfA. Twenty-five years following the BPfA, Member States in the Asia-Pacific reaffirmed their commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment in November 2019. Following the Beijing+25 Review, a stocktaking exercise of the progress made and remaining challenges, Member States in the Asia-Pacific region adopted the Beijing+25 Declaration.

There is much to celebrate. Since 1995, gender equality has become central to the realization of inclusive and sustainable global development. Women's empowerment was integrated into the 2030 Agenda and

the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and SDG 5 directly calls for gender equality. The Asia-Pacific region has made some commendable progress, especially in adopting laws, regulations and policies. Of the countries reviewed, 63 per cent identified law and policies are one of the key achievements during the review period.<sup>1</sup> Thirty-three countries had a gender strategy or a national action plan at the time of the review and 47 countries had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).<sup>2</sup> Progress in gender equality has been a joint effort by governments, civil society, community organizations and private sector actors.

There, however, is also a need to acknowledge that the progress remains slow and that many challenges continue to persist. Further, there continues to be a need to acknowledge and address intersectional barriers when addressing gender inequality to ensure that no one is left behind. Taking the progress and challenges into account, the Beijing+25 Declaration calls governments and other actors to intensify actions to realize gender equality and women's empowerment. The Beijing+25 Declaration is centered around thematic areas:

- Equitable and inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work
- Poverty eradication, social protection and social and public services
- Freedom from violence, stigma, harmful stereotypes and negative social norms
- Participation, social dialogue, accountability and national women's machinery for gender equality and women's empowerment
- Peaceful and inclusive societies
- Environmental conservation, climate action and resilience-building
- Data and statistics
- Partnerships and regional cooperation

The Declaration effectively renewed the Member States' commitment to gender equality, including a regional perspective on SDG 5. Since the signing of the Beijing+25 Declaration, the COVID-19 pandemic has rightly raised many concerns about the pandemic's effect on gender equality. A pandemic heightens and amplifies existing inequalities and has the potential to undo any progress made in poverty alleviation and gender equality.

The COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to posing specific health risks, is also limiting women and girls' access to critical medical services. With disrupted supply chains and health services overwhelmed, maternal mortality and morbidity may increase. This is happening in parallel to an increasing demand for healthcare workers, who are predominantly women. Globally, there has been a spike in domestic violence levels in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although comprehensive data remains elusive, reports of domestic violence and calls to helplines have been surging. This rise in violence against women and girls has been coined as the Shadow Pandemic. Collective efforts at all levels are needed to stop this.

In developing economies, up to 70 percent women in the labour force are engaged in informal work. Women are already facing higher levels of unemployment and loss of livelihoods. In addition, women are spending more time at home after care work. Prior to the pandemic, women and girls, in the Asia-Pacific region spent 4.1 times more on care work than men.<sup>3</sup> This share is likely to have increased since the onset of the pandemic. Women and care work, however, remain missing from national and local stimulus





packages across the region. Girls and adolescent girls are also impacted by the increased household work.<sup>4</sup> School closures may also lead to more girls dropping out of schools, especially those in rural areas.

As the UN policy brief notes, the COVID-19 pandemic even the limited gains in the past decades are at risk of being rolled back.<sup>5</sup> The pandemic is already aggravating the existing inequalities in our societies, and gender inequality is no different. This impact risks having generational effect if not addressed.

## Presentations

The first session was moderated by **Ms. Cai Cai, Chief, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP**. Ms. Cai Cai kicked-off the session with an overview of the Beijing Platform for Action, Beijing+25 Declaration and progress with gender equality. Ms. Cai Cai introduced the panellists and discussants and presented the guiding questions for the session.

**Ms. Emily Veiqati, Divisional Women's Interest Officer, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Fiji** delivered the first presentation on the '2019 Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review'. This included a background on the key achievements and challenges, the key actions needed and the gendered impact of COVID-19 in Fiji. Ms. Veiqati provided an overview of the 25 years of progress since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995 and shared key highlights from the Beijing+25 Review. Key challenges identified in the Beijing+25 Review included women's participation to economic participation, negative gender norms and stereotypes and a lack of capacity in implementing policies and programmes. Ms. Veiqati shared an infographic by the Fiji COVID-19 Gender Response Working Group, noting that the impact of the pandemic on women and girls can extend beyond the health crisis. This only stresses the importance of building resilience among poor households. Fiji is currently looking into best practices, looking into other countries, innovations and trying to understand what may work for Fiji.

The second presentation on "Reflections on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the context of advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the Philippines" was delivered by **Ms. Kristine Rosary Yuzon-Chaves, Executive Director, Philippine Commission on Women, Manila, Philippines**. Ms. Yuzon-Chaves reiterated how the COVID-19 is threatening the hard-fought progress with gender equality and women's empowerment and stressed that 2020 is an important year. There has been some progress in accelerating progress of the Beijing Platform for Action between 2014 and 2019 in the Philippines. The Philippines has advanced laws on decent work, business and entrepreneurship. This includes, but is not limited to, the expanded maternity leave law, resources for overseas workers and the domestic workers act. The Philippines is also taking initiatives to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work. In context to the COVID-19 pandemic, MSMEs are the hardest hit. The Philippines has made advances in poverty eradication, social protection and social services, which are now being threatened by the pandemic. Other advances have included policies to eliminate VAWG, expanding women and girls' access to ICT and national action plan on Women, Peace and Security, strengthening women's role in environmental protection and climate resilience. Ms. Yuzon-Chaves reaffirmed the Philippines' commitment to the BPfA and gender equality, especially in the context of emerging challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.

**Ms. Sara Duerto Valero, Regional Advisor on Gender Statistics, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific** delivered the third presentation, "The impact of COVID-19 on gender-related Sustainable



Development Goals”. Ms. Valero shared the research findings on the gendered impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific from a recent report “Unlocking the Lockdown” (<https://data.unwomen.org/publications/unlocking-lockdown-gendered-effects-covid-19-achieving-sdgs-asia-and-pacific>). UN Women designed their own survey interface to ensure confidentiality and launched the survey through text messages to random men and women mobile phone users. This was completed with voice or face-to-face survey in some remote regions, where women may not have access to phones. The findings show that crisis has disproportionately affected women’s mental and emotional health, especially for women under the age of 25. Women also have had more non-COVID health issues, including accessing doctors and purchasing supplies. The survey also found that there’s been a substantial increase in unpaid care and domestic work. Social distancing measures have also limited people’s access to safe water sources. There have been significant consequences in the labour market, where workers in the formal sector are logging fewer hours and getting paid less, especially women. In the informal market, both women and men are losing their jobs. The shadow pandemic is worrisome with drastic increases in violence against women.

The third presentation on ‘Drivers to accelerate gender equality in the UN Decade of Action’ was delivered by **Ms. Gita Sen, Distinguished Professor, Public Health Foundation of India**. Ms. Sen noted the real but limited advances in gender equality in the Asia-Pacific region. She highlighted the foundations upon which these advancements have been made are relatively fragile. The BPfA was groundbreaking for its basis on human rights, which has been a connecting link to many other frameworks. Rising economic inequality in the region making a toxic combination with longstanding social inequalities, including gender, race and disability. Such inequalities are some of the reasons why progress has been slow and is faced with many barriers. Ms. Sen noted weak health systems combined with inequalities have made health services much more limited. This calls for long-term strengthening of health services. Within health services, women health workers tend to be at the bottom of the hierarchy, which often overlooks their needs. An example of this is how PPEs are designed, which grossly overlooks women’s menstrual health. Ms. Sen also highlighted women’s presence in the informal sector and migrant labour, which has been too invisible. Looking forward, Ms. Sen noted the importance of putting human rights at the centre for macroeconomic or sector-specific policies, addressing the challenges of intersectional equality and paying attention to the role of older women and boys in challenging negative gender norms. There also remain challenges to fund the Beijing+25 commitments, which require further attention. Women’s machineries need to be strengthened and CSO’s catalytic role needs to be emphasised.

**Ms. Nalini Singh, Executive Director, Fiji Women’s Rights Movement** delivered the last presentation on “CSO perspectives on key priorities in the context of the 2019 Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review”. Ms. Singh highlighted the ongoing role of women’s organizations in working on response and recovery with other stakeholders. The next steps in realizing the Beijing+25 must be based on a recognition of the realities that obstructed the region in fulfilling the goals in the first 25 years. Ms. Singh stressed that commitment alone is not enough. There is a need for greater political will, more resources and the inclusion of women at all stages. If the SDGs are to be achieved in the next decade, the approach needs to be women- and people-centered, intersectional and must address structural challenges. Ms. Singh noted that the COVID-19 pandemic, as portal, has revealed and exacerbated pre-existing structural and intersectional inequalities. Gender equality and women’s empowerment need to be understood within the framework of feminist development justice.



Ms. Singh highlighted the work and power of the Asia-Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism (APRSEM, <http://asiapacificrcem.org/>), which recognizes structural barriers and has institutionalised the inclusion of CSOs in SDG processes. Resources for women's movements should not be reduced and diverted at such critical times.

**Ms. Cai Cai, Chief, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP** closed the session highlighting the importance of the symbiotic relationship of governments, CSOs and UN bodies.

### Interactive discussions

The guiding questions included the following:

- What should be the next steps in realizing the goals set in the Beijing+25 Declaration? What is needed to turn this commitment into action at the different levels - regional, sub-regional, national and local?
- We're only a decade shy of reaching 2030 and as evidence suggests, the Asia-Pacific region is unlikely to achieve the SDGs by 2030 without accelerated action. What should this accelerated action look like?
- The COVID-19 pandemic is threatening to undo decades of progress made. Which area of progress should we be most concerned about? And, what can member states, the UN and CSOs do to ensure that any advances in gender equality is not regressing?
- Partnership and collaboration are central to both the 2030 Agenda and the Beijing+25 Declaration. Are there some examples of effective partnerships from the Asia-Pacific region?

The interactive discussion was suspended due to time constraints.

### Recommendations

Some key recommendations were put forward for consideration in the final session 5 on 'looking ahead'. These recommendations are structured according to the 2019 Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review:

***Equitable and inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work:*** The current economic models are leaving marginalized communities behind, including women and girls. Women continue to face obstacles accessing decent work opportunities and those who are working in formal work, continue face gender pay gap. The COVID-19 pandemic is further amplifying these inequalities.

- ✓ Promote gender-responsive policies that address vulnerabilities of women engaged in informal work.
- ✓ Recognize and compensate unpaid care work through gender-responsive policies, including the formalization of care workers.

***Poverty eradication, social protection and social and public services:*** The COVID-19 pandemic is threatening to undo decades of progress made in poverty alleviation. Without targeted interventions, many communities across the Asia-Pacific may slide back into poverty. Further, rising economic inequality



*is worsening the situation. In this context, gender-responsive and intersectional approaches to policies and actions are more important than ever.*

- ✓ Enhance and promote gender-responsive and an intersectional approach to social protection for immediate and long-term recovery.
- ✓ Acknowledge and recognize informal workers in short-term as well as in long-term recovery policies.

***Freedom from violence, stigma, harmful stereotypes and negative social norms:*** *Increasing violence against women and girls is alarming and needs to be addressed through immediate policies, collaboration and action.*

- ✓ Advance essential services to prevent and address violence against women and girls. This may take place in the form of supporting shelters, hotlines and health services.
- ✓ Engage older women and boy in addressing harmful gender stereotypes and social norms.

***Participation, social dialogue, accountability and national women's machinery for gender equality and women's empowerment:*** *As noted, many countries in the Asia-Pacific region have established national gender policies and action plans. Going forward, Member States must implement such commitments, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

- ✓ Ensure that women's diverse voices are included in government decision-making process and outcomes. This should be through participation as well as in the content of any policies or action plans.
- ✓ Provide resources, including funding, to women's machineries to implement action.

***Environmental conservation, climate action and resilience-building:*** *Many areas in the Asia-Pacific region are facing extreme climate disasters in addition to the pandemic. Further, the region continues to host some of the most vulnerable areas to climate change.*

- ✓ Ensure gender concerns are integrated into all analysis, risk-mitigations and disaster response.
- ✓ Ensure women's participation in environmental planning and climate adaptation.

***Partnerships and regional cooperation:*** *Member States, the UN and CSOs need to amplify and build cooperation to truly ensure that no one is left behind.*

- ✓ Establish communication channels and ensure regular information-sharing.
- ✓ Build collaborative interventions and projects to reach the most marginalized, especially those addressing intersectional inequalities.



## Session 2: Women's economic empowerment



### Context

**Care economy:** When the coronavirus pandemic hit Hubei province, China in late January 2020, the Asia-Pacific region was already facing an invisible care crisis. Countries with high life expectancies face a shortage of care workers as aging populations expand, while families across Asia have become smaller, nuclear families or single-parent households tasked with maintaining employment and child-care responsibilities. The increasing demand for care work disproportionately falls on women, who are constrained in their opportunities to enter the labour force throughout their lives as they move from caring for small children to caring for aging parents. Reliance by governments on women's unpaid or underpaid domestic work to supplement or replace public services is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain as more women enter the workforce and populations are living longer. Even in paid care industries like education, social work, and health, lack of social protections and financial benefits further penalizes caregivers for the essential services they provide to society. Covid-19 has offered a stark reminder of how the unequal care burden leaves women around the world vulnerable to economic shocks and health risks. Countries who use this opportunity to recognize, reward, and invest in essential care work beyond temporary crisis response measures will increase the resilience of their economies and encourage long-term growth and quality care for their populations.

**Women's entrepreneurship:** Challenges to women's entrepreneurship are multifaceted and exist at all levels – at home, in sectors, in communities and countries. Siloed interventions and single-issue training programs can be limiting and often unsustainable. As such, there is a greater need for a collaborative approach and for complementary resources that are designed to help realize the full potential of women's entrepreneurship. Covid-19 has had a severe ripple effect on business sectors, leading to drop in sales,

declining orders, and liquidity issues resulting from disrupted supply chains, reduced demand, labour shortages, and national lockdowns. Service and care sectors like tourism and garment work that feature high representation of women owned SMEs are being hardest hit. Women-owned SMEs are less resilient to crises due to their informal nature and the wealth gap for women; lack of collateral, historical bookkeeping, and formal banking relationships limit women business owners' access to emergency capital to cover short-term cash flow. The gendered digital divide also complicates transitioning to e-commerce for retail businesses. Women tend to operate service-based businesses, most of whom will not have the option of moving online. Lack of support networks and limited cash reserves will affect SMEs ability to sustain their business through the crisis in addition to added care responsibilities entrepreneurs may be facing.

