

# **ASIA-PACIFIC POST-BEIJING IMPLEMENTATION MONITOR**



ASIAN AND PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT CENTRE  
GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME  
P.O. BOX 12224, PERSIARAN DUTA  
50770 KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

TEL/FAX: (603) 651 9209  
E-MAIL: <gad@pc.jaring.my>

*The Asian and Pacific Development Centre (APDC) is an autonomous regional inter-governmental institution designed to provide a practical response to the development problems faced by countries in the region. The Gender and Development Programme of the Asian and Pacific Development Centre, addresses the gendered nature of development processes and their impact on women's lives in the Asia-Pacific region.*

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Asian and Pacific Development Centre  
Gender and Development Programme  
P.O. Box 12224, Persiaran Duta  
50770 Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA

Tel/Fax: (603) 651 9209  
e-mail: <gad@pc.jaring.my>

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Compilation: Meena Moorthy Shivas

Typing: Rosnani Hitam

Proof reading: Noreen de Souza  
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## ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADPs	Annual Development Plans
AFTA	Asian Free Trade Agreement
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
APW	Asia Pacific Watch
APWG	Asia Pacific NGO Working Group
APWIP	Asia Pacific Women in Politics Network
ARROW	Asia-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women
ASCENT	Asian Centre for Women's Human Rights
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AWDC	Azerbaijan Women and Development Centre
AWS	ASEAN Women's Sub-Committee
BBS	The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BFU	Beijing Follow-up Unit
CAPWIP	Center for Asia Pacific Women in Politics
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFAWs	Committees for the Advancement of Women
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIDSS	Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services
COFFEL	Coalition for Free and Fair Elections
COMELEC	Commission on Elections
COMFREL	Committee for Free and Fair Election
CPPCC	The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
DA	Department of Agriculture
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DOH	Department of Health
DOLE	Department of Labour and Employment
DOT	Department of Tourism
DOTC	Department of Transportation and Communications
DPWH	Department of Public Works and Highways
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DWA	Department of Women's Affairs
DWC	Department for Women and Culture
EPZs	Export Processing Zones
ESCAP	UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FDB	Fiji Development Bank
FNCW	Fiji National Council of Women
FUNCINPEC	Royalist Party, Cambodia
FWCW	Fourth World Conference on Women
GAA	General Appropriations Act
GAATW	Global Alliance Against the Traffic in Women
GATT	General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade
GDI	Gender Development Index
HART	Housing Assistance and Relief Trust
HAWA	Department for Women's Advancement
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HPI	Human Poverty Index
ICOMP	International Council on Management of Population Programmes
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMED	Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division

IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IRI	International Republican Institute
JAC	The Japan Accountability Caucus-Beijing
KNCW	The Korean National Council of Women
KOWANI	Indonesian Women's Congress
KWVC	Khmer Women's Voice Centre
LACC	Legal Aid and Counselling Centre
LWU	Lao Women's Union
MoWA (Cambodia)	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MOWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MoWD	Ministry of Women's Development, Social Welfare
MWF	The Mongolian Women's Federation
NACIWID	National Council for the Integration of Women in Development
NAP	National Action Plan
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation
NCAFW	National Committee for the Advancement of Women
NCR	National Capital Region
NCRFW	National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women
NCW	The National Council of Women
NCWD	National Council for Women's Development
NCWO	National Council of Women's Organisations
NEDA	National Economic Development Agency
NEM	New Economic Mechanism
NICs	Newly Industrialised Countries
NIPA	National Implementation Plan of Action
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NOW	National Organisation for Women
NPA	National Plan of Action
NSO	National Statistics Office
NWCWC	The National Working Committee on Women and Children
OCSS	One-stop Crisis Centre
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD/DAC/WID Expert Group	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee / Women in Development Expert Group
PBSB	The Philippine NGO Beijing Score Board
PDCW	Programme for the Development of Chinese Women
PFA	Platform for Action
PHC	Public Health Centre
POA	Plan of Action
PPGD	Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development
PPSEAWA	Pan Pacific and South East Asian Women's Association
PrepCom	Preparatory Committee
PWRB	Pacific Women's Resource Bureau
RRRT	Pacific Regional Human Rights Education Resource Team
RTIs	Reproductive Tract Infections
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SEA Watch	Southeast Asia Watch
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SNATs	Sectoral Needs Assessment Teams
SPC	Secretariat of the South Pacific Community
SRC	Social Reform Council
SSWA	Secretariat of State for Women's Affairs
STDs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
SVT	Sqososo ni Vakavalewa ni Taukei
TNC	Transnational Corporation
TW2	Thai Women Watch
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VND	Vietnamese Dong
WVU	Vietnam Women's Union
WCFWCR	Women's Coalition for Women's Citizenship Rights
WCWCSC	The National Working Committee on Women and Children of the State Council
WDD	Women's Development Divisions
WFP	Women for Prosperity
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WID	Women in Development
WIDSC	Women-in-Development Steering Committee
WINAP	Women's Information Network for Asia and the Pacific
WIRC	Women's Information and Research Centre
WMC	Women's Media Centre
Women's Convention	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
WOSED	Women's Social and Economic Development Programme
WSP	Women for Social Progress
WTO	World Trade Organisation
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

## TERMS

Aimag and Soum	Administrative areas in the provinces, Mongolia
Au Vaine	Term for women's groups in the 1940s and 1950s, Cook Islands
Badi and Gyane System	Traditional forms of entertainment, Nepal
Baitulmal	State fund for underprivileged Muslims, Malaysia
Buntogs	Euphemism for wild quails, Philippines
Copra	Dried coconuts
Dasar Wanita Negara	National Policy for Women, Malaysia
Dharna	Protest sit-ins, India
Fatwas	Religious decrees
Forkania Madrassahs	Religious schools
Imams	Muslim religious heads
Mahfils	Religious gatherings
Nashabandhi	Prohibition
Orang Asli	Indigenous people, Malaysia
Posyandu and Puskesmas	Integrated health posts and community health centres, Indonesia
Shalish	Local religious courts, Bangladesh
Syariah	Religious courts
Tangata Whenua	Indigenous people, New Zealand
Vole ni Kawa Bula	Register of Indigenous Fijians



**Message from Khunying Supatra Masdit,  
Minister to the Prime Minister's Office, Thailand  
and Convenor of the NGO Forum on Women, 1995**

During the three-year period that I served as Convenor of the NGO Forum on Women, 1995, I had several opportunities to observe first hand how NGOs in the Asia-Pacific region were constantly referred to as the leaders in many innovative efforts to bring women's concerns into public conscience and to integrate them into the Beijing Platform for Action.

Those achievements brought us only half way to the ultimate goal of gender equality. In the decade following the Nairobi Conference, the lack of systematic monitoring efforts was the main reason for slow progress in the advancement of women. The initiative of the Asian and Pacific Development Centre (APDC) in bringing out this annual monitoring report will go a long way towards transforming the Beijing Platform for Action into reality for women in the Asia and Pacific region.

I wish the Asian and Pacific Development Centre every success in this difficult but very crucial mission. I urge all government and non-governmental organisations involved in post-Beijing implementation and monitoring to cooperate fully with APDC by contributing timely and detailed information. With its great diversity, this region is an ideal setting for NGOs to explore various monitoring strategies. The other regions can again learn and benefit from the experiences of Asia and the Pacific.

**Message from Thanpuying Sumalee Chartikavanij,  
Honorary Chairperson, Thai Women Watch (TW2)  
(Focal Point, Asia and Pacific NGO Working Group, 1993-1995)**

On the auspicious occasion of the launching of the Asian and Pacific Development Centre's annual Asia Pacific Post-Beijing Implementation Monitor, it is a great pleasure for me to join other friends in sending my heartiest congratulations and best wishes for success to the Gender and Development (GAD) Programme represented by Dr. Vanessa Griffen.

The launching of the APDC Monitor brings back to me the memory of the busy time during the year 1993 when the Asia Pacific NGO Working Group (APWG) started the preparation work for the Fourth World Conference on Women and the NGO Forum for Women, held in Beijing in August 1995. Our joint efforts culminated in the organising of the first Asian and Pacific Symposium of Non-Governmental Organisations on Women in Development in Manila, November 1993. This Symposium was unique in its formation, its work schedule and programme, and its unexpectedly great number of participants who came with an abundance of issues and energy. The recommendations from the Symposium were concentrated in "The Yellow Book" which was the key document widely used by Asia and Pacific NGOs in their lobbying of governments throughout the period before the conference in Beijing.

Noeleen Heyzer, who was the Coordinator of APDC's Gender and Development Programme during that time, played an important role as Substantive Focal Point of the Asia Pacific NGO Working Group. With her support and that of APDC, the Working Group was able to achieve outstanding coordination work for the region. APWG's work towards Beijing brought better and closer cooperation not only among NGOs themselves but also created opportunities for NGOs to work closely with the governments' and the United Nations' offices in the region. APDC being an inter-governmental organisation served as a bridge for the NGOs to access the governments' and the UN's domain. When Noeleen left the Asia Pacific NGO Working Group in 1994 to serve as Director of UNIFEM, Dr. Vanessa Griffen took over at APDC and joined APWG as an active member. She was instrumental in publishing APWG newsletter "Reaching Out" up to the year 1996.

From 1993 to 1995 the Asian and Pacific NGOs worked effectively to set a distinguished record of attendance and participation at the NGO Forum on Women in Huairou. We were the biggest group with a total of 11,284. Our special APWG calendar of events included the "Asia and Pacific Friendship Tent", "Asia and Pacific Weaving the World Together Exhibition" both in the Forum ground and at the Great Wall of China, the "Asia Pacific Media Festival", "Send Asia Pacific Sisters to Beijing", workshops on "The Role of Civil Societies in Shaping National and International Policies on Women", "Women in the NICs", and several others on various issues of concern.



After Beijing, the members of APWG met a few times in Bangkok. Then in July 1997 in Seoul, the group met and decided to restructure and to continue as the Asia and Pacific Watch (APW). At present, Dr. Pam Rajput of the Centre for Women's Studies and Development, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India, is the Chairperson of APW. The first meeting under her leadership was convened in Chandigarh in January 1998.

