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**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**  
 Committee on Social Development
**Third session**

Bangkok, 18-20 August 2014

**Report of the Committee on Social Development on its  
 third session**

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## **I. Matters calling for action by the Committee or brought to its attention**

### **A. Recommendations**

#### **Draft outcome document of the “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review” (17-20 November 2014)**

1. The Committee requested the secretariat to revise, as appropriate, the draft outcome document in relation to suggestions made by delegations, as contained in section IIB2 of the present report.

### **B. Decisions**

#### **Adoption of the report**

2. On 20 August 2014, the Committee on Social Development adopted the report on its third session for submission to the Commission at its seventy-first session.

#### **Date of the fourth session of the Committee**

3. The Committee decided that its fourth session would be held in the last quarter of 2016.

#### **Programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017**

4. The Committee endorsed the programmatic focus and planned outputs in the field of social development for the biennium 2016-2017, as contained in E/ESCAP/CSD(3)/3.

## **II. Proceedings**

### **A. Review of social development trends and challenges in the context of the development agenda beyond 2015**

1. The Committee had before it the document entitled “Confronting rising inequalities in Asia and the Pacific: trends and opportunities in the context of the development agenda beyond 2015” (E/ESCAP/CSD(3)/1).

2. Representatives of the following ESCAP members made statements: Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; China; Fiji; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Pakistan; Philippines; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

3. The Committee’s attention was drawn to the following main trends and findings: (a) inequality persists in Asia and the Pacific, and in some instances has intensified; (b) inequality takes many forms and pathways; and (c) inequalities reinforce each other creating an “inequality trap” that disproportionately affects women and the most vulnerable, including persons with disabilities and migrants.

4. The Committee commended the secretariat on the selection for its third session of the timely theme of rising inequalities, noting in particular that gender inequality needed to be urgently addressed if the region was to be successful in integrating the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

5. The Committee expressed appreciation for the high quality of the documentation submitted, which captured prevailing inequality trends in the region and framed the mutually reinforcing pathways and forms of inequality in three dimensions: economic inequality; inequality in well-being; and inequalities across key population groups.

6. The Committee took note of the significant progress made by ESCAP members and associate members towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and addressing economic and social inequalities in the region. While recognizing that progress, the Committee noted that there was an “unfinished agenda”, particularly in relation to ensuring poverty reduction, gender equality and women’s economic empowerment.

7. In acknowledging the importance of the development agenda beyond 2015 and, in particular, welcoming the proposal of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals for stand-alone goals on reducing inequality and achieving gender equality, several delegations noted that the development agenda beyond 2015 must include robust monitoring and accountability mechanisms. The Committee also noted the challenges of articulating concise goals, measurable targets and means of implementation.

8. The Committee acknowledged that income inequality constituted an important driver of poverty and an impediment to socioeconomic mobility. For that reason, several countries had introduced cash transfer schemes, minimum wage legislation and other forms of income security, as well as facilitating access to microcredit and strengthening labour market policies.

9. Many delegations underscored the importance of more inclusive development processes that included ensuring universal access to affordable health services, as well as the provision of basic services, including from the view of a human development approach, such as electricity, water and sanitation. Several delegations stressed that policies and initiatives to reduce poverty and to eliminate social disparities should address horizontal inequalities by focusing on the needs of key population groups, including women, girls, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and migrants.

10. The Committee noted the progress achieved in primary and secondary school enrolment and completion rates, particularly for girls. The Committee also noted the central role of education in combating discrimination and gender stereotypes. The Committee noted with concern the prevalence of early and child marriage, as well as of adolescent pregnancy, and the consequent intergenerational impacts.

11. In noting that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action had been instrumental in promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment, the Committee attached high importance to its full and effective implementation in the region.

12. Several delegations reported on their efforts to mainstream gender issues into national policies and programmes, including through capacity-building and allocation of adequate resources. The importance of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics for informed policymaking was also highlighted.

13. The Committee was further informed of key legal reforms and policies that had supported the enhancement of women’s political participation and representation at national and local levels. Some delegations noted that gender quotas and targets had proven effective in encouraging greater representation of women in decision-making positions.