## Presentations

The session was moderated by **Ms. Joni Simpson, Senior Specialist, Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination for East and South East Asia and the Pacific, International Labour Organization.**

**Ms. Cai Cai, Chief, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP** presented an overview of the important factors for women's economic empowerment and the role of the Beijing+25 Asia-Pacific Declaration. Some important factors affecting women's economic empowerment include access to a decent income, access to property rights and financial service, social protection, education and training, support for care work, and representation and collective action. Ms. Cai Cai presented a snapshot of the current situation of women's labour force participation in the Asia-Pacific region showing evidence for the gender employment gap, women's overwhelming representation in the informal sector and vulnerable work. Beijing+25 Declaration recommends specific points to address these issues: gender-responsive macroeconomic policies, women's entrepreneurship, gradual formalization of work, social protection coverage of informal workers, redistributing care work and investing in the care economy.

**Ms. Yam Kumari Khatiwada, Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal** shared some achievements in the economic empowerment of women in Nepal as well as some relevant responses to COVID-19. Nepal has made a number of policy and institutional reforms to advance gender equality, including the progressive formalization of work, increasing political representation, primary and secondary education of girls and increased life expectancy. In context to the COVID-19 pandemic, women in Nepal are also experiencing reduced access to reproductive health, increased domestic violence, job loss, mental health issue and disruptions in girls' education. In response, Nepal has a steering committee with different stakeholders and actors. Ms. Khatiwada noted Nepal's gender-responsive guideline for COVID-19 and the completion of a rapid gender assessment. Economic relief packages have also targeted MSMEs. The government is working under the broad pillars of international commitment, protection, empowerment and, now, response to the pandemic at all levels.

**Ms. Sudha Gooty, Programme Manager-Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship, ESCAP** delivered the presentation on "Fostering an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs in Asia and the Pacific". Ms. Gooty presented on the overall entrepreneurship environment in the region as well as the COVID-19 context. Entrepreneurship one of the key pathways of women's economic empowerment and is known





to have a multiplier effect on well-being and overall sustainable growth. MSMEs account for about 96 percent of all enterprises in the region and provides employment for many. This highlights the potential for growth. Ms Gooty introduced ESCAP's Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship (CWE) programme, which aims to break down barriers to finance and technology, low digital and financial literacy, and discriminatory socio-cultural norms that limit opportunities and capacity-building for women entrepreneurs. CWE is creating a gender-responsive entrepreneurial ecosystem and is working with member States towards creating an enabling policy and business environment while advancing access to capital and digital solutions and providing training for women entrepreneurs. The programme is ongoing in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Nepal, Samoa and Viet Nam. The COVID-19 has had a tremendous impact on MSMEs as well as their employees. ESCAP's preliminary studies have been conducted in Cambodia, Vietnam and Samoa. Immediate and short-term recommendations include, but is not limited to, data-informed policymaking, increased digitization, gender-responsive policies and making information accessible.

**Ms. Katja Freiwald, Regional Programme Manager, 'WeEmpower Asia', UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific** presented on "Holistic approaches to private sector engagement to boost women's economic empowerment". Ms. Freidwald introduced the work of WeEmpowerAsia and highlighted the importance of supporting the private sector. WeEmpowerAsia is trying to create a blueprint for collaboration that includes working with private sector companies, gender-inclusive entrepreneurship and creating enabling environments. The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) is a volunteer framework for businesses to guide their work towards gender equality. Ms. Freidwald presented this framework in context to the care economy, which has the opportunity to create a significant number of jobs in the region.

**Ms. Deepta Chopra, Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies** and **Ms. Meenakshi Krishnan, Organization Development Consultant & Doctoral Researcher, Institute of Development Studies** presented on "The care economy and women's economic participation". **Ms. Chopra** started the discussion with an overview of what care work and the care economy consists and reiterated the importance of care work. Unpaid care work interacts with paid work in many ways, including constraints on time and lower productivity. Discussions on women's empowerment require a balance between paid work and unpaid care work, and any discussion on women's economic empowerment is limited if care work is not highlighted. The Asia-Pacific region has the highest gender gap when it comes to care work. COVID-19 has reduced women's economic participation, increased women's care workload and reduction of state provision of public services. The recognition of care work is foundational and there needs to be differentiated care policy responses that target care infrastructure, care-related social protection and transfers, care services and employment-related policies. Priority issues include the provision of decent paid work, decent working conditions (e.g. equal pay), support of unpaid care work and representation carers in decision making.

In her role as discussant, **Ms. Nadira Mohd Yusoff, Founder & CEO of Kiddocare and Head of AWEN Malaysia** shared that running MSMEs has always been a challenge for women but the COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated it. Kiddocare is providing work opportunities in care work to women who have lost their jobs. The business model also addresses the real need for care services, especially by frontline workers at the moment. Kiddocare also provides a career development programme for women to help them advance



further. Ms. Yusoff highlighted that some regulatory challenges may not provide sufficient recognition to such services. There remains a need to bring in more investors and supporters.

**Ms. Cai Yiping, Executive Committee member, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)** highlighted the urgent need to reflect on how the society is organized to operate and regulate economic activities, some of which are discriminatory and exploitative. It is time to rethink how to redistribute work and organization. Care work is essential but has long been devalued. Some of topics the stakeholders need to deliberate on are ways democratize decision-making processes so ensure marginalized groups are included, modes to monitor and evaluate government measures, and revisiting the Beijing+25 strategic objectives to ensure the needed investments.

### Interactive discussions

The guiding questions included the following:

- What are the greatest challenges women entrepreneurs and paid and unpaid caregivers are facing during Covid-19? Is this crisis different from previous economic shocks?
- Why is it in the interest of member states to provide emergency response support specifically directed at caregivers? Are there regions where this has been done well?
- Will the pandemic fundamentally alter business as usual for women owned SMEs in the long term (i.e. e-commerce and digital platforms, remote work, banking risk assessments)?
- What can governments do to support women's economic empowerment in their roles as caregivers, employees, and business owners in the long-term to support building resilient communities?
- How can governments promote the voices of women and intersectional vulnerable groups in crisis response and long-term planning (migrant workers, refugees, minority women)?

The guiding questions were, to a great extent, covered during the presentations. Participants maintained a dynamic chat throughout the session and presented questions and shared resources. Some additional questions included how women with disabilities are being included in government responses and how the described frameworks can be applied to women farmers. Many participants echoed the basic step of recognizing care work as “work” and its subsequent formalization and agreed that care work need to be given its due importance in economies. Some participants also noted role of digital services and systems in delivering benefits (<https://itforchange.net/Recommendations-IT-for-Change-NITI-Aayog-COVID-19-Impact-Women-Girls>) , which was followed by concerns about gender digital divide and data transparency.

### Promising Practices

Japan shared some of their measures to ensure women's economic empowerment in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which includes temporary special benefits for single-parent households, subsidy for



employers to provide paid leave, employment security benefits, employment security support and revised guidelines on measures for maternity healthcare.

Participants noted the Gender Boys' Lab program in India, which engages boys as advocates to change attitudes towards gender-based violence and care work (<https://asiafoundation.org/2019/09/11/the-gender-lab-boys-program/>). Similar work is being done in Pakistan with the engagement of older patriarchs to curb early, child and forced marriages. In India, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is provided 24/7 mental health helpline. They are also using the code "KIRAN" to specifically support women and girls, which may provide much-needed support when people are in isolation.

## Recommendations

Some key recommendations were put forward for consideration in the final Session 5 on 'Looking Ahead'. These recommendations are structured according to the 2019 Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review.

***Equitable and inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work:*** The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequalities for women in care work, informal employment, and entrepreneurial roles, leaving them disproportionately prone to financial, employment, health, and safety insecurities. Emergency crisis responses that target only the formal economy ignore the essential contributions of women workers to human capital and economic development, relying on caregivers to absorb the shocks of the economic crisis. Covid-19 responses must support women's labour contributions address challenges faced by women owned SMEs.

- ✓ Recognize care work as work.
- ✓ Implement care-sensitive employment practices such as: reskilling and retraining for caregivers who have been out the job market; providing child care services for job-seekers; promote flexible working arrangements such as telework and reduced hours; vocational training for women in non-traditional occupations; paid parental leave that encourages shared caring responsibilities; information and awareness campaigns to counter gender discrimination in the workplace in hiring practices and working conditions and encourage men's participation in care activities.
- ✓ Facilitate access to capital for women-owned MSMEs and promote liquidity, via credit guarantees to lending financial institutions, tax payment deferrals, incentivizing timely payments to small vendors by large farms, credit score support, income transfers etc.
- ✓ Support digital and e-commerce training for women entrepreneurs and support cash-based financial resources for the non-digitally literate or unbanked.
- ✓ Provide incentivizes to formalization care services, make care expenses tax-deductible, and providing tax-incentives to workplaces that adopt-care sensitive practices.
- ✓ Consider financial incentives for women owned MSMEs to formalize their businesses.
- ✓ Ensure that businesses have access to the information on the resources that are available to them.

***Poverty eradication, social protection and social and public services:*** Governments can ease the care burden on women and families through inclusive and intersectional social assistance policies and programs that address the needs of caregivers at all stages of life. Social protections interventions must take care



*to address the position of caregivers in families and societies in addition to simply the symptoms of poverty, recognizing women as workers and community leaders as well as welfare recipients.*

- ✓ Implement gender-responsive social assistance and social insurance schemes, e.g. non-contributory pension schemes, unconditional cash transfers, universal health insurance, publicly funded long-term care provision, and recognizing women as independent beneficiaries of benefits.
- ✓ Provision of childcare services, early childhood education, and long-term care that is accessible and affordable.

***Data and statistics:*** *Previous epidemics and financial crises have demonstrated the importance of collecting high quality data to identify impacted markets and communities in order to best target relief measures. Without sex-disaggregated data, government response packages will not address the specific needs of caregivers and women-owned SMEs.*

- ✓ Collect sex disaggregated data on social protection beneficiaries and individual level impacts of interventions.
- ✓ Collect sex disaggregated data across sectors on SME types, formality level, location, access to emergency funds, and business outlook (cash flow).

***Partnerships and regional cooperation and coordination:*** *Regional cooperation among countries is essential to controlling the spread and impacts of the virus. Sharing knowledge makes government and community initiatives stronger.*

- ✓ Ensure that partnership work with development partners, UN entities, and sub-regional organization is gender-responsive from a fiscal and policy standpoint.
- ✓ Partnership efforts to build resilient supply chains and SME infrastructure must include consideration for women-owned SMEs, industries that largely employ women, and the informal economy.
- ✓ Promote investment in businesses and hold them to accountable for promoting gender equality.



## Session 3: Addressing violence against women



### Context

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) may be the most widespread violation of human rights worldwide, globally affecting around one in three women in her lifetime. Violence against women occurs at home, in public and private spaces, in workplaces and online. Cutting across all distinctions of geography, class or ethnicity, it is grounded in unequal power relations between women and men and reinforced by discriminatory and gender-biased attitudes, norms and practices that both contribute to such violations and allow them to continue unchallenged. VAWG impedes human development and has serious negative consequences, ranging from multiple immediate to long-term physical, sexual and psychological impacts- including death, which often prevent women and girls from fully participating in society. In addition, it carries tremendous economic costs. VAWG is an economic issue which carries enormous costs for women, families, businesses, national budgets, the economy, and society at large.

Regional evidence suggests that VAWG is widespread throughout Asia and the Pacific, though with significant variations across sites, and within specific contexts. For example, in several Pacific countries, rates of VAWG are as high as two in three women experiencing violence in their lifetime. Available data indicate that South East Asia has prevalence rates of intimate partner violence (IPV) of 37% - and the rate of IPV and non-partner sexual violence combined is 40%. Research shows that exposure to violence is high among 15-19-year-olds, indicating that the experience of violence often starts early in women's

relationships.<sup>2</sup> Challenges also remain in the realization of women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights. These deprivations are exacerbated for women from marginalized groups who, due to intersecting forms of discrimination and exclusion, are at greatest risk of being left behind.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put women and children at greater risk of violence as movements have been restricted, anxieties and fears have risen in families, economic situations have become more precarious, and social networks and protection systems have been weakened.<sup>3</sup> Violence worsened for many women who have been trapped at home with an abusive partner or family member and less able to call or go out to get help – and at a time when service providers that respond to VAWG have been less available due to movement restrictions or being redirected to COVID-related tasks. The proliferation of VAWG during the COVID-19 pandemic has been termed the “shadow pandemic,” in part because the rise of VAWG has happened alongside the increases in the impacts of COVID-19. Violence against women was an ongoing threat well before COVID-19, and without adequate attention to prevention- and changing the social norms that accept violence or allow it to be met with silence, immediate response services, and accountability for violence, it will continue to thrive.

There have been numerous factors that have been contributing to violence, in a context where services have been less available during the COVID-19 pandemic: (1) increased exposure to perpetrators due to lockdown orders, women's disproportionate care responsibilities, online work and school environments; (2) greater levels of financial strain and alcohol consumption, both of which are linked with violence; and (3) limited support services as shelters and support have been deemed “non-essential” in many locations during lockdowns, as COVID-19-related care overwhelm routine and emergency health services. The combination of these VAW facilitators, among others, may result in both short- and long-term increases in violence.