To assist in continuing Asia and Pacific NGOs' tradition of working harmoniously together with the government, the APDC Monitor is very much welcome. The aim of the APDC Monitor to serve as fora for analysing and assessing progress on the implementation and monitoring of the global Platform for Action, ensures NGOs of the technical assistance so crucial to their work in the advancement of women. We are grateful to APDC for taking this responsibility which will benefit all NGOs. Personally, I look forward to enjoying the APDC Monitor and to learning from the contributions in the publication.

On this occasion may I wish the staff members of the GAD and the APDC Monitor led by Dr. Vanessa Griffen all success and much pleasure in their work.

**Message from Dr Noeleen Heyzer,  
Executive Director, UNIFEM  
(Substantive Focal Point,  
Asia and Pacific NGO Working Group, 1993-1994)**

It is a great honour to be asked to contribute my thoughts to this launch of the Asian and Pacific Development Centre's annual Asia Pacific Post-Beijing Implementation Monitor. The opportunity to write this coincides with the end of the year, a time to look back and to think ahead. And this is exactly what the Post-Beijing Implementation Monitor gives us an opportunity to do: to reflect on where we've come from and use our experience and the commitments made to build a better future for ourselves and our communities.

My reflection on the past is replete with memories of the challenges and accomplishments that we, as Asia-Pacific women, experienced during the preparations for Beijing. That preparatory process — which I participated in, first, as the head of the APDC's Gender and Development Programme and as the Substantive Focal Point of the Asia and Pacific NGO Working Group, and then as the Director to UNIFEM — was the beginning of a crucial and intense period of creating a future agenda for women's empowerment and gender equality. Thousands of us participated in this process. And, though we strategised and planned many events and meetings for the Beijing conference, we were fully aware that the process that we were engaged in could not end in September 1995; rather, the Beijing process was one that would only be validated and valuable if it led to sustained and effective implementation of the commitments secured at the conference.

With the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA) by the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the world acquired a comprehensive action plan to enhance women's social and economic empowerment, improve women's health, advance women's education and training, promote women's rights, and end gender-based violence. At the Beijing conference, women affirmed the kind of world we want to live in. This world is one where development processes will empower people and women in particular. It is one where we can create sustainable livelihoods, build stable lives and healthy communities, where we can resolve conflicts and build peace on a long-term basis.

Although the PFA is not legally binding, more than 100 countries and most UN organisations made commitments to develop implementation strategies to secure gender equality and women's empowerment. The world watched as those commitments were being made, and it is initiatives like APDC's Post-Beijing Implementation Monitor that will assist in providing the information necessary to ensure that women's eyes continue to focus on how these commitments are being implemented.

What are the key challenges now, slightly more than two years after the Fourth World Conference on Women? At the March 1998 session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the UN will report that approximately 90 governments have submitted national action plans that delineate the

specific commitments that they are making as follow-up to Beijing. At the CSW, governments will have dialogues about and craft a set of resolutions related to promotion of women's human rights, elimination of violence against women, the situation and roles of women in conflict situations and the situation of girls. A key challenge is to continue to create the political space to ensure that countries that have national action plans institute the concrete policies and practices needed to implement them, and to encourage governments in countries that have not developed action plans to do so. Another key challenge is to use 1998, a time of commemoration and work related to the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the five-year review of the World Conference on Human Rights, to increase advocacy and policy responses related to the universality and indivisibility of women's human rights.

And, finally, as the inter-linked trends of globalisation and increasing economic inequalities continue, there is a heightened need for a transformative poverty elimination agenda that recognises women's achievements, enhances women's capabilities, and builds on the assets that women have.

The Beijing process stimulated and strengthened many national and regional networks in Asia and the Pacific. It is these networks, and the creative and committed organisations that comprise them, that will sustain much of the work of monitoring, lobbying and advocating that is needed in the implementation phase of the Beijing agenda. Strong financial support from the donor community, as well as new partnerships and sources of support from the private sector and others, are needed to ensure that these networks and organisations continue to grow in strength, in numbers, and effectiveness. At UNIFEM, we are working constantly in an attempt to leverage increased support that can sustain the critical work that networks and women's organisations continue to perform.

It will take years to measure the full impact of the initiatives that have been launched as follow-up to Beijing. The year 2000 will undoubtedly be a time in which to take stock again. The need for an initiative like the Monitor could not be greater and, with APDC's commitment and Vanessa Griffen's leadership, we can feel secure that we will be receiving state-of-the art analysis and assessments to assist us in future stock-taking exercises and to alert us to the innovations that deserve closer attention and replication. I congratulate the Centre and Vanessa for taking on this responsibility and look forward to a stronger partnership between UNIFEM and APDC in supporting the progress of the world's women towards women's empowerment and equality.

## Beijing and Beyond: Personal and Political Transformation<sup>1</sup>

*Dr Patricia B. Licuanan,  
former Chairperson, UN Commission on the Status of Women,  
for and during the Beijing Conference*

It has been two years since the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) and the NGO Forum were held in Beijing, China in September, 1995. And yes, I still have my Beijing hangover. I would like to think that the spirit of Beijing is alive and well and that we remain true to the promises we made two years ago and remain strongly committed to the difficult work of implementation of the Platform for Action that came out of the Conference. As we discuss the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, allow me to reflect on Beijing and its implementation from a slightly different perspective.

Questions on Beijing and its accomplishments are often addressed to me as an advocate for women as well as someone who spent two years as Chair of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the Preparatory Committee for the Conference and who, at the Conference itself, chaired the Main Committee which was the working committee of the Conference where the Platform for Action was negotiated.

My reflection on Beijing and the challenges beyond usually concentrated in the twelve Areas of Concern of the Platform as well as on the strategic objectives and recommended actions for each of these areas. Recently, I have focused on what has been implemented.

But what I would like to share at this point will concentrate less on the outcome of the Beijing Conference and to what extent these have been implemented. Instead, my remarks will focus on the Beijing Process' and its significance particularly in the light of social-psychological transformation and the genuine personal and political empowerment of women. The preparations for Beijing, the Conference itself (along with the NGO Forum) and the past two years of implementation have all been part of a political process — a transformative process that is ongoing.

The main message of these brief comments is that the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW), through its substantive work but particularly through the process involved, transformed governments, the United Nations, women's groups and individuals. This transformation is generally not given the attention it deserves as we focus on more concrete policies, programmes and activities generally associated with the implementation of the Platform for Action (PFA), but it is equally important. This transformation involves the transformation of the political agenda, transformation of processes and transformation of individuals and groups.

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<sup>1</sup> Speech delivered at the Legislative Symposium on the Philippines government's implementation of the Platform for Action, held on September 29, 1997, in Manila.

### **Transforming the Political Agenda**

The political agenda was transformed from a mainstream mindset to an alternative engendered agenda. Even before we reached Beijing, the FWCW had already achieved one of its main objectives that is, raising the level of awareness and discussion of gender issues globally. No other conference received as much attention from the media. At national and regional levels as well, advocacy for women gained a legitimacy that only a high-profile global conference could give it.

Today, because of Beijing, issues first raised during the UN Decade for Women that remain valid today, are an accepted part of development discourse and issues such as the feminisation of poverty, economic participation, health, education, political participation, violence against women and human rights have a visibility and legitimacy as they never had before.

### **Transforming Processes**

Processes were transformed from a top-down, bureaucratic and hierarchical one to a more democratic and participatory one. One must recall that the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women involved a complex consultation process at national, regional and global levels. At the national level, as recommended by the UN General Assembly, committees were set up to spearhead and coordinate preparatory activities for the FWCW. National activities included public education campaigns, discussion of country positions on key issues, workshops on the Draft Platform for Action and preparation of country reports.

Five Regional Preparatory meetings were organised by the five UN Economic Commissions for the various regions with a regional plan of action coming out of each one. The UN Division for the Advancement of Women also convened Expert Group Meetings focusing on different areas of concern of the Platform. The outputs of the Regional Preparatory Meetings and Expert Group Meetings were all inputs into the Draft Platform for Action prepared by the Secretariat and negotiated at the 39th. Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

At the Conference itself, the Plenary sessions and the meetings of the Main Committee were open to all delegates, NGOs and the media. The two working groups and the Contact Groups were open to delegates and NGOs but were closed to media. Only delegates had access to the informal informals. Access to meetings particularly for NGOs was always a thorny issue but ultimately there was general satisfaction with regard to NGO access. The FWCW established a new norm for NGO lobbying and input into the Platform for Action. This was done through NGO membership in official country delegations as well as through NGO attendance at the FWCW.

Perhaps the most special feature of the FWCW was its highly participatory nature. Because of the high level of participation at all levels starting from the micro to the macro, the grassroots to the global, numerous networks and alliances were forged. The broad-based interest and involvement at the national, regional and global levels was unmistakable. The partnership with NGOs throughout the process, though not without tension, was unparalleled. In both the formal and informal processes of the Conference and its preparations, decision-making was participative and non-hierarchical. The Conference benefitted tremendously from the high degree of networking among women's groups since Nairobi.

This highly participative and basically horizontal communication pattern combined with the emotionally-charged atmosphere (not to mention the variety of colours and costumes present) generated occasional misgivings among those who viewed the process as 'chaotic'. I remember at the PrepCom, assuring a well-meaning male ambassador from one of the larger delegations that while his concerns about organisational and management aspects of the Conference and its preparations were well-taken, he would have to appreciate the positive difference between a Women's Conference and the typical grey-suit, hierarchical, formal and male atmosphere of UN meetings. The Beijing process demystified the processes and procedures of UN meetings.

### **Transforming Persons and Organisations**

But transformation is also apparent in individual women and their organisations. In the years of preparation for Beijing, during the Conference itself, and now, as we implement the Platform for Action, I have seen women transformed from shy and unsure to aggressive and confident; from passive and tentative to proactive and assertive. I cannot forget how as the Chair of the PrepCom, it was so difficult to accommodate all the women representing various NGOs who wanted to speak. There has been a noticeable change from working alone to working in groups and networks. The visibility and viability of national as well as regional networks is an important development. The use of electronic technology has significantly helped this process.

I have also observed how NGOs that used to handle rather stereotyped programmes and projects generally focusing on the practical, short term needs of women now have a more engendered agenda. There is now more emphasis on strategic or long-term needs or on the uneven power relations between men and women. I have watched groups with a few 'stars' who did all the work, gradually distribute responsibility more evenly and reflect this in 'multiple billing'.

I have witnessed the competition and negative stereotyping between and among groups that characterised the pre-Beijing scene transformed to greater cooperation, genuine appreciation of others' strengths and styles, increased mentoring and sharing of know-how. Never before have we had so much working together between and among groups as we do now.