14. The Committee noted with appreciation the efforts that had been made by several countries to enhance women's economic participation. Those efforts included the promotion of women's entrepreneurship, facilitation of access to credit, introduction of innovative financial products and provision of training opportunities, as well as targeted employment programmes. Several delegations emphasized the need to strengthen support for women in realization of their career and family aspirations, including measures to promote work-life balance.

15. The Committee underscored the need to end violence against women and children across the region. Several delegations reported on their legislative frameworks, policies and programmes that sought to protect women and children from all forms of violence, including domestic violence and sexual assault and harassment in the workplace and other contexts. For that purpose, the Committee noted that crisis centres for women who had experienced violence had been established in several countries. The Committee also noted that a range of laws and policies had been adopted to protect women and children from human trafficking, including for sexual purposes.

16. In reference to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Committee noted the critical role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict, particularly through their leadership and active engagement in peacebuilding processes.

17. In noting that Asia and the Pacific was the most disaster-prone region in the world, the Committee highlighted the increasing vulnerability of particular populations, including the poor, older persons and persons with disabilities, to natural disasters. The impact of climate change was also noted as a potential threat to the achievement of sustainable development.

18. The Committee recognized that reducing inequality in all its forms, particularly addressing the social exclusion of women and girls, would require strategic and gender-responsive investments, including through innovative partnerships. In that respect, the Committee noted the importance of enhancing social protection, promoting productive and decent work, strengthening redistributive taxation systems and increasing data collection to support evidence-based policymaking, as means of addressing inequalities in the region.

19. The consolidated statement made by civil society highlighted the range of challenges faced by women and girls in the region, including the pervasive and entrenched inequalities in wealth, capital and natural resources. The representative of civil society expressed support for investment in redistributive policies and a focus on decent work. The representative requested that Governments commit to reforming the international trade, finance and taxation architecture in support of sustainable development. In the process of defining the development agenda beyond 2015, civil society applauded the proposed inclusion of a stand-alone goal on gender equality and called for the establishment of more effective accountability mechanisms at the international, regional and national levels.

**B. Consideration of a thematic focus on gender equality and women's empowerment in preparation for the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women**

**1. Review of regional preparations for the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review (Bangkok, 17-20 November 2014)**

20. The Committee had before it the document entitled "Asia-Pacific road map for the 20-year review of progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" (E/ESCAP/CSD(3)/2).

21. In providing an overview of the global preparatory process for the 20-year review of progress in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+20), the Executive Secretary of the Commission on the Status of Women informed the Committee that the Beijing+20 review process included national-level reviews, regional intergovernmental review meetings and a communication and social mobilization campaign. The Beijing+20 review process would culminate in a global review during the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women to be held from 9 to 20 March 2015. The Executive Secretary of the Commission on the Status of Women further highlighted the importance of wide stakeholder engagement in the Beijing+20 review process, including men, boys, youth and the media.

22. In providing an overview of the regional preparatory process for the Beijing+20 review for Asia and the Pacific, the Director of the Social Development Division of ESCAP recalled resolution 2013/18 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, which had mandated the regional commissions to undertake regional-level reviews and appraisals of progress in implementation of the Platform for Action. She presented to the Committee the Asia-Pacific road map for the 20-year review of progress in implementation of the Platform for Action, which had been endorsed by the Commission at its seventieth session. The Director further outlined the three tracks in the road map consisting of intergovernmental consensus building, research and analysis and stakeholder engagement. Under the intergovernmental track, the current session of the Committee served as the regional preparatory body for the "Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review", which would be convened by ESCAP at the ministerial level, in cooperation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), in Bangkok from 17 to 20 November 2014. The outcome of that Conference would serve as the Asian and Pacific regional input to the global Beijing+20 review.

**2. Consideration of the framework and elements of a draft outcome document for the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review**

23. The Committee had before it the document entitled "Elements of a draft outcome document for the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review" (E/ESCAP/CSD(3)/WP.1/ Rev.1).

24. The Director of the Social Development Division of ESCAP provided the Committee with an overview of the structure and content of the draft outcome document. She informed the Committee that the content of the draft outcome document had been grounded in the Beijing Declaration and

Platform of Action, particularly the 12 critical areas of concern. The content of the draft outcome document had also been drawn from feedback provided by member States in response to the Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey conducted by the ESCAP secretariat, as well as Beijing+20 national review reports. The Committee noted that, to date, 38 ESCAP members and associate members had responded to the regional survey. Additionally, 26 countries in the Asia-Pacific region had completed national review reports.