To prevent and reduce VAWG during the pandemic, governments, UN agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector in Asia-Pacific have employed several strategies. Efforts to facilitate reporting instances of VAW have been characterized by creative use of social media- such as targeting messaging to users about helplines to call for help regarding VAWG based on search terms. Other efforts aim to expand services for survivors of violence, either through traditional methods such as creating helplines to offer greater level of telephone and Internet support or expanding funds available to shelters and counseling services, or through non-traditional measures such as repurposing empty hotels and schools to provide extra room to shelters or creating crisis information at supermarkets and pharmacies.

The pandemic has shown that everyone– governments, service providers, CSOs, businesses, the media, influencers, the public – has a role to play and co-create innovative responses to VAW. While the theoretical implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for VAW paint a bleak picture, this can be used as an opportunity to create innovative policy responses to VAW and preventative measures that may last beyond the global health emergency and reduce VAW in the longer term. Governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector should focus on greater communication and information access,

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<sup>2</sup> WHO (2013). Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and Non-partner sexual violence, p .16.

<sup>3</sup> [COVID-19 preparedness and response, United Nations Population Fund \(UNFPA\) interim technical brief](#), 23 March 2020.





creating methods for victims of abuse to contact help without facing retaliation from their abusers, and building out the capacity of support services like crisis centers and shelters. Centering women's wellbeing and gender equality in policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic can mitigate the rise of violence against women.

## Presentations

The session was moderated by **Ms. Melissa Alvarado, Ending Violence against Women Regional Programme Manager, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific**. She introduced the panelists and presented the guiding questions for the session. Ms. Alvarado provided a brief statistical overview on intimate partner violence displaying prevalence rates of violence against women in countries throughout the region, and data that underlines the fact that violence represents a consistent threat to the health and wellbeing of women and girls in the context of COVID-19.

**Ms. Bandana Rana, Vice-Chair of the UN CEDAW Committee**, gave the overview presentation on ***the impact of COVID-19 on violence against women and girls***. She called attention to the recommendations from the Beijing+25 Asia-Pacific Declaration and Report concerning the key area for action: "Freedom from violence, stigma, harmful stereotypes and negative social norms". Identified issues to be addressed include legislation relating to public and private spheres, as well as digital contexts; monitoring and evaluation of policies, as well as gender-sensitive police responses; anti-trafficking legal and regulatory frameworks and strategies; services, programmes and responses for all victims of all forms of violence and other forms of abuse; resources for national women's machineries; collaboration between all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, and engaging men and boys; and closing the digital gender gap. COVID-19 revealed structural weaknesses such as the lack of essential services for survivors of violence against women, and the lack of legal systems to ensure women's access to justice through high quality support services. COVID-19 is a reminder of the importance of having comprehensive, well-coordinated and sustained multi-sectoral services to respond to violence, before, during and post pandemic or emergencies.

Ms. Rana further provided insights into the situation of women's shelters in Nepal. Poor infrastructure of the shelters themselves as well as administrative barriers due to their non-recognition as essential services lead shelters to suffer from general unpreparedness related to the increased needs for protection of women during the pandemic. It is therefore urgent to accelerate the commitments made in the Beijing+25 Asia-Pacific Declaration and to draw upon CEDAW as the strongest mechanism to hold actors accountable.

**Ms. Jan Logie, Under-Secretary for Domestic and Sexual Violence, Ministry of Justice, New Zealand Government**, shared lessons and priorities on VAW and COVID. She emphasized that the responsibility to end family and sexual violence in New Zealand has shifted from the responsibility of individual government agencies, to the responsibility of ten government agencies and their chief executives who are collectively responsible. Ms. Logie highlighted five key strategic points of New Zealand's response to VAW and COVID: 1) clear communications of the services available; 2) clear and consistent communication between government and frontline workers which enabled a strong partnership between civil society and government; 3) family and sexual violence are still taken seriously during COVID- demonstrated by: having information about violence against women on the COVID website and on TV advertisements; and ensuring clear communication with the police leadership regarding violence against women; 4) increased financial support was provided for violence, for resources such as motels as emergency shelters, access to phones, data, and food, and; 5) information and protocols were shared as tools for frontline workers and services shifted online, regular meetings were held by the Ministry of Justice with practitioners to debrief and



support each other to ensure good practice. New Zealand prioritizes and recognizes the intersections of violence against women and women's economic empowerment. The introduction of the Domestic Violence Victims Protection Act has been an important measure to ensure the protection of victims of violence at the workplace, enabling survivors to take domestic violence leave. It is indispensable to provide increased financial support for victims, removing barriers to accessing social security and ensuring pay equity which economically empowers women to have more choices in terms of protecting themselves and living free from violence which is connected to the wider social security system.

**Ms. Kitanaka Chisato, Executive Director, All Japan Women's Shelter Network, and board member of the Asian Network of Women's Shelters (ANWS)**, provided insights into the exchanges ANWS organized among women's shelter practitioners from across the region and the world during COVID-19, which facilitated a well-informed response to the pandemic for women's shelters and frontline responders. She shared key lessons: to address challenges brought forward and exacerbated by COVID-19, having existing national & global networks are vital. An example is the Global Network of Women's Shelters Women's Helpline Project that strives to provide a global database of trustworthy hotlines for victims of domestic violence in every country. Violence against women is not an isolated issue, it is crucial to acknowledge atrocities such as domestic violence, femicide, and institutional racism as ongoing pandemics that are being aggravated by the current COVID-19 crisis. Technology plays a critical role to help survivors of violence and provide training to frontline service providers. There is an urgent need to formally recognize women's shelters as essential services. Evidence shows that in countries where women's shelter networks are strong such as in the United States of America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, shelters could mobilize quickly to lobby government and public for support and raise awareness about the issue of domestic violence during lockdown.

**Dr. Avni Amin, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, WHO**, addressed prevention strategies related to violence against women such as the RESPECT Framework<sup>4</sup>, an interagency framework with wide UN ownership (WHO, UN Women, UNFPA, UNODC, OHCHR) for the implementation of seven strategies to prevent violence against women. She highlighted how the framework can be adapted in the context of COVID. The framework is especially relevant to COVID-19 and can be utilized to emphasize equal, egalitarian relationships including sharing the burden of household and unpaid care work. Poverty reduction is a key strategy to prevention as conflicts and violence are exacerbated in context of stress brought on by poverty. When building a post-COVID economic recovery plan, focus on interventions that specifically target women such as cash transfers (unconditional) and supporting women's access to assets and employment, especially women in informal sectors. Interventions that promote gender equitable norms, including through community mobilization are among those that have a strong evidence base for prevention of VAW and has a wide effect on many health and development outcomes linking multiple SDGs. The investment in capacities of implementers as well as ensuring constant ongoing monitoring and evaluation are critical when scaling-up.

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<sup>4</sup> Based on the principles of respect and equality, and lessons learned from evidence-based results on what works in preventing violence from occurring and recurring, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UN Women, in collaboration with ten other UN, bilateral, and multilateral agencies, have developed "RESPECT Women: Preventing violence against women". This publication provides a comprehensive framework to inform policy makers and implementers about designing, planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating interventions and programmes on preventing and responding to violence against women.



## Interactive discussions

The guiding questions included the following:

- Violence against women has emerged as a serious threat to women, children and families during COVID. What insights have you drawn from this? What has emerged as critical areas that need attention linked to violence against women and COVID?
- How can governments be better prepared to respond to VAW in the future for such emergencies- noting the lifesaving roles of shelters and frontline service providers, as well as the critical roles of police?
- We understand that the New Zealand government has prioritized violence against women services and has boosted funding this year linked with COVID. What informed these decisions to prioritize violence against women?
- COVID-19 has revealed the close associations between women's economic status, safety and experiences of violence. What potential is there to address women's economic empowerment associated with ending violence against women- through policies, programmes, workplace approaches, or other interventions?
- The Asian Network of Women's Shelters is a regional body that connects women's shelters across countries, in this region and globally. During the height of COVID unfolding in this region, ANWS hosted a series of global calls to allow shelters to share challenges and solutions quickly. What were the key challenges that stood out during this time, and what solutions did the shelters and crisis services develop to respond to VAW in the face of COVID?
- Technology-based services, for example, have been getting increased attention. What lessons are emerging related to violence against women and technology?
- COVID has highlighted that violence against women is prevalent and that crises like this put additional pressure on families. In addition to reviewing response services to be sure they meet the needs of survivors during crises, what should be done to prevent violence from happening in the first place?
- What can be done to maintain a focus on prevention even during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What is your single leading recommendation for decision makers and policymakers on ending violence against women, linked to COVID-19, future epidemics and emergencies?

The guiding questions served as points of reference for the discussants regarding their initial presentations and were thus already addressed in the first part of the session. The last question initiated the interactive discussion, and the discussants responded in turn.



It was suggested that Member States would need to review existing policies and assess where they need to be improved, where investments are needed, and where capacity needs to be strengthened. It was further indicated that the elimination and prevention of violence against women is a matter of budget allocation, that frontline services on the ground need more resourcing, and that the use of scarce resources need to be consistently monitored and evaluated. Partnerships and clear communication between governments and communities were identified as crucial in facilitating far-reaching responses to violence as well as evidence-based programming. There is an urgent need for more diversity and representation of women at decision-making levels to ensure reflection and representation of the intersectional aspects of violence against women.

The resourcing the frontline workers on the ground and partnerships between all the players such as the pandemic working group in New Zealand are vital. The informal network of communication will continue; communication between community and government is critical to success. Another area is strengthening the intersectionality of who is at the table - from those with gender-based specialities to people living with disabilities, LGBTIQ+, migrant workers, and youth need to be at the table. It was emphasized that to be successful, there needs to be intersectional representation.

One of the main priorities is the budget, as many NGOs and women's shelters are lacking financial support due to the COVID pandemic. Governments need to prioritize funding and providing resources to shelters recognizing they are essential services.

### **Questions and Discussion with Audience**

Regarding **access to justice**, it is important to achieve a transformation of gender norms within the justice systems that currently hold many women back, particularly elderly women and women with disabilities, from enjoying full legal support. Addressing family violence is extremely important to continue during crises; when courts were closed during the lockdown, that is when essential justice was required. There is a need to promote court services and online court services. CEDAW promotes the accessibility of elderly and people living with a disability to make all support services including shelters very disability friendly. With regard to women's shelters, it can be more beneficial to integrate special, accessible services and facilities into shelters that already exist instead of establishing new specialized ones. Governments should consider shelters and support services catering to family violence as essential services, pre-, post- and during COVID.

Concerning the **CSO-government coordination mechanisms** in the New Zealand context, it was reported that it was initiated by NGOs and has developed into two work streams, for indigenous peoples and non-indigenous peoples working on the frontlines. This is crucial to effectively meet the responsibility for decolonization efforts. Meetings were formalized online, through joint ventures of government agencies and with civil society. Through this joint venture, members of government agencies became regularly involved, and the expertise from communities shapes the government's response. It is essential to create more space for such partnerships.

With regard to **resourcing**, it is important to have a network to share resources and ideas on how to mobilize funding when crises unfold. Although some services have been shifted online to help survivors, technology is only the first step to providing services. It is still important to meet in person to support survivors and provide services. Resourcing remains an issue and has become a more pressing issue during



COVID. Having visibility among networks, organizations, and services providers, having them well known and understood in the community and a supportive base in these contexts when crisis unfold can be helpful.

Gender budget analysis shows a clear demand from policy makers for cost effectiveness. There needs to be a shift from thinking of cost effectiveness in terms of single purpose outcomes to conceiving it in terms of multiple outcomes. Successful interventions on prevention of violence against women usually result not only in reduced rates of violence but bring about positive benefits for women and communities in other areas of life, such as higher rates of school attendance, positive health outcomes, reduction of HIV and teen pregnancy, and so forth. Particularly with a focus on the Agenda 2030 it is crucial to consider how costs for interventions can be distributed across the different ministries and different sectors of States to have multiple benefits and multiple outcomes across the different SDGs. Many interventions are structural interventions at a higher level, it is changing norms that will have benefit for many outcomes such as health and economic outcomes. One strategy is to advocate for ministries of finance to support prevention programming in a cost-effective way. The connections with poverty, women's roles, and lives in the workforce are critical components that inform women to leave an abusive relationship.

### Promising Practices

Since the early stage of COVID-19, the government of Japan has provided 24-hour telephone counselling, counselling through chat in social media and through e-mail in 10 foreign languages. A new networking program with a theme of ending gender-based violence will be launched, inviting countries from Asia-Pacific and Africa. In India, safety and social audits are used as tools for safe cities (<https://safetipin.com/>). The INSPIRE framework (<https://www.end-violence.org/inspire>), launched alongside the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children in 2016, is a complimentary technical package and guidebook for implementing effective, comprehensive programming to combat violence against children. At the Asia Foundation, a Safe Court program was supported by bringing together CSOs and members of the judiciary. Through this shared forum, CSOs demonstrate the impact of gender-blind judicial systems to members of the judiciary and propose recommendations and contribute to training to ensure gender inclusive approaches to court processes. In the Philippines, the "Men Oppose to VAW Everywhere" (MOVE) was organized in 2006 with the goal of involving men from various national government agencies and local government units in the effort of ending VAW. In this way, Gender and Development programs were integrated into the programs of national agencies, LGUs and other government instrumentalities.

COVID has led to re-examining development programming to understand the flexibility of development in the context of emergencies and how-to better plan for the unexpected shocks and into systems. The commentary from participants and the speakers can be summarized with the following themes and recommendations:

1. **Services to respond to violence against women, and reproductive health services, are essential** and lifesaving, including during emergencies and pandemics, and should be resourced adequately.
2. **CEDAW** should continue to be used to provide direction and means to hold governments accountable, and for governments to hold themselves accountable.

3. **Coordinated approaches for VAW response**, and networks of service providers are needed, to allow countries to have a “center of expertise” and respond quickly in times of crisis, including for health, social welfare, **policing and justice** systems.
4. **It is important for government to** communicate that it takes violence against women seriously and to name the approaches that are being supported.
5. **Partnerships between civil society, government and civil society** are needed to enable quicker communication between communities and government and facilitate creative solution building.
6. Keeping focus on the **intersectional needs of women** is critical to ensure that all women are being reached.
7. **Prevention of violence against women is possible, approaches that work are available**, and this is relevant during times of development and emergencies.
8. **Violence against women is linked with women’s economic status and empowerment**, poverty reduction, social protection, and workplace policies- this needs to feature in economic recovery plans as well as prevention approaches.
9. **Governments should provide caregiver services as an essential service** and there should be local support systems to ensure safety of women with disabilities/ older women who have hired these services.