Other changes are: from dull meetings with stereotyped and predictable outcomes to meetings where there is more willingness to disagree and find creative solutions; from dependence on outside funding to heightened resourcefulness and sustainability. Finally, I have been privileged to observe and personally experience the transformation of casual, pragmatic working relations into strong friendships built on shared commitment and deep respect.

As a social psychologist, I sincerely believe that aside from the implementation of the Platform for Action, these personal and organisational transformations are very important and should be documented as part of the impact of Beijing. I have committed myself to this effort.

So, after Beijing, let us celebrate our action and accomplishments, our new strengths and power, our heightened solidarity and sisterhood and our deepened friendship and partnership. But let us also remember that much more remains to be done — that we still have a long way to go, a long way to grow.





**INTRODUCTION  
TO THE APDC  
ASIA-PACIFIC POST-BEIJING  
IMPLEMENTATION MONITOR**

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# Introduction to the APDC

## Asia-Pacific Post-Beijing Implementation Monitor

### Background

The Asian and Pacific Development Centre (APDC) is a regional autonomous intergovernmental institution for development research, training, consultancy and advisory services and information dissemination. The Centre's mandate is to assist developing countries of the Asia Pacific region in the study, formulation, implementation, management and evaluation of development policies and strategies.

The Gender and Development (GAD) Programme of the Centre specialises in addressing the gendered nature of development processes and their impact on women's lives. The Programme engages in systematic analysis, data collection, training, action research and policy dialogues in order to bring to the fore the realities of women's work and lives in the context of changes in structures, institutions and processes as a result of macro-economic policies. It provides a regional forum to articulate the needs, interests, perspectives and situation of women and to contribute to the identification of appropriate strategies to bring about meaningful changes in women's lives. The Programme works with a wide range of government agencies, non-governmental organisations, women's groups and academic institutions.

The Gender and Development Programme's main areas of focus are :

- Policy oriented research studies and recommendations for policy change;
- Training in gender awareness for development planners and implementers;
- Strengthening of local programmes through technical assistance and faci-

litation of networking initiatives;

- Dissemination of information to organisations and individuals through various publications.

Gender and development issues including international migration of women, women's health, sustainable development, women and poverty, women farmers and rural change, gender, population and reproductive rights, and gender and the environment, have been addressed by the Programme.

In its advocacy role, the Programme was involved in substantive regional preparations for the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, September 1995. The Centre was designated a regional lead institute for the Southeast Asian region by the OECD/DAC/WID Expert Group Facilitation Initiative, provided technical assistance to some governments in the finalisation of national reports for Beijing and offered training in lobbying techniques. Regional information on NGO preparations for the Beijing Conference was disseminated through a regular newsletter, "Reaching Out", which was brought out by the Programme.

The Programme's post-Beijing initiatives have focused on the dissemination of information on post-Beijing implementation and monitoring through a monthly fact-sheet, the "APDC-GAD Post-Beijing Newsflash/Faxnews"; technical assistance to governments and non-government organisations in Indonesia and Mongolia on post-Beijing implementation and monitoring; and the compilation and production of the annual Asia-Pacific Post-Beijing Implementation Monitor.

### **The APDC Asia-Pacific Post-Beijing Implementation Monitor**

Work for the inaugural issue of the annual Asia-Pacific Post-Beijing Implementation Monitor involved the gathering of information on post-Beijing implementation and monitoring initiatives from governments and non-government organisations in the region. Other sources of information for the APDC Monitor include the information posted by organisations on their Internet web sites and also articles from the region and internationally which provide an overview of social and economic developments, and key gender and development issues in the region.

The APDC Monitor is divided into four sections: the first section, gives a brief overview and analysis of post-Beijing implementation in the region. It covers the main areas of focus of government implementation strategies, and reviews women's regional post-Beijing initiatives. The second section contains the main country reports from governments and non-governmental organisations on the status of post-Beijing implementation and monitoring. Interspersed, between each subregion's reports, is information and statistics on women's status and conditions which indicate the on-going problems of poverty, violence, ill-health and discriminations against women under the laws; in education and in the media in countries in the region. The country reports are divided into sub-regions presented in order of the number of reports for each sub-region: beginning with the Southeast Asian region which had the maximum number of reports, followed by East Asia, South Asia, the Pacific and Central Asia. The second section also concludes with an overview and analysis by APDC of monitoring methods used in the region by governments and non-governmental organisations. The country report section ends with some brief examples of innovative post-Beijing implementation and monitoring activities in the region.

The third section of the APDC Monitor is a reminder of the Beijing Conference and its commitments. It presents a list of responsibilities allocated for the

implementation and monitoring of the global Platform for Action (PFA) made by governments in Beijing. The section also provides information on what is being done by the UN at the regional level, by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), to follow up on the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing PFA.

The final section of the APDC Monitor presents a series of articles, which provide analysis and overview of some of the key gender and development issues in the region. The section presents the current situation in the region with reference to only a few of the critical issues affecting women which need to be addressed by governments and non-governmental organisations in monitoring women's rights, status and gender equity. It also gives a brief, critical review of the impact of macro-economic policies on women in Asia and the Pacific and the role of civil society in mobilising people for action for change. These articles were written before the current financial crisis hit the Southeast Asian region and had reverberations elsewhere. This economic crisis affecting the Asia region is now having major social, economic and political impacts, including on women.

The Gender and Development Programme of the Asian and Pacific Development Centre thanks governments, non-government organisations and individual contributors in the region who sent in reports, articles and information for the APDC Asia Pacific Post-Beijing Implementation Monitor and appreciates the efforts of women analysts in the region who contributed the articles on critical gender and development issues which need to be addressed. The Programme also greatly appreciates the messages and good wishes sent by key women leaders of the region. Finally, the Programme places on record its thanks to the European Commission whose grant made the publication of the APDC Asia Pacific Post-Beijing Implementation Monitor possible.

# Brief Overview and Analysis of Post-Beijing Implementation in the Region

*This article analyses government implementation and NGO monitoring of the Beijing Platform for Action and national plans of action in the Asia-Pacific region. Based on the reports presented, certain observations are made which point to the areas where different and more extended efforts to implement and monitor the Platform for Action may be needed.*

## Monitoring Government Implementation

### Main Areas of Focus

From the post-Beijing reports sent to the APDC annual Asia Pacific Post-Beijing Implementation Monitor, we conclude that governments in the region have concentrated their implementation efforts mainly in the following areas:

- Violence against women, particularly domestic violence, trafficking and rape.
- Women and the law, particularly review of laws and enactment/amendment of laws.
- Women and the economy, particularly micro-credit and other self-sufficiency programmes.
- Gender mainstreaming and gender sensitisation training.
- Women and health including reduction of maternal mortality rates, anaemia rates and reproductive tract infections including STDs;
- HIV/AIDS prevention and family planning programmes.
- Education of women and girls.
- Women and natural resource management.
- Gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Women and politics.
- Women and poverty.
- Rural women.

### Issues

Most government post-Beijing implementation activities in the region have a strong focus on women and economic issues, particularly on credit schemes for women. Connected with women and economic activities is the promotion of ongoing training in entrepreneurship. The reason for the emphasis on credit schemes appears to be the concrete mechanism and the direct control of resources it offers governments in their programmes, to reach out to poor women. In addition, the expected increase in self-sufficiency of these women and their reduced dependence on government aid and social security, also is an incentive for governments to focus on micro-credit schemes. While many governments in the region tend to rely on such schemes as useful forms of post-Beijing intervention, it is not known whether all credit schemes are monitored regularly to assess their impact on women's lives, and particularly whether women have become economically empowered as a result of the intervention.

Most governments are addressing the primary education needs of girls, particularly those from ethnic minority communities. Both Vietnam and Laos have programmes in place. Although education and training programmes for women are also increasingly implemented, most training seems to focus on transferring management and

entrepreneurial skills to women and it is not known whether these training programmes also educate the women on their basic rights as women and workers. In Vietnam, while the government report points to a number of training programmes being conducted to develop skills that are useful for employment and entrepreneurship, the report does not give any information on how some of the gender impacts of the transition to a market economy can affect women's lives. The increased opportunities for work in exclusive Export Processing Zones, for example, also present particular risks for women employed in such sectors.

NGO reports on women and health, particularly reports on women's reproductive health, indicate that government programmes still stress safe-motherhood and family planning measures. Meeting targets for sterilisation continue to be focused on and reported. Although governments have committed themselves to the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action and have agreed to recognise and acknowledge women's reproductive rights in their health programmes, most reproductive health programmes focus on certain aspects of reproductive health only. For example, programmes on family planning often stress the control of women's fertility through sterilisation and menstrual regulation and there is less importance given to women's needs, experiences and perceptions of their fertility. Further, women and health programmes often still do not integrate such issues as violence against women, as part of the overall concept of women's health. NGO reports also note that privatisation of health services has not meant wider reach of the services, as poor women are often not able to afford private medical care. Statistics on health also indicate that maternal and infant mortality rates continue to be high.

While many Asia Pacific governments have given importance to rural women by recognising them in national plans of action, rural women's worsening economic conditions under structural adjustment programmes and the regime

of agricultural free trade, have not been adequately addressed. Shirkat Gah, a women's NGO in Pakistan, and the Philippines NGO Beijing Score Board, the post-Beijing monitoring watch group in the Philippines, both outlined women's worsening situations in rural and ethnic minority areas despite government plans and intentions.

Reports received on the issues connected with the globalisation of economies, note that there is an increasing trend in the casualisation of women's labour as countries trade under new conditions in the global market. Reports from Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Indonesia reveal that women continue to migrate for economic survival and often have to work under exploitative conditions both in their countries and abroad. In addition, in the present economic crisis in East and Southeast Asia which began in the last quarter of 1997, women analysts are concerned about increasing loss of jobs for women in the formal sector and a concurrent increase in women's employment in the informal sector where there is no security and benefits. Women's working conditions including their few benefits, may undergo a further setback.