25. The Director of the Social Development Division further explained that the draft outcome document contained four sections as follows:

- (a) Section I: Preamble;
- (b) Section II: Renewing political commitment;
- (c) Section III: Consolidating gains in the Asia-Pacific region;
- (d) Section IV: Moving forward: measures to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the era beyond 2015.

26. The secretariat outlined the time frame for the review of the draft outcome document, which had been circulated to member States in July 2014. The current session of the Committee would undertake the first reading of the draft outcome document and provide suggestions for changes to reflect government positions. Thereafter, in line with the suggestions of member States, the secretariat would prepare the second version of the draft outcome document for online circulation to member States by mid-September 2014, after which member States would be requested to provide any further comments within 15 working days. On the basis of the feedback received, the secretariat would prepare a third version of the draft outcome document for issuance to member States by early October 2014 in advance of the final reading and anticipated adoption of the draft outcome document by the forthcoming “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review”.

27. The Regional Director of the Asia and Pacific Regional Office for UN-Women highlighted the significance of the 20-year review of the Platform for Action and stressed the need for political will and sufficient resources for the further implementation of the Platform for Action. She noted the repeated calls from the Asia-Pacific region for a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment to be included in the proposed sustainable development goals currently under development through the General Assembly.

### **General comments**

28. The Committee expressed appreciation for the efforts of the secretariat in preparing the draft outcome document. Some delegations provided general comments and suggestions on the draft outcome document, as indicated below.

- (a) Russian Federation

The delegation noted that the Platform for Action remained relevant, addressing the main problems and questions in relation to gender equality and women’s empowerment. The delegation stressed the importance of women’s equal access to employment, women’s economic empowerment and the ability of women to enjoy full family lives.

## (b) Philippines

The delegation requested that references to “women” in the draft outcome document be revised to “women and girls”, as appropriate.

## (c) India

The delegation reserved comment with reference to insertion of “women’s human rights” after “gender equality” throughout the draft outcome document, until further direction could be obtained from its capital.

## (d) Japan

The delegation indicated that proposals for change would be forthcoming following the outcome of consultations with civil society, regarding priority actions for the further national implementation of the Platform for Action, especially in the areas of women and the economy and gender-responsive disaster risk reduction.

**Preamble**

29. The Committee considered section I, “Preamble”, of the draft outcome document and made the following suggestions for change:

**Paragraph 2:**

## (a) Australia (supported by the Philippines)

Proposed the addition of “and girls” after “and the empowerment of women”.

## (b) Philippines

Proposed the addition of “, the full realization of women’s and girls’ human rights” after “gender equality”.

## (c) China

(i) Proposed replacing “*Recalling*” with “*Reaffirming*”.

(ii) Stated that it would provide a textual recommendation using broader language at a subsequent reading of the draft outcome document, as the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women were more than solely matters of human rights.

**Paragraph 3:**

## (a) Philippines

(i) Proposed the insertion of the word “substantive” between “for realizing” and “equality”.

(ii) Suggested inserting “the implementation of measures to address discrimination against women and girls in all its forms” after “in Asia and the Pacific by ensuring”.

- (b) India (supported by Pakistan)

Sought clarification on the use of the word “*Reaffirming*” in instances where member States were not party to the convention or optional protocol in question.

**Paragraph 4:**

- (a) Philippines
- (i) Proposed an addendum to line 3, inserting “the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development” after “the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,”.
- (ii) Proposed inserting the word “gender” in lieu of “sex”.
- (b) China

Stated that the paragraph under consideration, as well as subsequent paragraphs, referred to several international instruments with different levels of authority and ratification and, accordingly, suggested that the paragraphs be streamlined with more general wording.

**Paragraph 5:**

- (a) Pakistan

Noted that not all listed documents had been ratified by all member States and, as such, proposed that a note of that fact be made in paragraph 5.

- (b) Philippines

Proposed the addition of “and International Labour Organization Convention 189 concerning decent work for domestic workers” after “the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families”.

**Paragraph 8:**

- (a) Australia

Proposed the addition of “and post-conflict settings” after “phases of conflict”.

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

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