## Recommendations

Key recommendations were put forward for consideration in the final session 5 on ‘looking ahead’. These recommendations are structured according to the 2019 Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review.

**Poverty eradication, social protection and social and public services:** *Governments play a crucial role in communicating and disseminating information about available services for victims of violence at all levels. Social protection for women affected by or at risk of experiencing any form of violence, particularly domestic violence, includes providing and maintaining help services and facilities that must be accessible for all women.*

- ✓ Keep essential services for survivors of violence running and available. These include health, police, shelter, psychological, social and justice services.
- ✓ Ensure well-coordinated, quality multi-sectoral services are available.
- ✓ Declare all gender-based violence and reproductive health services such as women’s shelters essential services.
- ✓ Establish and promote comprehensive, interdisciplinary services, programmes and responses for all victims of all forms of violence and other forms of abuse, girls, and children.
- ✓ Support shelters for survivors of violence to keep them running, support helplines so that all calls are free of charge and provide mobile phones, phone credits/data, Wi-Fi mobile hotspots, and operational or technology assistance to front-line providers of services to survivors of violence.
- ✓ Ensure gender-sensitive police response, completed prosecutions, quality support services, and data collection and evidence.
- ✓ Spread clear messages to the public that the issue of violence against women and domestic violence taken seriously by the government.





- ✓ Provide accessible information on the help services available.
- ✓ Foster communication between the government and frontline workers.
- ✓ Provide protocols and tools to guide frontline workers.
- ✓ Enable shifts to work more online if necessary, and sharing good practices for doing so.
- ✓ Ensure that staffing, funds and other resources remain adequate to deal with the problem and *are adapted to serve those in need in times of crisis*.
- ✓ Integrate special, accessible services and facilities into already existing women's shelters instead of establishing new specialized ones.
- ✓ Provide increased financial support for victims.
- ✓ Declare care giver services and local support systems essential service to ensure safety of women with disabilities/ older women who have hired these services.
- ✓ Address the gender and class-based digital divide when designing tech-related solutions.
- ✓ Ensure access to help facilities and digital services for women with disabilities.
- ✓ Scale up domestic violence helplines, while ensuring quality services.
- ✓ Provide free counselling services and legal aid in vernacular languages.
- ✓ Technically connect female helplines agents with policewomen.
- ✓ Provide counselling help lines for adolescent girls.

***Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes:*** Any progress on eliminating VAW in Asia-Pacific over the last 30 years faces undoing during the pandemic. Efforts to prevent and eliminate VAW must be bolstered. The deeply structural unequal power relations between women and men are root causes for existing gender inequalities, and governments must work towards a transformation of these negative gender norms in order to prevent violence against women and girls.

- ✓ Recognize that violence against women and children during emergencies and epidemics requires immediate action.
- ✓ Amend and enforce legislation – referencing CEDAW, CRC and international human rights obligations – to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including in digital contexts.
- ✓ Implement, monitor, and evaluate policies to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private, including digital contexts.
- ✓ Implement comprehensive anti-trafficking legal and regulatory frameworks and strategies to combat and eliminate all forms of domestic and cross-border trafficking in persons and exploitation, both online and offline.
- ✓ Strengthen and allocate resources to national machineries for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- ✓ Leverage the media to influence social norms and transform the acceptance of violence against women and children and gender inequality.
- ✓ Collaborate with all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, and engage men and boys and women and girls, to promote non-discriminatory, culturally appropriate and gender-sensitive portrayals of women and men.
- ✓ Close the digital gender gap by enhancing women's participation as users, content creators, employees, entrepreneurs, innovators, and leaders, and increasing access of all women and girls to digital technologies.



- ✓ Include all gender-based violence and family law cases in the purview of court urgent matters.
- ✓ Addressing sexist hate online through new legal measures:
  - Ground content governance standards in privacy, dignity, and the prevention of harm.
  - Provide clear guidance on intermediary accountability for third party content.
  - Establish avenues for speedy redress for victims of sexist hate speech, gender trolling and gender-based cyberviolence.
- ✓ Foster a paradigm shift from framing women as 'victims' and 'vulnerable' to supporting local women's and girls' own agency and autonomy to acknowledge and strengthen their home-grown approaches and movements.

***Participation, accountability, and gender-responsive institutions:*** *The ending and prevention of violence against women is substantially a matter of budget allocation. Governments must further address the need for more diversity at the decision-making level to ensure reflection and representation of the intersectional aspects of violence against women.*

- ✓ Facilitate a transformation of gender norms within the justice system that currently hold many women back, particularly older women and women with disabilities, from enjoying full legal support.
- ✓ Promote online services to improve general access to justice systems.
- ✓ Strengthen inclusive and responsive local government institutions through informed knowledge, resources and legal enforcement. Start at the local level.
- ✓ Invest in local and frontline mechanism/actors.
- ✓ Ensure that interventions for prevention follow certain guiding principles, e.g. as set out in the RESPECT framework.
- ✓ Invest in capacities of implementers.
- ✓ Ensure constant and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
- ✓ Make evidence-based approaches feasible through donor support for smaller-scaled home-grown programs that do not have the capacities to afford evaluation of their effectiveness.
- ✓ Review policies and assess where they need to be improved, where investments are needed, and where capacity needs to be strengthened.
- ✓ Ensure that frontline services on the ground receive the necessary resourcing.
- ✓ Consistently monitor and evaluate the use of scarce resources.
- ✓ Foster the shift from thinking of cost effectiveness in terms of single purpose outcomes to conceiving it in terms of multiple outcomes for it to have multiple benefits and multiple outcomes across the different SDGs.

***Partnerships and regional cooperation and coordination:*** *Government, Civil society organizations, private sector, academia, and other UN agencies play an integral role in providing support services to survivors of violence. During the COVID-19 pandemic, governments and the UN should aim to provide funding and administrative support to CSOs as much as possible.*

- ✓ Maintain up-to-date information on CSOs in each country that focus on preventing and eliminating VAW so support can be quickly offered during the pandemic and other crises.



- ✓ Establish regular meetings or forums for governments, CSOs and UN Agencies to convene during the pandemic and share best practices or mishaps related to their attempts to combat the shadow pandemic.
- ✓ Engage all stakeholders (CSOs, donors, the private sector, media, etc.) to co-create solutions and innovative responses to VAW.
- ✓ For the private sector: Demonstrate commitment to gender equality and ending violence against women and girls and back it up by supporting employees who are experiencing domestic violence; providing information about where to seek help, and providing leave time if needed; by supporting women's shelters, crisis centres and helplines for survivors of violence and by donating business services such as hotel rooms to shelter survivors, free calls to helplines, advertising space for crisis services; supplies as well as technology and service support.
- ✓ Establish national and global networks to address the global pandemic of violence against women.

**Data and statistics:** Available data on VAW in Asia and the Pacific is limited for pre-COVID-19 pandemic times. Collecting additional data on VAW during the pandemic is particularly difficult because in-person surveys are difficult to conduct safely. Data collection must be improved in normal and crisis times to have a better understanding of the prevalence of VAW.

- ✓ Rely on existing prevalence surveys and research on violence against women where available, noting that data collection during movement restrictions and lockdowns may not be possible due to inability to guarantee safety, privacy, or confidentiality.
- ✓ Emphasize high standards for ethical and safety protocols regarding any data collection and research on violence against women and use of existing guidance.
- ✓ Conduct interviews of support service providers during the pandemic to get a better understanding of the changes in VAW case volume without needing to enter individual homes.
- ✓ Train specialized researchers to conduct regular, high quality national-level surveys for the purpose of collecting data on violence against women with the highest ethical and safety standards.
- ✓ Collect more data on other forms of violence rather than solely focusing on intimate partner violence.
- ✓ Apply evidence-based approaches for effective programming on prevention.
- ✓ Institute survivor support services of state agencies, and an online, centralized system to collect and track data on violence against women.
- ✓ Disaggregate data should according to income/wealth, education, ethnicity, disability status, geographic location, including gender and sexual identities, severity, and type of violence, as required under indicator 5.2.2 of SDG 5.
- ✓ Analyze synchronized data across various components of the redressal ecosystem (helplines, OSCs, shelters etc.), and avoid duplication.

**Equitable and inclusive development, shared prosperity, and decent work:** The COVID-19 pandemic has not only exacerbated women's exposure to domestic violence but has put them under an increased risk of



*facing violence in the workplace. Interventions aiming at the protection of women from violence must consider special measures of protection for working women.*

- ✓ Introduce laws and legislation to ensure the protection of women from violence at the workplace.

#### Session 4: Women and environmental sustainability



#### Context

2020 was intended to be a pivotal year for the global gender equality agenda and global climate change ambition. It was supposed to be a year to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action and to celebrate the start of the Paris Agreement implementation. Yet, the unexpected and rapid spread of the coronavirus has set in our paths an unprecedented challenge. We can use this time as an opportunity to better understand the impact of climate change on gender equality and how these impacts and associated gendered vulnerabilities are exacerbated in the context of COVID-19 and to ensure that we rebuild from this crisis inclusively, equitably and sustainably. It is important to keep the momentum for the inclusive climate resilient development and continue advocating for a more climate-friendly and sustainable development.

At the Asia-Pacific regional Ministerial Conference dedicated to the review of progress in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (November 2020), the gender machineries have expressed their continuous commitment to the action agenda on environmental conservation, climate action and resilience-building, which called for the integration and mainstreaming of a gender perspective into environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation, and promoting gender-responsive climate

action, disaster risk reduction and resilience-building. The action agenda recognized the urgency and importance of the climate crisis faced by the Pacific small island developing States and other low-lying countries.

Asia and the Pacific is one of the most vulnerable regions in the world to climate change and climate-induced natural disasters. The spread of COVID-19 multiplies already existing significant threats to thousands of people in the region, where the impact of climate change on health and well-being is already devastating. Current data on the COVID-19 impact shows that people's exposure to the virus varies with factors, such as place of residence, income and gender. COVID-19 adds economic pressures on our society, which are complementary to already existing structural barriers, discriminatory social norms and gender inequalities that are exacerbated by climate change.

**Impacts of climate change on gender equality:** Climate change affects all of us, but the impacts are felt hardest by women who are already vulnerable – those who suffer from pre-existing inequalities and are involved in vulnerable livelihood sectors or are otherwise out of the safety nets provided by formal work arrangements. Climate change disproportionately affects the health of women and girls. Due to climate crises, women are held back by restrictive discriminatory social norms and face greater challenges.

Before the COVID-19 spread was announced a pandemic, climate change was already recognized as one of the top 10 global threats that require urgent attention of global leaders. Threats like the climate or biodiversity crises cannot be addressed in a comprehensive way without paying urgent attention to repairing societal divisions and driving sustainable economic growth.<sup>5</sup> This argument can also be made for dealing with the current crisis: linkages between the global climate change agenda, promotion of social inclusion, and gender equality should be integrated in the COVID-19 recovery action.

**Climate-friendly sustainable socio-economic recovery from COVID-19:** Now is the time to begin planning and preparing to rebuild economies and bring back renewed, sustainable progress and prosperity. While doing so, governments should build the bridge between fighting COVID-19 and not lose sight of persisting climate change impacts and ecological destruction and available climate mitigation and adaptation measures, including nature-based solutions, while upholding critical gender equality and social justice commitments. While designing the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, we need to ensure that a sustainable response provides benefits to all – women, men, girls, boys, vulnerable, marginalized, those living with disabilities, aging population and others. The COVID-19 crisis further highlights how important it is to empower local economies to be climate resilient. Improving sustainability of livelihoods is essential for effective and inclusive recovery.

## Presentations

The session was moderated by **Ms. Inkar Kadyrzhanova, Regional Adviser on Gender and Climate Change, UN Women Asia and the Pacific**. She reminded of the call to action of the Beijing+25 Declaration, the recommendations of the Asia-Pacific Declaration, and the challenges reported in the national Beijing+25 review reports.

The keynote presentation on '**Overview: Climate Change and Gender in the Context of COVID-19**' was delivered by **Ms. Angie Dazé, Associate on Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation, International Institute on Sustainable Development**. She started by outlining gendered impacts of COVID-19; based on

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<sup>5</sup> World Economic Forum (2020). Global risks report 2020. 15<sup>th</sup> edition. Available at: [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Global\\_Risk\\_Report\\_2020.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Risk_Report_2020.pdf).



gender differences in exposure to the virus due to differing roles and responsibilities. It was broadly reported that during the lockdowns, women had experienced an increase in unpaid care work and gender-based violence. She explained that the barriers faced by women in access to health and social support services are impeding their advancement, and that COVID-19 brought critical economic impacts on people with precarious livelihoods. These gendered impacts are common themes between COVID-19 and climate change. She then suggested a gender-responsive approach to climate action, including recognition of gender differences in needs and capacities for climate action, gender-equitable participation and influence in planning and decision-making processes, and gender-equitable access to finance, and she explained other benefits resulting from investments in climate action. She concluded with key actions for a gender-responsive approach to climate action including sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis as the foundation for action, an intersectional approach, and gender-responsive budgeting and allocation of financing.

Following, five panellists shared their views on:

- The impacts of environmental degradation and climate change on women in the new COVID-19 reality
- Actions or solutions (by state actors, civil society, international community and private sector) to alleviate this situation.