In the area of women and power/decision-making, many countries have addressed concerns about women's representation in policy making bodies through affirmative action, for example, India has reserved one-third of the seats in local governing bodies for women, and Vietnam has adopted a quota system for women's participation in the National Assembly. While this is an indication of government's intention towards increasing women's political participation, it is also reflective of the considerable attention given to the issue by women's groups and donor agencies. For example, in India, the women's post-Beijing group, the National Alliance of Women's Organisations, has identified women and politics as a key area of concern. In addition, the Asia-Pacific region has witnessed the emergence of networks and organisations that have a specific focus on women and politics, for example, CAPWIP, ASCENT and

APWIP. The work of these organisations, including political education and training for women entering politics, has contributed to women's increased participation in politics.

With regard to issues on women and the law, more attention seems to be given by governments and women's groups to legislative reform than to the more difficult issues of certain gender inequities under the law, or, the dichotomy between civil and customary/religious laws and women's rights. However, some fundamental changes are being established through new legislation. In Nepal, Parliament has recently passed a bill on women's right to land and women's groups were actively involved in the drafting stage of the bill and in lobbying for its passage in Parliament. In India, although Hindu widows have won the right to own their husbands' property, a proposal for a uniform civil code for all women is considered a problem by many groups including some women's groups, because not all socio-cultural and gender aspects of customary laws and social practices can be addressed by a uniform civil code.

Although many issues have been the focus of government action, for example, women and poverty, and women and political participation, a few issues, for example, women and armed conflict and refugee women, have been largely marginalised. However, in certain countries where the issue of armed conflict is ongoing, NGOs and governments are attempting to address the issue. For example, in Azerbaijan, women's groups work with multilateral agencies to address the issues concerning refugee women and children; in Cambodia, NGOs are involved in conflict resolution training, and in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, women are active partners in negotiations for peace. Women's groups in Sri Lanka and the Sri Lankan national plan of action, have identified the issue of women and armed conflict as a priority concern. However, in contrast, in Indonesia, the government has not



addressed the issue of women and armed conflict in the national plan of action despite the fact that there are ongoing situations of armed conflict in the country, stating that there is no conflict present.

#### *Monitoring Mechanisms*

With regard to mechanisms for implementing and monitoring the Platform for Action and national plans of action, although governments have mostly indicated their intention to strengthen national machineries for the advancement of women and other line ministries, not all structural or procedural changes have been accompanied by increased allocation in the national budgets for gender equity activities. Some countries report an increase in budget allocation, while others report no change or an actual decrease. In the Philippines, the government has decreed that every line department and ministry has to allocate a portion of its budget towards gender and development issues and women's groups are monitoring the GAD outlay in official budgets. In other countries, for example, Malaysia, there has been an increase in government allocation to support NGO activities for women. However, an additional concern now is whether governments in Asia will be able to keep commitments made on increased allocation of resources for women and development issues, given the current financial crisis.

Another issue linked to monitoring mechanisms is the relative lack of development of monitoring indicators to measure progress made in implementing the PFA. Although governments have called for gender disaggregated data and instructed their machineries accordingly, not many government reports indicate the development of such indicators for monitoring or collecting gender disaggregated data for policy analysis and change. Some countries are collecting or initiating data collection as part of implementing gender equity strategies. New Zealand announced the launch of a nationwide time use survey on women in 1997. The national machinery for women's advancement in Cambodia developed some indicators to monitor progress in implementation of the PFA early in its implementation strategy and in Mongolia, a women's information and research group is developing a database on gender issues and will develop indicators for monitoring implementation shortly. However, overall, indicators for monitoring and attention to monitoring itself, as part of the process of implementation, is relatively neglected or under-developed in the region's post-Beijing activities.

## Conclusion

### *Observations*

Based on the brief overview of the status of implementation and the examination of monitoring methods presented in the APDC Monitor, a number of observations can be made. First, in reviewing post-Beijing monitoring of implementation in the region: there is a difference in women's mobilising and information sharing in the pre-Beijing period, as compared with the post-Beijing monitoring phase. In the pre-Beijing preparatory phase, women mobilised extensively in the region to raise issues of concern and to make demands for actions needed through pressuring governments to act. Women's mobilisation in the pre-Beijing phase was also influenced by the UN World Conferences. The regional Asia-Pacific preparatory process for the UN Fourth

World Conference on Women was very strong. Sharing of information and analysis of issues, including the planning of lobbying strategies for a strong regional advocacy on key issues, were well organised. An added impetus was that donors were willing to fund such activities. Analysis and advocacy were greatly informed by inputs from a number of sources in the region.

In the pre-Beijing phase therefore, there was support for mobilising at national, regional and international levels because a United Nations International Women's Conference was being convened after ten years. The series of UN regional preparatory conferences preceding Beijing involved governments in obligatory reporting on progress made for women's advancement in the last decade and these reports also provided grounds for gender critiques or counter reports to be made by women on their countries' development.

However, the post-Beijing phase does not have this high powered UN impetus in the region and post-Beijing monitoring of implementation is carried out under different circumstances: mobilisation and analysis for the monitoring of the implementation of national action plans by governments need to be carried out nationally. The national level analysis and mobilising by women is therefore more important for monitoring post-Beijing implementation. While this offers the opportunity for women's groups to coordinate and exert pressure on governments at the national level, the added force of mobilisation offered by regional organising at various Asia-Pacific meetings which served as fora for women's analysis in the pre-Beijing phase, is now absent. Mobilisation of women and monitoring after Beijing on the Platform for Action is less evident. There are relatively few national non-government monitoring groups set up after Beijing and where these exist (e.g., the Philippines and Thailand), their monitoring activities vary from continuing advocacy on post-Beijing implementation, to close involvement with governments in implementation and establishing an



organised monitoring role (e.g., the Philippines).

The development of a regional monitoring group of women and NGOs to monitor implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action has not developed substantially in the Asia Pacific region. The Asia Pacific Watch (APW; formerly the Asia Pacific NGO Working Group) and the Southeast Asia Watch Group (SEA Watch) are still in formative stages. The Asia Pacific Watch has made interventions and issued statements at the 42nd. Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women and SEA Watch is planning its monitoring role. Regionally therefore, while most countries have adopted national plans, the regional Plan of Action which was agreed to at the Ministerial Meeting in Jakarta, remains a regional plan with no mechanisms for lobbying or monitoring being devised for its implementation. Many women in the region also feel that the regional POA very specifically addresses key Asia-Pacific issues and implementation of this platform for action should be ensured as well. No group has yet referred back to this Regional Plan of Action as a reference point for implementation also.

However, an exception in monitoring regional implementation is the Pacific Platform for Action adopted by Pacific Island nations. A regional strategy of monitoring its implementation was decided in December 1997 at a Pacific meeting organised by the Women's Bureau of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (formerly South Pacific Commission). The Pacific, therefore, has an institutional mechanism for follow-up on the regional POA, with the assistance of the Women's Bureau of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. The Bureau has a regional mandate to monitor and initiate advocacy for implementation of the regional POA and has developed a strategy for monitoring which it intends to implement.

In conclusion, a scan of monitoring methods based on Asia-Pacific reports received, reveals that a framework for monitoring advancements for women



nationally has not been developed. Further, there is a lack of development of indicators to monitor women's current status and conditions nationally and across sectors, or to assess progress in implementation and the impact of policy changes for women's advancement.

Secondly, from the above observations, it is evident that there is a break in regional NGO post-Beijing mobilising and monitoring. Given the depth and range of women's NGO mobilising at the regional level in the pre-Beijing phase and the value of sharing a regional platform for action for presentation of key issues of concern from the Asia-Pacific region at the international level, the need for strengthening both regional and national NGO mechanisms for monitoring implementation of the Beijing PFA, is very evident. Women's movements in the region have grown in stature and strength from the Nairobi World Conference on



Women in 1985 and at the various UN meetings since then. Although women in the region have become empowered and participate at different levels and in different fora on key issues of concern, a sustained follow-up of commitments of the Beijing Conference is not evident.

National monitoring, specifically of the POA and national plans, has an uneven degree of commitment from women's organisations and NGOs. Some national monitoring is undertaken (or some groups would argue, 'taken over') by approved national women's organisations which may not always have the capacity, inclination or direction, to coordinate a strong national monitoring group representing a variety of women's organisations and networks. On the other hand, not all or many women's groups or NGOs that were active and vocal in the Beijing preparations, are necessarily interested or involved in monitoring implementation. While monitoring of key issues of concern continues to take place as women and organisations involved in certain issues or areas pursue their own NGO monitoring, advocacy and action responses on the issues, fewer women are involved in post-Beijing monitoring of governments commit-

ments to action made in international, regional and national action plans.

In other words, "Where did all the regional organising, analysis, documentation and critical reviewing of women's rights and gender inequalities and critical views of development, go in the post-Beijing phase?", Dr. Patricia Licuanan, Chairperson of the UN CSW during the Beijing Conference, asked in a plenary meeting of SEAWatch. She noted that the Asia-Pacific region had one of the best regional action plans and the most coordinated regional lobby and advocacy mechanism for the Beijing Conference and that this mobilisation needed to be sustained in the post-Beijing phase. The strength of the Asia-Pacific region's mobilisation of women is now required for a more rigorous monitoring of government action for implementation of commitments made in the Beijing PFA, the Jakarta POA and national action plans, if women's advancement and substantial changes in women's position and conditions are to be effected in the Asia Pacific region.

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## **SOUTH EAST ASIA**



# Post-Beijing Implementation Report from Cambodia

*Extracted from a paper presented by Ket Sam Ath, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Cambodia, at the APDC Sub-Regional Consultation for Indochina and Mongolia on Post-Beijing Implementation and Monitoring, Bangkok, May 1997*

## Introduction

This report covers the activities undertaken by the national machinery for women's advancement in Cambodia — the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and the focal points of the line ministries of the government, since the Beijing Conference. Information on monitoring mechanisms which have been put in place as part of post-Beijing implementation as well as the problems of implementation are provided. The

report ends with a needs assessment of post-Beijing implementation and monitoring in Cambodia.

## Institutional Strengthening

With regard to the activities undertaken in the area of institutional strengthening, our government has upgraded the former Secretariat of State for Women's Affairs

### CAMBODIA: SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS MADE AT BEIJING

- Enable women to break the vicious circle of poverty
- Remove gender disparities in national education programmes
- Adopt a comprehensive and adequately funded health care service for women
- Bring gender parity in peace negotiations and conflict resolutions
- Eliminate discriminatory elements in laws and regulations concerning economic activities
- Design and implement employment programmes targeting women, guarantee loans for women entrepreneurs and provide training to women in non-traditional fields

Source: UN Division for Advancement of Women website

### BASIC INDICATORS

Maternal Mortality	900 (per 100,000 live births)
Female Literacy	NA
Female Labour Force Participation	54%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

### INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS SIGNED OR RATIFIED

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 ●
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 ●
- International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969 ●
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948 ●
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 ●
- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979 ●
- Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984 ●
- Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951 ●

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

Key:  
● Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature  
○ Signature not yet followed by ratification

Note: Status is as of 1 March 1997

to a Ministry of Women's Affairs which is accountable to the Council of Ministers instead of the Prime Ministers.