**Ms. Keya Khan, Joint Secretary, Gender Focal Point, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bangladesh,** outlined impacts of environmental degradation and climate change on women, and updated the participants on the initiatives taken by the Government of Bangladesh regarding climate change and gender issues. The Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan implemented in 2009 includes specialized programmes on livelihood protection of vulnerable socio-economic groups (including women), and strengthening gender consideration in climate change management, while a separate Bangladesh Climate Change and Gender Action Plan (CCGAP) was implemented in 2013. The National Women Development Policy developed by the Minister of Women and Children Affairs in 2011 proposes strategies for the protection of women and children before, during and after disaster. She then provided information on the overall negative impacts of COVID-19 on pre-existing structural social and economic vulnerabilities of women, girls and diverse gender groups, and the challenges faced by these groups in accessing information and health, education, and WASH, protection and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) services as well as support for livelihoods in Bangladesh. She emphasised that the government should increase tests in where most of the workers are women, and awareness campaigns about the COVID-19 situation should be organised by the Government, NGOs and community organizations in the slum areas as well as in the print and electronic media.

**Ms. Ruth Manorama, President, National Alliance of Women, National Federation of Dalit Women, National Centre for Labour, India,** stated that environmental degradation and climate change impacts on gender are widely acknowledged and COVID-19 has aggravated the existing challenges and heightened risks for women. Women are not only more impacted by economic and social setbacks than men through deepening fault lines in existing economical systems such as restrictions of access to land ownership and natural resources. She highlighted that women are also well suited to find solutions to prevent further degradation and adapt to climate change. She further called for the urgent need to look at existing realities from gender and intersectional perspectives that allow for the identification of these inequalities and





incorporate greater protection and assistance to include vulnerable populations in COVID-19 response plans. She concluded by outlining solutions such as: critically analysing environmental justice and building on the achievements of the environmental justice movements in extensively documenting the differential impacts of environmental degradation on women and girls. She further insisted on advocating for greater participation of women in decision making spaces and working in solidarity with women, who are most affected by environmental degradation and climate change to amplify their voices every step of the way.

**Ms. Noelene Nabulivou, Political adviser and co-founder, CSO “Diverse Voices & Action (DIVA) for Equality”, Fiji**, elaborated on the interconnections of environmental degradation and social failure aggravated by the current pandemic. Climate change and environmental damage interconnects with the violations on bodily autonomy and integrity, and on how human rights and safety and security are experienced, and the ability of vulnerable people to experience environmental justice. Climate change and the natural system breaking down are consequences of long-term decisions by various actors such as states, governments, corporations, development agencies informed by the false logic of competitive interests between economic and ecological sustainability that are embedded in negative social structures. She further insisted that tactics and strategies for addressing women’s challenges in climate change and environmental degradation should be based on the human rights-based approaches and economic and ecological justice. This should include women in all diversity as well as transgender, non-binary gender people and also men and boys in Fiji and the Pacific. She emphasised urgent climate action led by women, including mitigation, adaptation, response to localized loss and damage, and technology development. She also stressed the importance of mainstreaming gender in the multilateral efforts for climate finance, as well as the need for a gender-just multilateral funding system.

**Mr. Mozaharul Alam, Regional Coordinator, Climate Change Programme, Asia and the Pacific Office, UNEP**, discussed the issue of threatened livelihoods of women in deeply disadvantaged positions due to unequal tenure rights, unequal access to livelihood assets, and limited participation in decision-making. He then pointed out the reasons for placing high importance on disaggregated data and information to understand the impacts of environmental degradation and climate change on women and support decision making. He reminded about the clear trend in Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar of “feminization of agriculture”. He further described how climate impacts are exacerbated due to COVID-19, illustrating the dependence on home-based sales/markets to sell agricultural produce and goods and informal jobs. Particularly in the context of the informal economy, women are at an increased risk of loss of livelihoods as many of women-owned small-scale businesses are unregistered and therefore not eligible for any state-provided benefits. He concluded by stating where to focus in future, including on building back better, protecting global environmental governance, mainstreaming gender in all aspects of our business and responsibility of all, and creating alternative livelihood options for women, such as entrepreneurship development and engaging them in renewable energy sector , as the EmPower project has aimed to do.

**Ms. Fleur Newman, Action Empowerment Unit Lead, ACE, Gender and Youth; Gender Focal Point and Focal Point for Women, UN Climate Change Secretariat**, was stating the impacts of environmental degradation and climate change on women and how these impacts are exacerbated due to COVID-19, and shared insights on the climate change negotiations at the global level. She explained that the differentiated impacts of climate change on women and men has been officially recognized under the UNFCCC process. She then highlighted on what policy actions should be prioritized to enable gender-



sensitive transformation in climate and environment policy space and which other actions (by state actors, civil society, international community and private sector) should be put in place, to accelerate efforts in this area noting the priority actions highlighted in the Beijing+25 Asia-Pacific Declaration. She further described what are some emerging good practices or examples of innovative policies by governments, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) or private sector that have demonstrated how COVID recovery packages could be designed to be more inclusive. She emphasised on the urgency to address climate change which has intensified during the COVID pandemic and a need of a rapid transition to low carbon, climate resilient and just economies and societies. She concluded that we learn the lessons of this global health crisis, which has further exposed the inadequacy of business-as-usual approaches.

### Interactive discussions

After the interventions by the panellist, the audience was invited to give feedback and ask questions. The questions and answers session were moderated by **Ms. Riina Haavisto**, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

The guiding questions included the following:

- What are **the impacts of environmental degradation and climate change on women**?
- How have these impacts been exacerbated due to COVID-19?
- Noting the priority actions highlighted in the Beijing+25 Asia-Pacific Declaration:
  - What **policy actions should be prioritized** to enable gender-sensitive transformation in climate and environment policy space?
  - Which **other actions** (by state actors, civil society, international community and private sector) should be put in place, **to accelerate efforts in this area**?
  - What are some emerging **good practices or examples of innovative policies** by governments, CSOs or private sector that have demonstrated how COVID recovery packages could be designed to be more inclusive?

Discussion in the chat box was lively, with participants sharing resources on gender, climate and environment issues, and examples of good practices involving women in sustainable COVID-19 recovery and climate action. Participants stressed that there is a momentum now for strengthening local economies through various sustainable activities, but it needs to be done at the systemic level and address underlying structural inequalities to build back better and differently. Solutions such as climate-smart agricultural initiatives lead by women, fisheries, sustainable forest management, development of inclusive climate change and flood response systems, and empowering women in waste management were mentioned in the discussion.

It was highlighted, that intersectional gender analysis, gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation systems, allocating resources for gender inclusion, and gender-mainstreaming in Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) on greenhouse gases reduction and climate change adaptation policies are needed to achieve the SDG 5: Gender Equality. Sex, age, and diversity disaggregated data produced by national statistical systems is important for providing evidence for the development of policies and programmes as well as tracking progress of women, men, girls, boys, and vulnerable groups in climate action.



Participants raised concerns about the shrinking space for CSOs and the need to support women networks on the ground in climate action and disaster risk reduction to ensure inclusiveness and that no-one is left behind. It is important to ensure women have access to opportunities that emerge from COVID-19 response and that grassroot CSOs, including those led by women and youth, are also included in the response. Finally, it was discussed that budgeting processes need to be gender-responsive and financing systems gender just to better respond to adaptation and mitigation needs of women.

### Promising Practices & useful references

- The Asian Farmer's Association For Sustainable Rural Development is supporting small scale women and men farmers in the Asian region, enabling them to engage in sustainable activities and cooperation to build solidary and resilient farming communities (<http://asianfarmers.org/>).
- In India, Swayam Shikshan Prayog facilitates women-led climate resilient farming that acknowledges women as active agents and bearers of knowledge, enabling them to gain cultivation rights from their families (<https://swayamshikshanprayog.org/women-led-climate-resilient-farming/>).
- A toolkit that was developed by the NAP Global Network in collaboration with the LEG and the Adaptation Committee. It was launched at COP last year. ([Toolkit for a Gender-Responsive Process to Formulate and Implement National Adaptation Plans \(NAPs\)](#))
- The NAP Global Network's second synthesis report on integrating gender considerations in NAP processes. It provides an overview of the areas that have made significant progress in the last two years, as well as the additional efforts that will be required in the coming years. ([Advancing Gender-Responsive Climate Action Through National Adaptation Plan \(NAP\) Processes](#))

### Recommendations

Some key recommendations were put forward for consideration in the final session 5 on 'looking ahead'. These recommendations are structured according to the 2019 Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review.

The participants discussed the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on women and how those impacts are exacerbated in the COVID-19 context taking into account the fact that in our region every year, the livelihoods of millions are threatened by climate-induced disasters.

Noting the importance of ratcheting the implementation of gender transformative policies aimed at environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation, and promoting gender-responsive climate action, and resilience building, it was recognized that in the context of the new reality, the efforts by governments, civil society and private sector should be addressed to including forward-looking sustainable, environmentally ambitious and socially inclusive approaches in the COVID-19 economic recovery packages. Countries need to ensure that the vast global fiscal support deployed to fight the pandemic also works to build a smarter, greener and more equitable future.

The transformational recovery from the pandemic is only possible through coordinated action by all actors, therefore, the recommendations are put forward for each actor to take an action as below:

The participants agreed that **the role of state actors** is;



- ✓ To encourage a behavioural and cultural shift to promote women as holders of knowledge and as agents of change;
- ✓ Collect sex-disaggregated data and conduct gender analysis for informed climate policy and action;
- ✓ Make people the top priority in the COVID recovery packages taking into account unique knowledge and role of women in their communities with full and equal leadership and participation of women at all levels;
- ✓ Build technical capacities and include women in decision making processes to intergrade gender perspectives into environmental and climate policies and programmes, and support gender-responsive risk-informed disaster prevention and preparedness systems;
- ✓ Support gender-just multilateralism, funding system, and global perspectives on climate action and gender mainstreaming in climate action from the local, national to global levels through partnerships and;
- ✓ Establish institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms both across ministries and vertically for subnational and local governance including civil society, grassroots organizations and indigenous peoples and communities.

Also, it was discussed that the recommendations should be complemented **by civil society and private sector actions;**

- ✓ Civil society should work with grassroot communities, national and provincial governments, and other partners in developing gendered emergency and recovery response plans and incorporating greater protection and assistance for the vulnerable groups in climate actions;
- ✓ Create more spaces for women to connect, share and solidarize on climate action and environmental management at the civil society level;
- ✓ Private sector should focus on developing innovative business plans and gender equitable investment plan, which are inclusive and climate resilient;
- ✓ Civil society and private sector in line with governments need to invest in local level action and women networks, and to upscale the good examples of sustainable land and natural resource management

Overall, all actors need to act on:

- ✓ Achieving freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes by applying an overall approach of a long-term, systemic and intersectional nature that addresses the historic and persistent inequalities between women and men and addressing unequal social structures



***"Intersectional gender analysis is essential to inform decision making, policy development and implementation of programs. If we don't understand what the barriers are, it's very difficult to remove them. People of all genders and social groups, including people with disabilities, need to be involved in analyzing problems and defining solutions."***



**Ms. Angie Dazé**  
Associate on resilience and  
climate change adaptation  
International Institute for  
Sustainable Development

***"We really need to see Covid-19 as an opportunity for dramatic change for a reimagined world rather than tinkering around the edges of a system that is broken and structures that sustain and deepen inequalities."***



**Ms. Jane Sloane**  
Senior Director  
Women's Empowerment Program  
The Asia Foundation



***"Gender equality does not just require addressing discrimination against women and girls, but also dismantling structures, social norms and institutions of cis-heteronormativity and the binary of femininity and masculinity, and centering people's pleasure and dignity."***



**Ms. Vica Larasati**  
Co-Founder and Executive Director  
Qbukatabu

***"We need a gender-just funding ecosystem, reflecting the different gender, economic and climate realities of people."***



**Ms. Noelene Nabulivou**  
Political adviser and co-founder, CSO  
"DiverseVoices & Action (DIVA) for Equality"  
Fiji





### Context

The final session was co-facilitated by Ms. Cai Cai, Chief, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP, and Ms. Sarah Knibbs, Deputy Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

The objective of the final session is to articulate key recommendations for priority actions to implement the Beijing+25 outcomes, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. These recommendations will be directed towards (a) ESCAP member states, cf. their commitments to the 2019 Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review; (b) civil society organizations; (c) private sector actors and (d) UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, cf. their respective mandates to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Ms. Cai Cai, Chief, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP,** thanked all participants for their active contribution to the EGM and recapped some of the key recommendations. Recommendations from Session 1 on the Beijing+25 Framework emphasized the importance of regional cooperation, collaborative projects, gender statistics and solidarity, to put women front and centre – not only in COVID-19 recovery efforts – but from here on onwards. Recommendations from Session 2 on women's economic empowerment focused on extending gender-responsive policies, recognizing and redesigning the care economy to reduce the burden on women, to provide financial, technical and networking support to promote women's entrepreneurship, and enabling women's access to digital tools, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Going forward, ESCAP will continue

to host intergovernmental dialogue and support the region's stakeholders in realising the gender commitments.

**Ms. Sarah Knibbs, Deputy Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific,** thanked all participants for the lively and energetic exchange and recapped some of the key recommendations. Recommendations from Session 3 on addressing violence against women focused on the interconnectedness of women's exposure to violence and their economic status, empowerment, poverty reduction, social protection and workplace policies. Emphasis was put on essential health and care services, especially for elderly women and women with disabilities. Clear public communication, the functioning of networks and service providers and partnerships are key to an effective crisis response. Recommendations from Session 4 on women and environmental sustainability emphasized the interconnectedness of the pandemic, the environment and gender equality. Transformational recovery needs coordinated action by all actors on the basis of a behavioural and cultural shift to promote women's importance as agents of change. Including women in decision-making processes is as important as involving civil society and grassroots actors in developing gendered emergency recovery response plans. Innovative business plans and gender equitable investment plans which need to be inclusive and climate resilient are key priorities for the private sector.

Final questions of the audience on CSO engagement and partnerships were addressed by both, Ms. Cai Cai and Ms. Sarah Knibbs. Ms. Cai Cai stated that CSO engagement is of vital importance in the overall ESCAP roadmap of implementing the 2030 Agenda. This is highlighted as a corporate strategy for the UN system as a whole, but also as an overall strategy for the roadmap on SDGs. ESCAP is working with member states in addressing this aspect, and will work with the other divisions, especially utilizing ESCAP's Asia Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development as a main vehicle.