In addition to upgrading the status of the Ministry, the government has also set up women's focal points in all line ministries and relevant government organisations in order to integrate women and gender issues into government policies and projects. These focal points are in the process of being strengthened, particularly their managerial capacity to undertake such challenging tasks. As a result of the cooperation with line ministries and other concerned parties, some of the mainstreaming efforts have started to bring about concrete results.

We have faced financial constraints so far in order to achieve objectives of the

*"We have faced financial constraints so far in order to achieve objectives of the Beijing Conference. Our Ministry's budget covers less than 1% of the national budget, meeting only the costs of human resources, but not services which are required to meet the needs of women in rural areas."*

Beijing Conference. Our Ministry's budget covers less than 1% of the national budget, meeting only the costs of human resources, but not services which are required to meet the needs of women in rural areas. We also need to upgrade the competence of our staff, particularly our provincial staff, in order to undertake duties which have fallen under our mandate including legal protection and credit activities. Our Ministry has a

relatively short history as a modern national machinery. While many of our staff have the proven capability in the area of service delivery to women, many of the critical areas, such as research (both qualitative and quantitative) and mainstreaming as well as securing budgets, are new frontiers of challenges.

### Monitoring Mechanisms

Indicators for monitoring implementation: relevant indicators on women's and gender issues have been identified and each line ministry including the Ministry of Planning have compiled statistics disaggregated by

gender and region. The Ministry of Women's Affairs can collect them for policy making and project formulation purposes through its women's focal points in line ministries should the need arise. Reporting requirements agreed under the Beijing Conference have been fulfilled thus far with the Ministry acting as the coordinator and women's focal points as collaborators. Final reports have been communicated to the United Nations through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### Post-Beijing Implementation Programmes

We have organised a national conference to review our activities since 1995 and tried to project our activities according to the Beijing Platform for Action. During the conference, the most critical areas of challenges for Cambodian women were identified as education, health, poverty alleviation and legal protection sectors. Four critical areas for action were agreed upon by the participants. They are legal protection, education, reproductive health and equal participation in economic development.

For health, we are very concerned about the soaring HIV prevalence rate among women — 2.5% of ante-natal clinic clients according to the latest sentinel surveillance. We feel that women need to be informed of the danger of infection and knowledge of proper preventive measures. They will also need to be empowered in order to persuade men to use condoms. Such programmes also need to target adolescents who need to have information on sexuality and sexual practice.

For legal protection, we are very concerned about the trafficking of women and children. I acknowledge that many valuable studies have been published on this violation of fundamental human rights. We feel that we have to undertake action involving all parties concerned, not simply NGOs, but also government ministries to tackle this issue. We also feel the need for a study

which is not a simple advocacy, but which highlights the structural causes of trafficking. Such a study also needs to be unbiased in dealing with commercial sex workers.

In the area of health, one of our staff represents the Ministry in the National Committee on STDs and HIV/AIDS and provides it with advice related to social and gender aspects of the diseases. Our Ministry is also implementing a pilot project in educating women on birth-spacing and HIV/AIDS prevention.

In the area of income and employment generation, a staff member also represents the Ministry in the National Rural Credit Committee where suitable measures to extend credit to the poorest segments of the population in the country are discussed. We contribute to the identification of the social and gender profile of the most vulnerable and poorest in the country by drawing on their experiences in credit disbursement through the community development project.

Another major mainstreaming effort undertaken by the Ministry is to build momentum among the WID focal points and women's organisations (local NGOs) to adopt domestic laws covering many areas relevant to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Ministry has hosted several workshops in order to discuss strategies and priority areas to be adopted as domestic laws.

In the area of legislation, a law to abolish human exploitation and child trafficking has been approved. The National Committee for Children has been established and one of our staff is representing the Ministry as a member. The Ministry also prepared a draft Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence with concerned parties. It will be considered by the Council of Ministers and the National Assembly.

In the area of labour issues, the Labour Law was adopted in the National Assembly in 1996. During the process



of drafting the law, MoWA provided technical advice focusing on women and labour issues including occupational health, working conditions and labour rights including child rights.

In various sectors, we also seek international cooperation from the donors, United Nations agencies as well as NGOs (both international and local). In the area of reproductive health, the ministry is planning to co-finance, with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the birth spacing and HIV/AIDS education for women in rural areas for a period of two years from 1997.

The Ministry also co-finances a community development project with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) focusing on credit and literacy activities. We are implementing this project in the 18 provinces in Cambodia since the mid 1980's. The Ministry has also hosted two technical assistance missions from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in the area of income and employment generation for women with a US\$2 million loan project being signed between the Royal Government of Cambodia and ADB.

In the area of women's rights, the Project Against Domestic Violence has contributed in collecting data and providing analysis on the scale of domestic violence in Cambodia. Some

staff are trained to undertake field research as well as caring for the victims including their quick recovery and integration into normal life. Following a needs assessment research, the Ministry also received a grant from the Canada Fund for training social workers at the provincial and district levels on the counselling of women victims of domestic violence.

of human resource development of the Ministry and assistance to women in Cambodia.

Our Ministry also runs integrated women in development centres at the provincial level. Many organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Food Programme (WFP) as well as the Government of Japan have rendered their valuable assistance in the provision of buildings, equipment as well as necessary training for the trainers in such provinces as Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, Kandal, Kampong Cham and Kampot.

For education, our immediate interest is to narrow the gender gap at the basic education level. We provide external assistance agencies with technical advice on the aspects of how poverty impacts on enrolment rates and how the gender gap can be narrowed. We are at the stage of formulating practical activities which can be introduced into our national cluster school system which aims to upgrade teachers' competence as well as community's resources. We will also look into the possibility of merit-driven scholarships for girl students at the secondary level so that they will be able to serve as role-models for younger girls.

## Conclusion

Since the Beijing Conference, many donors are taking a great interest in rendering their valuable cooperation towards women-in-development in our country. The same is true for governmental and non-governmental circles in Cambodia. In this sense, we can conclude that we have been given an unprecedented opportunity to pursue our objectives by ourselves, both in the areas



# Rural Women's Situation and Needs in Cambodia

*Summarised from a paper presented by Srey Chanpallara, Outreach, at the APDC Sub-Regional Consultation for Indochina and Mongolia on Post-Beijing Implementation and Monitoring, Bangkok, May 1997*

## Introduction

Outreach was established by a group of Cambodian human rights activists and former victims of human rights and democracy abuses, to work cooperatively with local organisations in Cambodia and with international NGOs.

For two decades now, our country has fallen under the flames of war, resulting in the suffering of our women in their daily lives. Women have truly been the greatest victims of the war but most people seem to be blind to this fact. Many women have become widows and many of them have had to work as labourers and construction workers in order to support their children. Women are porters, merchants and providers of shelter. They care for the welfare of their children, care for the elderly, take charge of their households and serve in the community. Women have accomplished all these tasks despite severe constraints including the lack of funds, lack of job training skills and at personal health risks. Women have had to face discrimination, have low social status and get treated as mere objects of men's carnal desire. Rural women lack education opportunities and have remained unproductive.

## The Situation of Rural Women

Between 1996 to 1997, the education rate for rural women increased to 11%. However, educating children remains an expensive endeavour for most Cambodian families. As a result, poor

families often direct their limited resources to the education of boys, while girls remain uneducated. Traditional stereotypes are often the root cause of the decreasing ratio of female to male students, as students go from primary level to secondary level. Many families consider it inappropriate for their daughters to pursue a career or to mix with the opposite sex and expect girls to take on their role as house-keepers. In rural areas, the early age of marriage for girls (15 years in rural areas, 18 years in urban areas), exacerbates the problem of girls dropping out of school.

Rural women in Cambodia suffer, as do the rest of Cambodians, from the absence of laws or enforcement of laws to protect the environment. The environment is being poisoned by the dumping of toxic wastes, deforestation and industrial pollution. Rural women are also faced with issues of land scarcity, exacerbated by weak land laws and corrupt officials and military personnel who confiscate land from women headed households or poor people. Cambodian women suffer from acts of violence against them in all its typical forms: rape, battery or domestic violence, incest, sex trafficking, sexual discrimination and pornography. Rural women between the ages of 14-17 years are particularly vulnerable.

*"Rural women face a myriad of barriers in participating equally in Cambodian society. Indigenous and provincial people are generally under-educated, under-nourished and under-represented in the government. They are rarely provided with adequate health resources."*

Cambodian women have, using the available opportunities, taken part in many development initiatives and decision-making processes at local,

provincial and national levels. They have launched several campaigns to educate women on their rights and responsibilities. They take part in the political, social and economic initiatives of the government, non-governmental and community-based organisations.

Despite continuing problems including discrimination and violence against women, the emergence of democracy is a promising tool. The Constitution, endorsed by the Royal Government of Cambodia in 1993, states that men and women are equal. The government is well aware that women are a major resource in the development of the nation. Nevertheless, specific policies to promote participation of women in developmental initiatives are still few.

### Rural Women's Needs in Cambodia

Outreach has identified the following needs:

- Training programmes that teach rural women about basic concepts of family law and the dynamics of domestic violence.
- Education is a crucial issue, particularly the understanding of rights to better one's life in relation to community development.
- Human resource development.
- Training on gender issues which includes women's rights at the grassroots level.
- Strengthening of women's media to produce bulletins, booklets, posters and video.

### Reaching Out to Rural Women

Women's NGOs in Cambodia are conducting programmes for rural women. An example of Outreach's work in the rural areas is the conducting of training workshops on human rights and democracy with women in rural areas and rural development work. The objectives of the organisation are to:

- Increase the knowledge of the general public, especially women,

about women's rights and democracy:

- Encourage local women leaders to register as candidates in the upcoming election and educate women about how to fully participate in the upcoming election;
- Educate women about all available resources in their region that assist rural women in improving their educational opportunities, health and economic status;
- Provide skills training for rural women.

Outreach networks with rural women's organisations and other NGOs involved in rural development work. Outreach's activities meet urgent needs for increased education and advocacy for democratic principles in Cambodia, particularly targeting rural women, as nearly all of them have received little or no education about human rights and democracy. Rural women face a myriad of barriers in participating equally in Cambodian society. Indigenous and provincial people are generally under-educated, under-nourished and under-represented in the government. They are rarely provided with adequate health resources.

### Suggestions for Government Action

- Establishing a platform for women to identify what Cambodian women need in order to share their experiences with the community or in society; organising many meetings with women at national level.
- Increasing education, advocacy and media work on rural women's issues.
- Conducting women's leadership training programmes.
- Increasing women's participation in public affairs programmes.
- Implementing credit schemes for women.

# An NGO Report on Post-Beijing Implementation — Cambodia

*Summarised from a paper presented by Nanda Pok, Women for Prosperity, at the APDC Sub-Regional Consultation for Indochina and Mongolia on Post-Beijing Implementation and Monitoring, Bangkok, May 1997*

## Introduction and Brief History

In the past twenty five years, Cambodia has gone through five regimes which can be categorised as:

Before 1970 -	Monarchy regime
1970 - 1975 -	Republican regime
1975 - 1979 -	Communist regime (Pol Pot)
1979 - 1993 -	Socialist regime (State of Cambodia)
1993 - to date -	Constitutional Monarchy (The King reigns but does not govern)

Cambodian women were given the right to vote and to stand for elected office from 1947. However, it was not until 1958, that we had the first and only woman elected as a member of parliament. The latest statistics from the Ministry of Interior shows that Cambodia's total population is 10.8 million, of which women make up 52%, which is slightly more than half of the total population.

Since the election in 1993, many people believe that the situation of women in Cambodia has worsened. Although more than 50% of the population are women, there appears to be less gender equity in the current regime than the previous one. This lack of equity is apparent in the public sector today. At the 1993 general election, where 90% of registered voters turned out to vote, women comprised 54% of the people who cast their votes. Legitimately,

women should govern in proportion to their numbers, but due to the lack of gender balance in society, their representation is very low.

- Currently, there are 7 women out of 120 members of the National Assembly, representing less than 6% of the total.
- Among the 45 Cabinet Ministers and Secretaries of State, none are women. Five women are Under Secretaries of State, two of whom are with the Ministry of Women's Affairs.
- In the 23 provinces and municipalities, there is still no woman governor, but there is one deputy governor.
- Of 175 districts, there are two women district chiefs and four women deputy chiefs.
- Out of the 1,558 communes, less than ten women are commune chiefs and deputy chiefs.
- Despite a decrease in the number of women holding senior government positions, the 1994 country report put out by the Ministry of Women's Affairs notes that "there was no shortage of women who worked very hard during the election campaign to put forward the agenda of their political parties. Many of these women are now working in different ministries, mostly as low ranking officials".



### NGO Organisation and Mobilisation on the Issue of Women and Politics

Currently, there are about 300 NGOs in Cambodia. However, only four of these organisations work on promoting women's participation in politics. These organisations are:

- Women for Prosperity (WFP) which develops women leaders through its "Women Leadership Training" Programme, and encourages their participation in a "Public Affairs" Programme. The first Programme identifies, nurtures and trains women to become leaders. The second Programme, a natural extension of the first, encourages women to be part of the Cambodian political process by giving them the necessary skills and confidence to stand for elected office. Women from ministries, government departments, non-governmental organisations, individuals and members of political parties are targeted. These women come from all the provinces of Cambodia.
- Khmer Women's Voice Centre (KWVC) which has conducted research on "Women in Politics" and produced monthly publications on women, also runs TV and radio programmes on women's issues.

- Women Media Centre (WMC) which works mainly with media campaign, television, radio, video production and information.
- International Republican Institute (IRI), an international organisation works mainly with political parties.

Cambodia will be organising two elections, local and national, in 1998. The NGOs have formed two coalitions: "Coalition for Free and Fair Election" (COFFEL) and the "Committee for Free and Fair Election" (COMFREL), to ensure that the upcoming elections will be conducted in a free and fair manner. The Women's Affairs Committee of COFFEL together with other organisations had requested the government and political parties to accept a 30% quota system for women candidates for the upcoming election. So far, one political party (FUNCINPEC) has granted the request. Cambodian women are now prepared and willing to challenge their party's leaders for nominations.

Cambodian women are aware of their equal rights as citizens and particularly their rights to be involved and intervene in political affairs of the state which is guaranteed by the Constitution. Therefore, women propose to exercise this right by preparing to get actively involved in the upcoming elections including whether or not to choose to run as candidates and/or choose the representatives who will work for the benefit and interest of women and children. We want to prove that women's votes are important and need to be recognised and reckoned with, and that women and men together make democracy work. Each of us has the same responsibility and there is no task that can only be performed by men or by women alone.

## AMARA's Activities on Post-Beijing Implementation

*Summarised from a paper presented by Ung Yok Khoan, at the APDC Sub-Regional Consultation for Indochina and Mongolia on Post-Beijing Implementation and Monitoring, Bangkok, May 1997*

AMARA was founded in 1994 as a network of Cambodian women cooperating for equality, development and peace, with the goals of preparing a platform for women and preparing women to take action for change in their communities. For the first two years, AMARA focused on building a network of women and strengthening their capacity to be active in their communities. Activities were focused around preparations for Beijing particularly connecting Cambodian women to Beijing through the "Women Weaving the World Together" project.

Since Beijing, AMARA's strategy for enhancing the status of women, has been drawn from the Beijing Platform for Action. The Platform for Action (PFA) places poverty as the first critical area of concern: it proposes that funders and development agencies should improve women's economic participation by implementing policies to provide more resources to rural women and support initiatives to provide resources to small-scale women entrepreneurs.

AMARA believes that women cannot advance in society without securing a better economic position, so it focuses on economic empowerment of women. The full participation of women in Cambodia's reconstruction is essential to sustainable development. Women make up 60% of the Cambodian population, a great majority of them are economically active and many head households, bearing the sole responsibility for supporting families. Women in Cambodia bear the heaviest burdens of

poverty and are marginalised and under-represented at decision-making levels. Their labour is undervalued and it is extremely difficult for them to secure a livelihood for themselves and their families.

In July 1995, AMARA was selected as country coordinator of a project organised by the International Council on Management of Population Programmes (ICOMP), based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Philippines. The project aims to build a network among Cambodian women's NGOs and NGOs of six other countries viz. Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Vietnam. The Project, which is the focus of AMARA's networking activities since Beijing, provides training for 30 women's NGOs in the seven countries to strengthen NGO capacity to enhance the status of women.

AMARA and the 30 NGOs in the team will focus on women's economic empowerment as their priority activity for the next four years. Activities to strengthen capacity-building in the network have included training workshops, both regionally and nationally; exposure programmes focusing on livelihood projects; organisational development assistance; and mutual assistance of NGO groups.

Following the in-country exposure programme visit to the silk-producing area of Phnom Srok in Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia, AMARA has set up a pilot programme



called the Women's Economic Project for women's economic empowerment through building on existing skills of silk production. The project aims to revitalise traditional silk production in the area, where many women already have skills in sericulture, spinning and weaving, but are not able to make adequate income from these activities because of a lack of organisation and marketing. Two major objectives of the project funded by CARERE (Cambodian Relief and Rehabilitation Programme) are:

- to provide technical assistance to improve women's existing traditional skills.
- to improve women's access to markets for their products through promoting mutual trust and cooperation.

The Women's Economic Project aims to have a positive impact on women's family income, with their improved skills, quality and marketing of their products and in turn bringing more money into their families. It hopes to strengthen women's leadership skills and increase their participation in the economic and social development of their communities. In the long term, AMARA plans to involve these women in other community development initiatives, according to the community's assessment of its own needs in areas such as health and education.

# Indonesian National Plan of Action

*Summarised from a report sent to the UN Division for the Advancement of Women by the Office of the State Minister for the Role of Women*

## Introduction

The National Plan for Women's Advancement focuses on five priority areas which fall within the twelve critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action. However, certain issues, for example, Women and Armed Conflict are not covered because it is not deemed significant as Indonesia is considered peaceful and stable. The Office of the State Minister for the Role of Women, the national machinery for women's advancement, focuses on the following five priorities:

- the increased quality of women as human resources in development;

- the increased quality of the role and protection of female workers;
- the increased quality of the multi-functional roles of men and women in the family and community;
- the development of the socio-cultural environment conducive to the advancement of women;
- the development of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women and women's organisations.

Programmes for women's advancement, therefore, address women's education, health and labour. The Ministry's main programmes focus on:

- non-degree courses in education;
- improvement of the health and

## BASIC INDICATORS

Maternal Mortality	650 (per 100,000 live births)
Female Literacy	39.0%
Female Labour Force Participation	77.1%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	12.6%

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

## INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS SIGNED OR RATIFIED

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	NA
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	NA
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	NA
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	NA
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	●
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	●
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	O
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

Key:

- Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature
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Note: Status is as of 1 March 1997

- nutritional status of women;
- increase in the quality and productivity of female workers;
- protection of female workers;
- increase in the quality of the role of women as nurturers as well as solvers of socio-economic problems in society and at the international level;
- development of a socio-cultural environment conducive to the advancement of women;
- increase in research and studies on the advancement of women, institutional mechanisms as well as women's organisation to be supportive of the enhancement of the status and role of women.

The goals of the policies on the promotion of the status and role of women are translated into 30 programmes, projects and activities for the improvement of women. In addition, the Ministry has incorporated the majority of the programmes into sectoral programmes of line ministries. In line with its support role, the Ministry has also prepared a profile on the status and role of women at national and regional levels, a management information system on the advancement of women which includes the gender development index, gender empowerment measures and the principles outlined in the government policy on the gender partnership between men and women.

### **The National Plan Of Action**

The ongoing programmes in the 12 critical areas of concern from the Platform for Action (PFA) include:

#### **Women and Poverty**

Specific programmes to alleviate women's poverty are the integrated programme on the enhancement of the role of women towards a healthy and prosperous family and programmes for income generation. A general programme for poverty alleviation is the Backward Village Programme. The two programmes are carried out by the motivating team of the Family Welfare Movement, a movement which has

community membership from the grass root level. Women are the main motivators. The Backward Village Programme operates in 21,000 poor villages with each village receiving US\$10,000 for development.