UN Women has different engagements in several countries in the region on agricultural development with IFAD, FAO and other relevant agencies as part of the Socio-Economic Response Plan. Also, for UN Women, CSO engagement is both, part of the regional mechanism but also part of UN Women's work at country level to put UN Women's Beijing+25 commitments into action. Above that, integrating perspectives of intersectionality is a substantial component of UN Women's work with CSOs.



## Annexes

### Programme

**Tuesday 15 September 2020 from 09:30 –12:30 hours (Thailand Standard Time)**

09:10-09:30	Online log-in (Zoom) <a href="https://unwomen.zoom.us/j/95627395184?pwd=WGJZL2tWYXFERSHFU2pMQ3BrWIBHUT09">https://unwomen.zoom.us/j/95627395184?pwd=WGJZL2tWYXFERSHFU2pMQ3BrWIBHUT09</a>
09:30-09:50	<p><b>Welcome Remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dr. Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)</li> <li>Ms. Sarah Knibbs, Deputy Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific</li> </ul> <p><b>Overview of the EGM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms. Channe Lindstrøm Oğuzhan, Social Affairs Officer, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP</li> </ul>
09:50-11:00	<p><b>Session 1: Beijing+25 framework</b></p> <p>This session will introduce the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action through presentations on the “2019 Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review” and will place the subsequent discussions within the context of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Cai Cai, Chief, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP</p> <p><b>Presentations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>2019 Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review</b> <i>Ms. Emily Veiqati, Divisional Women’s Interest Officer, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Fiji</i></li> <li><b>Reflections on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the context of advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment in the Philippines</b> <i>Ms. Kristine Rosary Yuzon-Chaves, Executive Director, Philippine Commission on Women, Manila, Philippines</i></li> <li><b>The impact of COVID-19 on gender-related Sustainable Development Goals</b></li> </ul>



	<p><i>Ms. Sara Duerto Valero, Regional Advisor on Gender Statistics, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Drivers to accelerate gender equality in the UN Decade of Action</b> <i>Ms. Gita Sen, Distinguished Professor, Public Health Foundation of India</i></li> <li>• <b>CSO perspectives on key priorities in the context of the 2019 Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment</b> <i>Ms. Nalini Singh, Executive Director, Fiji Women's Rights Movement</i></li> </ul> <p>Interactive discussions (30 minutes)</p>
11:00-12:30	<p><b>Session 2: Women's economic empowerment</b></p> <p>This session will offer perspectives on challenges and opportunities to enhance women's economic empowerment, including in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Joni Simpson, Senior Specialist, Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination for East and South East Asia and the Pacific, International Labour Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Overview presentation</b></li> </ul> <p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Initiatives to advance women's economic empowerment in Nepal</b> <i>Ms. Yam Kumari Khatiwada, Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal</i></li> <li>• <b>The care economy and women's economic participation</b> <i>Ms. Deepta Chopra, Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies</i> <i>Ms. Meenakshi Krishnan, Organization Development Consultant &amp; Doctoral Researcher, Institute of Development Studies</i></li> <li>• <b>Fostering enabling environment for women entrepreneurs in Asia and the Pacific</b> <i>Ms. Sudha Gooty, Programme Manager-Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship, ESCAP</i></li> <li>• <b>Holistic Approaches to Private Sector Engagement to boost Women's Economic Empowerment</b> <i>Ms. Katja Freiwald, Regional Programme Lead 'WeEmpower Asia', UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific</i></li> </ul> <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ms. Nadira Mohd Yusoff</b>, Entrepreneur &amp; Founder (CEO) of Kiddocare and Head of AWEN Malaysia</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ms. Cai Yiping</b>, Executive Committee member, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)</li> </ul> <p>Interactive discussions (40 minutes)</p>
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**Wednesday 16 September 2020 from 09:00 –12:30 hours (Thailand Standard Time)**

08:30-08:55	<p>Online log-in (Zoom)</p> <p><a href="https://unwomen.zoom.us/j/95627395184?pwd=WGJZL2tWYXFRSHFRU2pMQ3BrWIBHUT09">https://unwomen.zoom.us/j/95627395184?pwd=WGJZL2tWYXFRSHFRU2pMQ3BrWIBHUT09</a></p>
09:00-10:30	<p><b>Session 3: Addressing violence against women</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Melissa Alvarado, Ending Violence against Women Regional Programme Manager, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Overview presentation</b></li> </ul> <p>Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Impact of COVID-19 on violence against women and girls</b> <i>Ms. Bandana Rana, Vice Chair of the UN CEDAW Committee</i></li> </ul> <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ms. Jan Logie</b>, Under-Secretary for Domestic and Sexual Violence, New Zealand Government</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Chisato Kitanaka</b>, Executive Director, All Japan Women's Shelter Network</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Avni Amin</b>, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, WHO</li> </ul> <p>Interactive discussions (40 minutes)</p>
10:30-12:00	<p><b>Session 4: Women and environmental sustainability</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Inkar Kadyrzhanova, UN Women Regional Adviser on Gender and Climate Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Overview presentation</b> <i>Ms. Angie Daze, International Institute on Sustainable Development</i></li> </ul> <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ms. Keya Khan</b>, Joint Secretary, Gender Focal Point, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bangladesh</li> <li>• <b>Mrs. Ruth Manorama</b>, Asia Dalit Rights Forum and Global Call for Action against poverty, India</li> <li>• <b>Mrs. Noelene Nabulivou</b>, Co-founder, Diverse Voices and Action (DIVA) For Equality, Fiji</li> <li>• <b>Mr. Mozaharul Alam</b>, Regional Coordinator, Climate Change Programme, Asia and the Pacific Office, United Nations Environment Programme</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ms. Fleur Newman</b>, Action Empowerment Unit Lead   ACE, Gender and Youth, UNFCCC Gender Focal Point and Focal Point for Women, UN Climate Change Secretariat</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Interactive discussions (40 minutes)</a></p>
12:00-12:30	<p><b>Session 5: Looking ahead</b></p> <p>The objective of this final moderated discussion is to articulate key recommendations for priority actions to implement the Beijing+25 outcomes, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. These recommendations will be directed towards (a) ESCAP member states, cf. their commitments to the 2019 Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review; (b) civil society organizations; (c) private sector actors and (d) UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, cf. their respective mandates to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.</p> <p><i>Co-facilitators:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Cai Cai, Chief, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP</li> <li>• Ms. Sarah Knibbs, Deputy Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific</li> </ul>





## Speaker and moderator profiles

- **Dr. Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)**



Dr. Srinivas Tata is the Director of the Social Development Division of ESCAP. He has 15 years of experience of working with the United Nations. He is a physician by qualification with experience in finance, social policy, public health and programme management.

He has served in wide range of positions. He has previously served as the Chief of the Capacity Development and Partnerships Section of the Strategy and Programme Management Division, and provided support to all ESCAP Divisions and Offices for the formulation and implementation of technical cooperation projects and managed partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders. He also served as the Chief of Social Policy and Population Section in the Social Development Division from 2012 to 2016, focusing on population ageing, demographic change, migration and health. He was also posted as the Deputy Chief of the Regional Commissions New York Office from 2010 to 2012.

Prior to joining the UN, he was posted as Director (Public Health) in the Ministry of Health in the Government of India, dealing with financing and implementation of large health programmes, and WTO negotiations on affordable access to medicines. He also worked as an Under Secretary in the Central Ministry of Finance dealing with indirect taxation policy and tariffs on a range of commodities.

- **Ms. Sarah Knibbs, Deputy Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific**



Ms. Knibbs has been working in the Asia Pacific region for the last 25 years, with a range of organisations including UN Women, UNFPA, DFID China, Save the Children Fund, VSO and the Khmer HIV/AIDS NGO Alliance (KHANA). Her work has focused on gender, violence against women, HIV, youth issues, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. Sarah joined UN Women in 2014.

She was initially based at Cambodia Country Office and moved to the UN Women Regional Office for Asia Pacific in June 2020 where she is the Deputy Regional Director.

Sarah is from the UK and studied History at Oxford for her first degree, later taking an MSc in Development Management specialising in Population and Reproductive Health at the University of Wales Swansea.



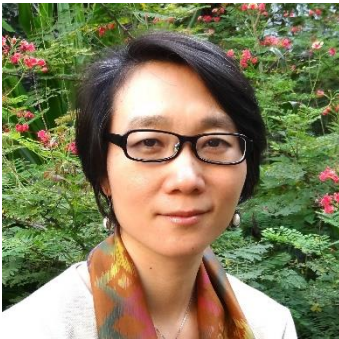
***Ms. Channe Lindstrøm Oğuzhan, Social Affairs Officer, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP***



Currently working with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on gender equality and social inclusion, Ms. Channe Lindstrøm Oğuzhan has worked for the United Nations since 2003: On the human rights-based approach to sustainable development for UN-Habitat in Nairobi; on the coordination of humanitarian affairs for OCHA's Central Emergency Response Fund in New York and its Liaison Office to the EU and NATO in Brussels; and with refugee protection and assistance in West Africa for UNHCR. Prior to joining the UN, she worked for the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights and conducted research on refugees and asylum-seekers for the American

University in Cairo, research which later earned her the Marquis Who is Who lifetime achievement award. She is a published author on issues related to forced migration and holds a Master's degree in Forced Migration from the University of Oxford Refugee Studies Centre and a Bachelors degree in Sociology from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

- ***Ms. Cai Cai Chief, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)***



ESCAP is the largest and most comprehensive United Nations entity in the Asian and Pacific region with a membership of 62 governments. Ms. Cai Cai leads ESCAP's regional programmes on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment as well as disability-inclusive development in Asia-Pacific.

She has over 20 years of rich experience with the United Nations at the country, subregional and regional levels, covering a wide range of socioeconomic issues in the larger context of sustainable development. In addition to gender and disability, she had worked in the areas of youth, ageing, as well as health and development issues. Prior to joining ESCAP, she worked with UNICEF and UNDP, focusing on policy development and advocacy that aimed to empower women and young people as a key strategy for pro-poor growth and sustainable development. Ms. Cai Cai holds a Master's degree in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, USA.



- ***Ms. Emily Veiqati, Divisional Women's Interest Officer, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Fiji***



Ms. Emily Kamoe Veiqati is a civil servant involved in Women's Development and Gender Equality programmes. She has gained experience in community-based and hospital-based social work as a social worker with a non-governmental organization and enjoy working closely with women at the community level. She is a graduate of the University of the South Pacific with a Bachelor of Science.

- ***Ms. Kristine Rosary Yuzon-Chaves, Executive Director, Philippine Commission on Women, Manila, Philippines***



Ms. Kristine Rosary E. Yuzon-Chaves is a mother, a lawyer, a business professional, and a women's rights advocate. ED Krey, as she is called by many, hails from Cagayan de Oro City where she finished her law studies and started her path in the legal profession. Her passion to advance women's rights is intertwined with her work as a lawyer.

From her time as an Associate Attorney and a partner at the Torre Franca-Yuzon Law, she handled pro bono cases on Violence Against Women and Children. She also advocated for the gender-sensitive policies, women entrepreneurship, and protection of women against sexual harassment in the workplace, and many others. When she is not drafting pleadings or giving legal advice, she is busy running or managing different businesses, her own and her family's, including Cenyu Whole Foods in Cagayan de Oro City.

- ***Ms. Sara Duerto Valero, Regional Advisor on Gender Statistics, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific***



Ms. Sara Duerto Valero is the Regional Advisor on Gender Statistics in UN Women's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, where she manages the Flagship Programme Initiative "Making Every Woman and Girl Count". Besides planning and implementing interventions to support the quality, availability and use of gender statistics across Asia and the Pacific, she provides technical advice and prepares analytical materials on gender statistics. Before joining the regional office, she worked as a statistics specialist in UN Women's Headquarters. Previously, Sara was a statistician at the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat (UNSD), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP-SD), and UNESCO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. She holds a Master's

Degree in Development Studies from the Universite Libre de Bruxelles and a graduate degree on Business from the Universidad de Zaragoza. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, arts and the ocean.



- ***Ms. Gita Sen, Distinguished Professor, Public Health Foundation of India***



Ms. Gita Sen has worked for 35 years nationally and internationally on population policies, reproductive and sexual health, gender equality and women's human rights, as well as issues of poverty, human development and labour markets. Her work has helped to shape the global paradigm shift on population and development. A citizen of India, Sen holds a PhD in economics from Stanford University. She is Distinguished Professor & Director, Ramalingaswami Centre on Equity & Social Determinants of Health, Public Health Foundation of India, and adjunct professor of global health and population at Harvard University. She is also the General Coordinator of DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era).

She currently serves as Co-Chair of the Gender and Rights Advisory Panel of WHO's Department of Reproductive Health Research. She is a member of the Independent Accountability Panel for the UN Secretary General's strategy Every Woman, Every Child, Every Adolescent.

- ***Ms. Nalini Singh, Executive Director, Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM)***



Ms. Nalini Singh, from Fiji, is a feminist and a social development specialist with over 20 years' experience in design, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of women's rights and development programmes in Asia Pacific. Her particular interests is in the issues of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), decent work and organisational capacity strengthening. Prior to joining FWRM over four years ago, Nalini worked as the Programme Manager- Advocacy and Capacity Building for the Asian Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW) based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for 7 years. Nalini is a

graduate of the University of the South Pacific with a Bachelor of Arts.

- ***Ms. Joni Simpson, Senior Specialist in Gender, Equality and Non-Discrimination for East and South East Asia and the Pacific, International Labour Organization***



In her current role, Ms. Simpson provides technical guidance and support on gender equality, non-discrimination and women's economic empowerment approaches to ILO constituents and partners for policies and programmes relating to gender, inclusion and non-discrimination in the world of work. Joni has over 20 years promoting women's leadership and women's entrepreneurship – and was ILO's Global Coordinator & Specialist in Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Entrepreneurship Education in Geneva for seven years.

Over and above her work at the ILO, Joni has over ten years of experience in Community Economic Development and Community Credit micro





finance, working on building accessible and gender-responsive programmes and policies in Entrepreneurship Development. Her past work experience includes work in micro-finance, social economy and youth employability. She holds a Master's degree in Cultural anthropology and a Bachelor's in Education. She has served on the Expert Committee for the Global Women Entrepreneur Leaders Scorecard and as Advisor to Value for Women and the Cherie Blair Foundation.

- ***Ms. Yam Kumari Khatiwada, Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal***



Ms. Khatiwada is currently the Secretary at Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens for the Government of Nepal. She has been serving for more than 24 years in various capacities within the government. Prior to her current appointment, she was the Secretary at Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, dealing with the policy issues of the Industrial sector under various responsibilities such as project Chief of Special Economic Zone, National Program Director of Micro Enterprise Development Program, Chairperson of Cottage and Small Industrial Development Board, and Coordinator of Nepal Business Forum, among others. Ms. Khatiwada obtained her Master's degree in Public Policy and Management from KDI School of Public Policy and Management, South Korea. She has also completed MPA, MA and Bachelor's in Law from Tribhuvan University Nepal.

- ***Ms. Deepta Chopra, Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies***



Ms. Chopra is a feminist social scientist, leading IDS's work on women's empowerment and unpaid care. Her research interests primarily focus on the empowerment of women and girls, and its core links with their paid work and unpaid care work. She has developed and implemented several research projects on the politics of policy processes and gendered political economy analysis of women's economic empowerment programmes and policies. Deepta has worked extensively on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and the Food Rights Act in India. She works closely with state and non-state partners in South Asia, and has had high impact in the policy and practice of international development, especially in relation to her work on the care economy and MGNREGA. She is an expert on mixed methods research design and qualitative methodologies, and aligns herself closely with issues of power and participation, citizen engagement and governance. Deepta is an enthusiastic and popular teacher; she convenes the PhD programme at IDS in addition to convening and teaching on a range of relevant modules, specifically on the MA Gender and Development.



- ***Ms. Meenakshi Krishnan, Organization Development Consultant & Doctoral Researcher, Institute of Development Studies***



Ms. Krishnan works in the areas of gendered political economy, women's empowerment, and social protection. Her particular research interests are exploring the links between paid work and unpaid care work, gendered division of unpaid care, and impact of family friendly policies on gender relations. She has co-authored evidence briefs and working papers on family friendly policies and women's interactions between childcare and economic engagement. Her PhD is a gendered political economy analysis of the Maternity Benefit Amendment Act in India from a Feminist Political Ethics of Care lens.

Meenakshi holds Masters degrees in Women's & Gender Studies as well as Human Resource Management. She has over 18 years of experience, working in both private and not-for-profit spaces, in organizational consulting and leadership development. She has special expertise in designing and facilitating women's leadership programs, building gender inclusive workplaces, articulating organizational vision and culture, devising strategic HR policies, and using psychometric assessments, feedback and coaching for personal transformation. She has independently designed and delivered workshops for audiences in Bahrain, Canada, India, Nigeria, Singapore and UAE.

- ***Ms. Sudha Gooty, Programme Manager-Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship, ESCAP***



Ms. Sudha Gooty is the Programme Manager for Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship Programme at UN ESCAP. Prior to joining ESCAP, Ms. Gooty has been working for the past 15 years with various UN agencies such as UNDP and IOM in different countries of Asia. Her areas of focus have been Gender and Governance, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Poverty Reduction. ESCAP actively supports its member States in efforts to enhance women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship as a strategy for poverty reduction, social wellbeing and sustainable economic growth, in fulfilment of SDG 5 on Gender Equality and multiple related goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As part of its support, ESCAP is implementing a five year (2018-2023) regional project

on "Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship - Creating a Gender-Responsive Entrepreneurial Ecosystem" (CWE project) funded by the Government of Canada. The project operates in Nepal, Bangladesh, Samoa, Fiji, Cambodia and Viet Nam. The project aims to strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems that foster women's entrepreneurship, enhance women entrepreneurs' access to capital through innovative financing mechanisms, and increase women entrepreneurs' use of ICT through relevant training and tools.





- ***Ms. Katja Freiwald, Regional Programme Lead 'WeEmpower Asia', UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific***



Ms. Freiwald leads UN Women's commitment under the women's economic empowerment and migration focus in Asia and the Pacific. She oversees 'WeEmpowerAsia', a UN Women programme funded by and in partnership with the European Union that aims to increase the number of women who lead and participate in business China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. A key component of the programme is to mobilize private sector companies to become more gender-responsive by committing to and implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), as well

as strengthen links Asian and European markets through gender-inclusive trade and supply chains. Having worked in the private sector for more than 15 years, Katja was Unilever's Director of Global Partnerships and Advocacy for Women's Economic Empowerment, Inclusive Business and Enhancing Livelihoods before she joined UN Women in 2019. Katja frequently serves as a speaker, panelist and member of several advisory boards, including Dharma Life, a social enterprise improving rural life in India through female entrepreneurship, and Amfori, a global business association for open and sustainable trade.

- ***Ms. Nadira Mohd Yusoff, Founder & CEO of Kiddocare and Head of AWEN Malaysia***



Ms. Yusoff is the Founder and CEO of Kiddocare, Malaysia's first mobile platform that connects parents with trained, reliable babysitters and child-minders. Inspired by ride-hailing service Grab, KiddoCare enables women to "grab" a babysitter from the comforts of their home. Kiddocare also provides a platform for women to pursue their career in childcare, or children's education, economically empowering them with more flexible employment arrangements, and growth opportunities. She is now Deputy President at Malaysia's National Council of Women's Organizations

and former President at the Women Entrepreneur Network Association Malaysia (WENA). She is also an avid advocate of women's economic empowerment for the EU-funded WeEmpowerAsia programme of UN Women in Asia and the Pacific.



- ***Ms. Cai Yiping, Executive Committee member, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)***



Ms. Cai Yiping is a Chinese feminist researcher and activist. She co-leads DAWN's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) activities. She participated in creating several vibrant women's NGOs in China after the 4th World Conference on Women, held in Beijing (1995). These included the Media Monitoring Network for Women (since 1996) and Network (Research Center) for Combating Domestic Violence (since 2000). Prior to joining DAWN in 2011, she served as Executive Director (2008-2011) at Isis International, a southern feminist organization based in Manila Philippines working on empowering women through communication. She was Associate Researcher at the Women's Studies Institute of China (2006 – 2008) and was a journalist for China Women's News (1995 – 2005), writing extensively on the issue of women's human rights. She serves as a member of UN Women's Asia-Pacific Civil Society Advisory Group from 2013 to 2016, and is also an advisor of the Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism established in May 2014. Yiping has deep experience working with government, international agencies and non-profit organizations. Her areas of focus include media and communications, gender-based violence, SRHR and gender mainstreaming. Her current work focuses on the sustainable development agenda, the ICPD and Beijing review processes. She holds bachelor and master's degree in history from Peking University.

- ***Ms. Melissa Alvarado, Regional Programme Manager on Ending Violence against Women (EVAW), UN Women Regional office for Asia and the Pacific***



Ms. Alvarado is the Ending Violence against Women (EVAW) Regional Programme Manager at UN Women, Asia-Pacific Regional Office. Melissa has been working specifically on ending violence against women and children for 20 years, through programme management and design, policy and legislation development and implementation, developing interagency response systems, technical assistance, capacity building, advocacy and research. Melissa has experience in addressing child abuse, particularly multi-disciplinary approaches to prevention and investigation of child sexual abuse and fatalities. From the United States, Melissa holds a master's degree in Social Work and a Bachelor's degree in Psychology. Her work is informed by years of experience advocating for and directly supporting survivors of violence against women and children in crisis.



- ***Ms. Bandana Rana, Vice Chair of the UN CEDAW Committee***



Ms. Bandana Rana from Nepal is the Vice Chair of the UN CEDAW Committee. Her experience spans three decades of promoting women's rights, gender equality and peace and security in Nepal and globally. She has led numerous advocacy programs linking UN frameworks provided by CEDAW, BPFA and UNSCR 1325.

Rana is the recipient of the Woman of Distinction Award 2016 conferred by the NGOCSW Committee, for her contribution to gender equality globally. She was a member of the UN Secretary General's High Level Advisory Group for the Global Study on UNSCR1325 and a member of UN Women Global Civil Society Advisory Group from 2012 to 2015.

- ***Ms. Jan Logie, Under-Secretary for Domestic and Sexual Violence, New Zealand Government***



**Ms. Logie** is a Green MP and Under-Secretary to the Minister of Justice, responsible for domestic and sexual violence issues. She has campaigned for women's rights throughout her life, including as the coordinator of Wellington Women's Refuge and executive director of YWCA Aotearoa New Zealand, and volunteering with Wellington Rape Crisis, Youthline and HELP Sexual Abuse Crisis Line. She championed the Domestic Violence Victims' Protection Act which provides paid leave and flexible working arrangements for people affected by domestic violence.

She is the lead Minister for a whole-of-government Joint Venture to eliminate family violence and sexual violence; oversees the implementation of new family violence legislation; and is working on justice system reforms to improve the experience of victims and survivors in sexual violence cases.

- ***Ms. Chisato Kitanaka, Executive Director, All Japan Women's Shelter Network***



**Ms. Kitanaka**, Director, All Japan Women's Shelter Network; Associate Professor at Hiroshima University Harassment Consultation Office (Japan), President of the NGO "Sexual violence victim support Hiroshima", a rape crisis centre for Hiroshima. She works as a social worker on university campus dealing with harassment, bullying, discrimination, and violence. Her major research themes are sociological gender theory, violence against women, harassment on campus, academic harassment, and academic misconduct.



She has a Master's degree from Nagoya University, Graduate School of Letters (Sociology), and participates in the Doctoral Program at Nagoya University, Graduate School of Letters (Sociology).

- ***Ms. Avni Amin, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, WHO***



Ms. Amin works at the WHO's Department of Reproductive Health and Research on violence against women. Her primary focus is to support countries – Ministries of Health – in the translation and uptake of WHO's normative guidelines and tools to strengthen health systems response to violence against women. She has led the development of clinical guidelines for responding to child and adolescent sexual abuse and is a lead author of the WHO global plan of action on strengthening health systems response to addressing interpersonal violence, in particular against women and girls and against children.

Avni is a passionate feminist scientist with a fierce commitment to gender equality and women's health. She has a PhD in International Health from the Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Hygiene and Public Health. She is originally from India and considers herself as a global citizen.

- ***Ms. Inkar Kadyrzhanova, Regional adviser on gender and climate change, UN Women Regional office for Asia and the Pacific***



Ms. Kadyrzhanova is leading the regional work on gender mainstreaming in climate change and disaster risk reduction at UN Women in Asia and the Pacific region. Prior to that, she worked at the UN Climate Change Secretariat in Bonn, Germany on mitigation, data and analysis issues and supported the negotiation process on climate action by state and non-state stakeholders. She has more than 15 years of work experience in the area of environment protection and climate change mitigation and adaptation and worked at different UN agencies. Besides working in Asia, Inkar has led the regional programmes of UNDP on environment and security in Central Asia and other sub-regions of Europe and CIS region.



- ***Ms. Angie Dazé, Associate on resilience and climate change adaptation with the International Institute for Sustainable Development***



Ms. Dazé is a member of the National Adaptation Plan Global Network Secretariat. Her work focuses on policy and practice related to climate change adaptation and resilience building, particularly in relation to National Adaptation Plan processes. As the gender co-lead for the NAP Global Network, she provides technical support to governments and other stakeholders, develops tools and guidance and documents learning on gender-responsive adaptation planning and action. Previously, Angie worked for CARE International and the Canadian International Development Agency.

- ***Ms. Keya Khan, Joint Secretary, Gender Focal Point, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of Bangladesh***



Ms. Khan was previously posted in different Ministries and the offices under field administration of Bangladesh, such as the District Administrations of Mymensingh District and Manikganj District, the Department of Trademarks Registration, the Ministry of Public Administration, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism and the Ministry of Industries. She has received her education in Bangladesh and Australia and attended various training programmes, seminar and workshops in Bangladesh and abroad.

- ***Ms. Ruth Manorama, National Alliance of Women (NAWO), National Federation of Dalit Women (NFDW), National Centre for Labour (NCL)***



Ms. Manorama, a Feminist Activist, involved in educating, organizing and mobilizing women, dalits, urban poor and unorganized sector over three decades from the grassroots to national levels in India and holds key positions in several women's groups like National Alliance of Women (NAWO), National Federation of Dalit Women (NFDW), National Centre for Labour (NCL) - a confederation of Unorganized sector unions and Human Rights organizations in the country and outside. She has built wider networks with Women's organizations, Trade Unions and various social movements in the country. She sees the interconnectedness between these issues and the common cause of the marginalized people share the world over.





- ***Ms. Noelene Nabulivou, Political adviser and co-founder, CSO “Diverse Voices & Action (DIVA) for Equality”, Fiji***



Ms. Nabulivou is a feminist grassroots organiser and educator, researcher, policy analyst, activist, advocate and movement-builder in Fiji, the Pacific and globally for over 35 years. DIVA for Equality undertakes grassroots feminist work and co-convenes several networks and coalitions from local to global and back, including the “Women Defend Commons Network” and the Pacific Feminist SRHR Coalition. DIVA is CSO co-lead of the global “Action Coalition on Strategies for Climate Justice”.

Noelene is a member of the UNDP Global Civil Society Advisory Committee; the Pacific Gender Technical Working Group to CSW; the Pacific Gender Coordinating Mechanism, and the Fiji SRHR Technical Working Group to Ministry for Youth and Sports. She has been a global adviser to a number of funds and foundation, and she is a recipient of the International Women’s Health Coalition’s Joan B. Dunlop award for advocacy.