#### **Education and Training of Women**

The ongoing programmes address the poor quality of the role of women in development which is often a result of their low level of education, low managerial skills and low leadership capacities. One of the programmes focuses on the eradication of the three illiteracies (in the Roman alphabet, in numbers and in the command of the Indonesian language) and expects to make two and a half million Indonesian women aged between 14-49 years literate by the year 2000. There is a programme addressing the non-formal education of women workers in factories and villages through the provision of modules which are similar to the curricula of primary and secondary level education. The monitoring and evaluation of the nine-year compulsory education for school children launched in 1994 is ongoing. In addition, various training and advocacy programmes to improve women's managerial and leadership skills and their use of science and technology are being implemented.

#### **Women and Health**

Under the Family Welfare Movement's team of motivators, village women assemble and participate actively in facilitating access to health services and improving the health status of the community. The government provides physical facilities such as community health centres (Puskesmas) in more than 14,000 sub districts and the integrated health posts (Posyandu) in more than 67,000 villages. Programmes to improve women's health status include the reduction of maternal mortality rate to a target level of 225/100,000 live births in 1998, and ultimately, to 80/100,000 live births in the year 2018; encouragement of breastfeeding, training of midwives in villages, developing gender sensitisation training and advocacy programmes for HIV/AIDS prevention, violence against



women and women's reproductive health.

### **Violence Against Women**

Among the steps taken to increase the awareness on violence against women are the raising of public awareness on the issue, lobbying and advocacy for more punitive measures for perpetrators, the amendment of gender discriminatory legislation, the strengthening of support services for battered women and their families with low income-levels, the dissemination of information on the Women's Convention and policies for violence against women and the encouragement for more research studies on the issue.

### **Women and Armed Conflict**

For the past three decades, the country is considered to be stable and under control. Within the framework of Women and Armed Conflict, Indonesia does not feel it necessary to follow it up with concrete steps. This does not mean that Indonesia is ignorant of the role of women in defence and security. Policies are in place for the participation of women in the total defence and security system and for the unity and integrity of the nation.

### **Women and the Economy**

In the sixth Five-Year Development Plan (1993-1998), the main focus of the national development is economic development inherent with the development of the quality of human resources. The government has increased the capabilities and professionalism of women including in entrepreneurship and leadership capabilities. A conducive environment enabling women to manage their business independently and access to credit/capital and market information is being created through many programmes.

### **Women in Power and Decision-making**

Although women's role in the decision-making process has improved significantly, they are still not represented adequately in key structural and functional positions. The

government is addressing the issues of women in power and decision-making through a number of measures including the consideration of legislation, affirmative policy, advocacy, training and strengthening the coordination mechanism among government agencies, women's studies centres, the private sector, women's groups and self-reliant community institutions.

### **Women's Human Rights**

The violation of women's human rights is a concern for the newly established National Commission on Human Rights and legal aid agencies. However, in reality, the implementation of human rights for women is still below expectation. Awareness raising is carried out through dissemination of information and advocacy. The government is also revising certain legislation to support implementation of women's human rights and encouraging the activities of legal aid agencies and crisis centres.

### **Women and the Mass Media**

The status and role of women in the development of information, communications and mass media still need to be addressed. Communication fora are organised regularly with officials of the Department of Information, association of Indonesian reporters, association of Indonesian advertisers, association of Indonesian film stars and association of production houses. Advocacy for women's employment and training in media organisations is also carried out. Other measures include strengthening censorship institutions to combat stereotyped images of women and the exploitation of women and young girls in the mass media, gender sensitisation training and advocacy.

### **Women and the Environment**

The number of women in key decision-making areas for the utilisation of natural resources and environmental conservation is still limited. Although several women's organisations and self-reliant community institutions have assisted with campaigns, women's participation in terms of the quantity and



quality, needs to be expanded. Programmes for women and environmental issues include the development of education and training materials, the inclusion of gender and the development of research and studies on the participation of women in natural resources management and conservation.

#### **The Girl Child**

The government has instituted certain measures to address the issue of the girl child particularly the implementation of a nine-year compulsory education system, advocacy for the increased protection of girl workers and severe punishment for perpetrators of violence against the girl child.

#### **Institutional Mechanism for the Advancement of Women**

The following steps have been taken to strengthen the institutional functions and mechanism for supporting post-Beijing implementation efforts:

- Increased coordination between the national machinery for women's advancement and other line ministries and implementing committees.
- Increased cooperation between the national machinery for women's advancement, management committees for implementation,

sectors and government organisations and women's and religious groups at different levels.

- Increased integration of the planning of women's programmes at different levels and with the National Development Planning Agency.
- Periodic monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of programmes.
- Increased advocacy on gender and development issues directed at officials of sectoral ministries and departments at national and regional levels.
- Implementation of gender analysis training particularly for planners, members of women's studies' centres and other women and community organisations.
- Support for the compilation of a profile on the status and role of women at national, provincial and regional levels.
- Encourage the Central Bureau of Statistics and women's studies' centres to publish gendered statistics and data.

# Post-Beijing Implementation in Indonesia

*Summarised from a report prepared by Irawaty Pulungan, KOWANI, for the Asia Pacific Watch Meeting, Seoul, July 1997*

*KOWANI, an umbrella organisation comprising 70 women's NGOs, has been actively involved in post-Beijing implementation particularly in disseminating the contents of the Platform for Action and advocacy and training work. KOWANI's focus areas include women and poverty, violence against women, women's economic empowerment, legal literacy, education and the girl child. KOWANI works closely with the government in implementing the Platform for Action.*

## Women and Poverty

A post-Beijing seminar was held on poverty alleviation in all aspects of life through the empowerment of women and the girl child. Recommendations from the seminar were addressed to related ministries and focused on non formal education, health, economy and employment, violence against women, the law and the girl child.

## Training and Empowerment

KOWANI has carried out training programmes on various issues including the training for the prevention of violence against women, which addressed members of the Standing Committee on Law and the Association of Integrated Law Extension Workers, training women members of KOWANI to enter politics and the training of women workers that addressed issues such as worker's health, productivity and working conditions and protection. Attention has been focused on women home based workers who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation by contractors. A project on training of trainers has finalised a hand book for trainers on gender equity perspectives including designing methods and organising for gender sensitisation training.

## Women and Economic Empowerment

KOWANI is addressing issues for women in co-operatives, particularly the obstacles faced by women in marketing their produce and managing their funds independently. KOWANI supports the government policy of encouraging partnership systems in co-operatives whereby big business houses assist small enterprises.

## Legal and Advocacy Work

Awareness raising and training on international conventions such as the Women's Convention, and national laws on marriage, family, environment and labour are ongoing. KOWANI's advocacy work involves advising national policy making bodies and research institutes such as the Institute for the Guidance of National Law and the State Ministry for the Role of Women. KOWANI is also represented in certain committees of the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture.

## The Girl Child

Girl's education is a priority area of concern and KOWANI addresses these concerns through its projects and programmes. In addition, the convention on the rights of the child was discussed at a seminar with focus on issues such as reproductive health and HIV/AIDS.

## Government Initiatives

- In cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the office of the State Ministry for the Role of Women organised a training programme for extension workers to address the high rates of maternal mortality;
- The government has a programme to address poverty in under-developed villages;
- The budget for the population planning sector and the health education sector have been raised;
- The government has a meal scheme for primary school children in under-developed villages.

## Report on Implementation of the Platform for Action in Laos

*Summarised from a report presented by Khempet Pholsena, the Lao Women's Union at the APDC Sub-Regional Consultation for Indochina and Mongolia on Post-Beijing Implementation and Monitoring, Bangkok, May 1997*

### Introduction

In 1986, the government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) adopted the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) which is an economic reform for the transition from a centrally planned economy to an open market based system. The NEM advocates the decentralising of economic decision making and encourages an active role for the private sector. An economic system based on market principles was included in the 1991 Constitution of the Lao PDR as well. The adjustment of the economy over the past years has had a positive overall impact on the economy. The

major macro-economic component of the government's policy includes the stabilisation of domestic prices and exchange rate, reduction of the fiscal deficit and increase and mobilisation of savings. The economy remains predominantly agricultural with 56% of value-added goods derived from this sector, 18% from industry and handicrafts and 24% from services. Since the NEM, the economy has been growing at an average rate of 7% per annum. The government has concentrated on the development of basic physical infrastructure and is

#### BASIC INDICATORS

Maternal Mortality	650
	(per 100,000 live births)
Female Literacy	47.0%
Female Labour Force Participation	42.7%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

#### INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS SIGNED OR RATIFIED

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	NA
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	NA
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	●
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	●
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	●
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	●
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	NA
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

#### Key:

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paying attention to the social sector, particularly the development of women and children. In fiscal years 1995-1996, 21% of the total budget allocation was earmarked for the social sector. The National Assembly has adopted the Socio-economic Development Plan to the Year 2000 and translated it into eight national priority programmes. They are:

1. Food Production Programme
2. Programme of Stabilisation/Reduction of Slash-and-Burn Cultivation and Environmental Protection
3. Programme of Commodity Production
4. Programme of Infrastructure Development
5. Integrated Rural Development Programme
6. Human Resource Development Programme
7. Expansion of International Cooperation Programme
8. Programme of Services Industries

The implementation of these priority programmes is a challenge for the government and the people of the Lao PDR.

The Lao PDR was among the first signatories of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. The 1991 Constitution accords women the legal and equal right to participate in all spheres of economic, political, cultural, social and family life. Gender equality is set forth in laws concerning marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption and other family areas. A number of land decrees covering issues such as land titles are currently being reformulated to take account of gender issues.

## Government Initiatives and Follow-up

In line with the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA), the government is committed to improving vocational and in-service training for women. It emphasises the importance of capacity-building and human resources development in promoting a more active and integrated participation of women in sustainable development. As part of its policy for implementing the Beijing strategy in the future, the government

has decided to integrate gender issues in national development.

In a resolution of the sixth Party Congress, gender issues were taken into consideration, and in particular the need for:

- Upgrading and raising education and vocational skills of women so that they can participate in all spheres of life;
- Building women's capability and promoting women's development;
- Promoting gender awareness in society in order to put into practice equality between women and men as stipulated in the constitution and laws;
- Protecting the rights and interests of mothers and children.