- ***Mr. Mozaharul Alam, Regional Coordinator, Climate Change Programme, Asia and the Pacific Office, United Nations Environment Programme***



Mr. Alam started his professional career as a young researcher with the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) in 1992. He has served the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of Bangladesh as a National Project Coordinator and has successfully undertaken inclusive process and formulated National Adaptation Programme of Action. In 2009, he has joined the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as a Regional Coordinator, Climate Change for Asia and the Pacific Office, where he provides strategic and technical guidance to design and implementation climate change actions. He has attended climate change negotiations for more than two decades and

has coordinated the adaptation group of G-77 and China during 2007 to 2009. He has worked as Lead Author for Working Group II for the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report. He received an international fellowship award by International Institute for Environment and Development under Climate Change Programme for three years in 2006.





- ***Ms. Fleur Newman, Action Empowerment Unit Lead | ACE, Gender and Youth, UNFCCC Gender Focal Point and Focal Point for Women, UN Climate Change Secretariat***



Ms. Newman leads the intergovernmental work on gender and climate under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. She is also the Gender Focal Point and Focal Point for Women for the UN Climate Change secretariat. Fleur is a lawyer by training who, before joining the UN, spent 10 years practicing law in the private sector in areas including climate change, sustainability, energy and international law.

Throughout her career, Fleur has been an advocate for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Fleur has a Bachelor of Science in Sustainable Development and Master of Laws in International Law.



## List of participants

### **ESCAP Members and Associate Members**

Ms. Keya Khan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Ms. Chinneth Cheng, Director, Department of Gender Equality, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Mr. Chhunhak The, Director General, Gender Equality and Economic Development, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Ms. Emily Veiqati, Divisional Women's Interest Officer, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Fiji

Ms. Marika Niitsu, Senior Researcher, Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, Tokyo, Japan

Mr. Yusuke Sato, Director for International Affairs, Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, Tokyo, Japan

Ms. Azimova Elvira Abilhasimovna, Commissioner for Human Rights in the Republic of Kazakhstan, National Human Rights Institution, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

Ms. Yam Kumari Khatiwada, Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal

Ms. Jan Logie, Under-Secretary for Domestic and Sexual Violence, New Zealand Government, Wellington, New Zealand

Ms. Pamela Susara, Supervising Gender and Development Specialist, Manila, Philippines

Ms. Kristine Rosary Yuzon-Chaves, Executive Director, Philippine Commission on Women, Manila, Philippines

Ms. Thida Pongcharoenchai, Social Development Officer, Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Vijita Rachatanantikul, Deputy Director General, Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Polotu Paunga, Deputy CEO, Women's Affairs and Gender Equality Division, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

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### **United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and funds**

Ms. Ishida Tomomi, Social Protection Officer, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Aya Matsuura, Gender Specialist, ILO Decent Work Team for South Asia and Country Office for India, International Labour Organization (ILO), New Delhi, India

Ms. Joni Simpson, Senior Specialist, Gender, Equality and Non-discrimination, ILO Decent Work Technical Team for East Asia, South East Asia and the Pacific, International Labour Organization (ILO), Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Therese Bjork, Human Rights Officer, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), South East Asia Regional Office, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Koh Miyaoi, Asia-Pacific Gender Advisor and Team Leader, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Bangkok Regional Hub, Bangkok, Thailand

Mr. Mozaharul Alam, Regional Coordinator, Climate Change Programme, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Annette Wallgren, Programme Management Officer, Gender and Climate Change, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Tanja Brøndsted Sejersen, Statistician, Statistics Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

Ms Sharita Serrao, Statistician, Statistics Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

Ms. Maha Muna, Regional Gender Advisor, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Regional Office for South Asia, Kathmandu, Nepal

Ms. Sujata Tuladhar, Technical Adviser, Gender and Human Rights, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Elizaveta Perova, Senior Economist, East Asia and Pacific Gender Innovation Lab (EAPGIL), Washington D.C., The World Bank

Ms. Avni Amin, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva, Switzerland

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### **Inter-governmental Organization**

#### **Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)**

Mr. Kim Robertson, Team Leader, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Social Development Programme, Pacific Community, Port Vila, Vanuatu

#### **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)**

Ms. Rishfa Rasheed, Director, Social Affairs, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Kathmandu, Nepal



## **Civil Society Organizations and Other Entities**

### **Civil Society Organizations**

Mr. Reaksmei Hong, Country Director, Action Aid, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Ms. Aida Alzhanova, President, Eurasian Humanitarian Center “ADAM DAMU”, Almaty, Kazakhstan

Ms. Estrella Penunia, Secretary General, Asian Farmers’ Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA), Quezon City, Philippines

Ms. Ya Gan, Programme Associate, Grounding the Global Coordinator, COVID-19 Response Team, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Ms. Sepali Kottegoda, Asia Pacific Women's Watch (APWW), Colombo, Sri Lanka

Ms. Dolores Balladares-Pelaez, Asia Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development (APWLD), Hong Kong, China

Ms. Carole Shaw, UN Liaison & Conference Focal Point, Asia Pacific Women’s Watch (APWW), Victoria, Australia

Ms. Laxmi Nepal, Program Officer, Blind Women Association, Nepal (BWAN), Kathmandu, Nepal

Ms. Romy Elizabeth Listo, Project Coordinator, Equality Rights Alliance, Canberra, Australia

Ms. Anita Gurumurthy, Executive Director, IT for Change, Karnataka, India

Ms. Suneeta Dhar, Senior Advisor, Jagori, New Delhi, India

Ms. Priyanka Samy, National Federation of Dalit Women, New Delhi, India

Ms. Vica Krisilia Larasati, Executive Director, Qbukatabu, Java, Indonesia

Ms. Anjlee Agarwal, Executive Director, Samarthyam, New Delhi, India

Ms. Reema Nanavati, Director, Economic and Rural Development, Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA), Ahmedabad, India

Ms. Celia Boyd, Managing Director, SHE Investments, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Ms. Vanessa Heleta, Director, Talitha Project (TON), Tonga

Ms. Prakriti Naswa, Programme Manager, The Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Ms. Sivananthi Thanenthiran, Executive Director, The Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Ms. Gulmira Kantinova Kazaklinova, Chairperson, Public Association “Union of people with Disabilities “Ravenstvo”, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan



Ms. 'Ofa-Ki-Levuka Guttenbeil Likkiliki, Director, Women and Children Crisis Centre (WCCC), Nukualofa, Tonga

Ms. Asel Kubanychbekova, Founder, Public Union "Women's Entrepreneurship Development Fund", Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Ms. Daisy Alik-Momotaro, Executive Director, Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI), Majuro, Marshall Islands

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### Other Entities

Mr. Ki-Soo Eun, Professor of Sociology and Demography, Seoul National University, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Ms. Mary E. John, Professor, Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi, India

Mr. Nguyen Sy Linh, Acting head of Department, Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment (ISPONRE), Hanoi, Viet Nam

Mr. Doan Ly, Deputy Director, Centre for Environment and Community Research (CECR), Hanoi, Viet Nam

Mr. Talaibek Makeev, Expert on Sustainable Development for Central Asia, Almaty, Kazakhstan

Ms. Viloyat Mirzoeva, Gender expert, Gender Equality Model Program (GEMP), Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Mr. Nong Monin, Research Associate, Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Mr. Lonh Pichdara, Director of Centre for Natural Resource and Environment, Cambodia Development Resource Institute, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Ms. Pam Rajput, Professor, Panjab University, National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO)/SAWW, Chandigarh, India

Ms. Jane Sloane, Senior Director, Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, The Asia Foundation, San Francisco, United States of America

Mr. Linh Nguyen Sy, Acting head of Department, Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment (ISPONRE), Hanoi, Viet Nam

Ms. Maria Tanyag, Research Fellow and Lecturer, Australian National University, Acton, Australia

Ms. Sandhya Venkateswaran, Deputy Director, India Country Office, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, New Delhi, India



## Speakers

Ms. Gita Sen, General Co-coordinator, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Bangalore, India

Ms. Cai Yiping, Executive committee member, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Beijing, China

Ms. Noelene Nabulivou, Executive Director, DIVA for Equality, Suva, Fiji

Ms. Nalini Singh, Executive Director, Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM), Suva, Fiji

Ms. Chisato Kitanaka, Associate Professor, Hiroshima University Harassment Consultation Office, Hiroshima, Japan

Ms. Deepta Chopra, Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, United Kingdom

Ms. Meenakshi Krishnan, Research Consultant & Doctoral Researcher, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, United Kingdom

Ms. Angie Dazé, Associate, Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation, International Institute for Sustainable Development

Ms. Nadira Mohd Yusoff, Founder and CEO, Kiddocare, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Ms. Keya Khan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Ms. Emily Veiqati, Divisional Women's Interest Officer, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Fiji

Ms. Yam Kumari Khatiwada, Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal

Ms. Kristine Rosary Yuzon-Chaves, Executive Director, Philippine Commission on Women, Manila, Philippines

Ms. Sara Vigil, Research Fellow, Stockholm Environment Institute, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Ruth Manorama, President, The National Alliance of Women (NAWO), Bangalore, India

Ms. Bandana Rana, Vice Chair, UN CEDAW Committee, Kathmandu, Nepal

Ms. Fleur Newman, Action Empowerment Unit Lead, UN Climate Change Secretariat, Bonn, Germany

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## Joint Secretariat

### Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)



Dr. Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, ESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Cai Cai, Chief, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Sudha Gooty, Programme Manager, Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Channe Lindstrøm Oğuzhan, Social Affairs Officer, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Farzana Sharmin, Associate Social Affairs Officer, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand

### **United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)**

Ms. Sarah Knibbs, Deputy Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Melissa Alvarado, Regional Program Specialist, Ending Violence Against Women, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Ms. Katja Freiwald, Regional Programme Lead 'WeEmpower Asia', UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Inkar Kadyrzhanova, Regional Program Specialist, Gender and Climate, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Hulda Ouma, Strategic Planning and Coordination Specialist, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, UN Women, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Sara Duerto Valero, Regional Advisor on Gender Statistics, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Carly Teng, Program Consultant, Ending Violence Against Women, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand

Mr. Somchai Yensabai, Program Planning and Coordination Officer, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Riina Haavisto, Program Analyst, Gender and Climate Change, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Denise Laaveri, Program Analyst, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand



## Social media engagement

Tweets were posted on Twitter by the UN Women Regional Office for Asia Pacific, Katja Freiwald (UN Women), Dr. Srinivas Tata (ESCAP) and Channe Lindstrøm Oğuzhan (ESCAP).





## Links to key documents

[2019 Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+25 Review, background paper](#) and the [Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review](#)

UN Secretary-General UN [Comprehensive Response to COVID-19](#) and his [Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women](#)

UN Women: [The shadow pandemic - violence against women and girls and COVID-19](#) and [UN Women: COVID-19 and gender: What do we know; what do we need to know?](#)

ESCAP [coronavirus response](#) and [socio-economic response framework](#)

## Resources shared

### Session 1:

1. <https://iwhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Beijing-25-Feminist-declaration.pdf>
2. <http://asiapacificrcem.org/>
3. [http://apwld.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2016\\_Development\\_Justice\\_Briefer.pdf](http://apwld.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2016_Development_Justice_Briefer.pdf)
4. <https://data.unwomen.org/publications/unlocking-lockdown-gendered-effects-covid-19-achieving-sdgs-asia-and-pacific>

### Session 2:

1. <https://itforchange.net/sites/default/files/add/IT%20for%20Change%20-%20Recommendations%20to%20Niti%20Aayog%20on%20Gender%20and%20COVID.pdf>,
2. <https://itforchange.net/sites/default/files/add/IT%20for%20Change%20-%20Recommendations%20to%20Niti%20Aayog%20on%20Gender%20and%20COVID.pdf>
3. <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/research-and-reports/lives-upended>.
4. <https://www.younglives.org.uk/content/dreaming-better-life-child-marriage-through-adolescent-eyes#overlay-context=user>
5. <http://makaam.in/>
6. <https://asiafoundation.org/2019/09/11/the-gender-lab-boys-program/>
7. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/women-poverty-economics/weempowerasia>

### Session 3:

1. <https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/en/resources/violence-against-women-regional-snapshot-2020-knowvawdata>
2. [https://itforchange.net/sites/default/files/1662/Born-Digital\\_Born-Free\\_Synthesis-Report%28DRAFT%29.pdf](https://itforchange.net/sites/default/files/1662/Born-Digital_Born-Free_Synthesis-Report%28DRAFT%29.pdf)
3. <https://itforchange.net/how-online-space-for-women-a-crisis-and-what-needs-to-be-done-about-it>





4. <https://www.firstpost.com/tech/news-analysis/public-participation-is-a-womans-first-order-claim-to-being-recognised-as-a-human-being-the-pandemic-cant-be-allowed-to-undermine-that-8419571.html>
5. <https://globalaction2030.blogspot.com/2020/04/the-impacts-of-covid-19-on-people-with.html>
6. <https://www.end-violence.org/inspire>

#### Session 4:

1. <https://www.gender-nr-peace.org/gender-climate-security/>
2. [https://gender-nr-peace.org/assets/2020\\_GCS\\_Report/GCS\\_AsiaPacific.pdf](https://gender-nr-peace.org/assets/2020_GCS_Report/GCS_AsiaPacific.pdf)
3. <http://asianfarmers.org/india-sewa-sanitary-napkin-making-training/>
4. <http://asianfarmers.org/india-sewa-covid19-response/>
5. <http://asianfarmers.org/laos-lfn-navieng-organic-vegetable-growers-group-attracts-buyers-after-posting-a-video-online/>
6. <https://swayamshikshanprayog.org/women-led-climate-resilient-farming/>
7. <http://feministgreennewdeal.com/>
8. <https://cambodia.actionaid.org/publications/2019/cambodia-womens-resilience-index-2019>
9. <https://actionaid.org.au/resources/the-south-asia-womens-resilience-index/>
10. <https://www.odi.org/publications/16997-universal-child-benefits-policy-issues-and-options>

#### Contacts

Ms. Channe Lindstrøm Oğuzhan, Social Affairs Officer, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, Social Development Division, ESCAP [lindstromoguzhan@un.org](mailto:lindstromoguzhan@un.org)

Ms. Hulda Ouma, Strategic Planning and Coordination Specialist, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, UN Women [hulda.ouma@unwomen.org](mailto:hulda.ouma@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.*