Many laws are being revised to take into consideration gender issues. The law on lands adopted in April 1997 gives equal rights to women and men concerning the use and management of land. Further, the following projects of the government specifically address gender concerns:

- The cooperation between the Government and UNICEF (1998-2002) which has a section on education, and on child, women and family development;
- The cooperation between the government and UNDP on "Microfinance for Sustainable Livelihood: Strategy for Poverty Reduction in Lao PDR (1996-2002)" where women are targetted in order to strengthen their skills in managing credit and income generation projects and for community planning;
- The cooperation between the government represented by the Lao Women's Union (LWU) and NORAD and UNDP (1997-2000) on a Gender Resource Information and Development Centre which aims to address capacity building needs for women's socio-economic development. More specifically, the LWU and other technical line ministries are actively seeking ways to increase gender awareness, and strengthen qualitative information gathering, and gender and development, in order to effectively implement programmes.

### **Problems in Implementing the Platform for Action**

Although the Party and Government of Lao PDR have given attention to promoting the role and status of women in society by introducing and implementing policies, laws and programmes on gender equality and equity, Lao women and the Lao Women's Union still face many difficulties and obstacles in implementing the Platform for Action (PFA). These include:

- Household workload of women;
- Low level of education among women and less opportunities for skills and vocational training;
- High rates of girls dropping out of schools in rural areas;
- Lack of self confidence among women;
- Lack of awareness of laws and the constitution among women;
- Limited participation in decision-making by women;
- Persistent gender bias stemming from traditions and beliefs about women; and
- Lack of gender awareness in society.

Further, the lack of reliable gender disaggregated data has limited the capacity of the government to develop gender-responsive national planning strategy.

### **Post-Beijing Implementation Activities of the Lao Women's Union (LWU)**

The LWU is a national organisation recognised under the Constitution (Article 7) as the mechanism for promoting equal rights advancement and mobilising Lao women of all ethnic groups to work together to develop the country. To ensure that gender issues are incorporated in all government, bilateral and multilateral projects in all areas and sectors, the LWU has recently recommended that each Ministry have a focal point together with the Women's Union Committee for Gender-related Matters.

The LWU is playing an important role in improving the quality of life for women throughout the country and particularly

in the rural areas. In collaboration with the Ministries of Health, Education, Agriculture, Labour and Social Welfare, the LWU has the responsibility for overseeing the implementation of all programmes related to women's development. It has been active in developing projects for women which include vocational training; improvement of agricultural production and animal husbandry; training in handicraft production; health education on basic hygiene and sanitation, birth spacing and reproductive health; information on environmental protection and non-formal education for the improvement of literacy and life skills. More recently, activities have been developed which specifically target gender issues, for example, training programmes to raise awareness on the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women for LWU and government staff.

Following the Beijing Conference, the Women's Union, with support and cooperation of concerned ministries and equivalent organisations, has organised a number of workshops in order to explain the outcome of the Beijing Conference and the Platform for Action to women, men and government officials. In June 1996, with the support of UN ESCAP and the Government of Japan, a national seminar was held to draft the National Plan of Action to the year 2000. The seminar also adopted the Indochina Plan of Action for the promotion of women's participation in economic development.

In many workshops, seminars, training programmes organised by the state organisations and provincial authorities, the LWU has been successful in including gender issues including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Platform for Action in discussions. With support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the LWU has established a legal counselling office for women.

# Implementing a Project on Basic Education for Girls in Laos

*Extracted from the project proposal submitted by Khanthaly Siliphongphanh, Laos*

## Introduction

The illiteracy rate for Lao women is high and estimated to be 28.04%. There are also disparities in the education system, for example, between towns and villages, between people of different ethnic groups, and between girls and boys. Girls have very few chances to attend school and complete their education because of the need for their labour in families, particularly to look after younger siblings, fetch water and help with household chores.

In order to address these issues connected with the education of girls and to implement recommendations from the 1990 World Conference on Education and the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Laos government has formulated certain policies and plans focusing on compulsory primary education in the country. The education of girls is a major consideration of the compulsory primary education policy. The project on basic education for girls aims to bring primary education services to girls in 18 provinces of the country. The ultimate objective of the project is to bring women into the mainstream of socio-economic development by progressively improving their education level throughout the country. The project aims to provide girls, particularly from ethnic minority communities, with equal access to primary education through:

- increasing the enrollment, attendance and retention of girls particularly from ethnic minority communities at the primary school level;
- increasing the girls' transition to the lower secondary school level;
- reducing the ethnic and gender gaps inherent in primary education.

The project will be implemented over a five-year period beginning in the first quarter of 1998.

## Project Components

The project has three main components:

### Access to Primary Schooling

This component addresses the issue of limited access of ethnic minority girls to school due to inadequate facilities, socio-cultural factors and economic constraints. The project component aims to improve the physical, socio-cultural and economic access of ethnic minority girls.

### Relevance of a Learning Environment

This component aims to generate effective and efficient adaptations in primary education curriculum and pedagogical methods through integrating and adapting the learning environment to the needs of girls, increasing the number of teachers and training them appropriately so that there is improved pedagogical support.

### Educational Sustainability

This component seeks to enhance the operational and planning functions of national, provincial, district and village level organisations. The component addresses the organisational and structural needs of the Ministry of Education, improves the capacity of provincial education services and the district educational bureau and assists with optimising community resource acquisition and allocation.

# Report of Post-Beijing Implementation in Malaysia

*Submitted by Fatimah Hamid Don and Ramani Gurusamy, National Council of Women's Organisations, Malaysia*

## Introduction

To fully implement the National Policy on Women (Dasar Wanita Negara), a National Action Plan has been formulated and approved by the Cabinet in 1996. This Plan takes cognisance of the recommendations in the Beijing Platform for Action. In the preparatory process for the National Action Plan, the National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO) initiated a Post-Beijing Conference with the purpose of seeking consensus on inputs to be incorporated into the draft National Plan of Action. Several NGOs participated in

the conference. Both documents, the National Policy on Women as well as the Plan of Action, are being widely disseminated to all women's NGOs. The National Action Plan (NAP) for the Advancement of Women (1996-2000) identifies various measures to be implemented by line ministries, government departments and NGOs.

Following the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the Government of Malaysia has taken steps to strengthen the national machinery for women's advancement. The Women's Affairs Division (HAWA) of the Ministry of

### MALAYSIA: Specific Commitments Made at Beijing

- Enhance the national machinery for women's advancement
- Increase women's participation in decision-making
- Safeguard women's rights to health education and social well-being
- Remove legal obstacles and gender discriminatory practices

Source: UN Division for Advancement of Women web site

### BASIC INDICATORS

Maternal Mortality	80 (per 100,000 live births)
Female Literacy	36.0%
Female Labour Force Participation	77.5%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	10.3%

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

### INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS SIGNED OR RATIFIED

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	NA
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	NA
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	NA
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	●
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	●
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	●
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	NA
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

Key:

- Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature
- Signature not yet followed by ratification

Note: Status is as of 1 March 1997



National Unity and Social Development, has been upgraded since January 1997 and redesignated as the Department for the Advancement of Women. The executive head is now the Director General and is being assisted by two deputy directors and three assistant directors. At the state level, WID (Women in Development) State Liaison Committees have been set-up with state-level offices of the national machinery for women's advancement serving as the secretariat.

NACIWID (the National Advisory Council for the Integration of Women in Development) has been given a fresh mandate in order to be more effective as an advisory body to the Government and to NGOs. Members of NACIWID have direct access to the Minister responsible for women's advancement. They also have access to information, data, policies and plans relevant to women's concerns and development. An Inter-Ministerial Committee has been set up to improve communication and coordination between the various Ministries responsible for the implementation of the national development plans in their respective sectors and to monitor the impact of their policies on women.

Increased budgetary allocations have been made to all levels of the national machinery for women's advancement with appropriate allocations to NGOs to assist in various projects in the implementation of the National Plan of Action.

### **Issues of Concern to Malaysian Women**

Women's NGOs in Malaysia have identified a number of priority issues of concern and embarked on various projects. Of particular concern is the issue of violence against women, employment, law, health, education and the girl child. The National Council of Women's Organisations and its affiliates have addressed these issues of concern through various projects and programmes.

### **Violence against Women**

Responsible government agencies working in cooperation with NGOs (notably the National Council of Women's Organisations and affiliates) have succeeded in making significant progress towards the achievement of the NAP's target objectives in eliminating violence against women. These include:

#### **Domestic Violence**

##### *Domestic Violence Act*

The Domestic Violence Act passed in 1994 eventually came into force in June 1996. With the enforcement of the Act, domestic violence is deemed a crime with appropriate penalties imposed. Detailed procedures with regard to its implementation have been worked out. NGOs continue to lobby for greater transparency of procedures adopted by police personnel and welfare officers. They have called for appropriate training and sensitisation of officers dealing with the issue.

##### *Shelters and Crisis Centres*

The Ministry of National Unity and Social Development has set-up temporary shelters for victims of domestic violence. A number of NGOs also run shelters for abused women and provide counselling and other services for the women and their children. Ninety percent of Government Hospitals (94 out of 111) have now established integrated One-stop Crisis Centres (OSCC) to serve rape victims, battered women and women in crisis situations.

##### *Rape Investigation*

In relation with related governmental agencies, NCWO has adapted and implemented a Rape Investigation Kit. The Kit is now being used in Government hospitals to gather evidence that could assist in charging the perpetrator(s).

##### *Public Education*

A roadshow at state and district levels to raise awareness on the Domestic Violence Act is being conducted by NCWO in collaboration with the police, the Welfare Department, Ministry of



Health, Association of Women Lawyers and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).

#### *Training Module*

The NCWO and the Department for Women's Advancement (HAWA) have been asked by the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Secretariat to develop training modules for dealing with violence against women for the Southeast Asian region. A proposal has been submitted to the Secretariat and is pending approval.

#### *Recruitment and Training of Paralegals*

A pilot scheme to increase the number of volunteer paralegal counsellors for the One-Stop Crisis Centres and shelters for battered women has been launched with the first batch of 60 women volunteers (selected by NGOs) being trained by members of the Malaysian Bar Council and the Association of Women Lawyers. A standardised training module is being formulated for use in the nationwide training programme.

#### *Kit on Missing Children*

To address the growing concern about missing children and adolescents, NGOs working with related government agencies have conducted case studies and gathered data on the subject. A special kit for the training of teachers,

students, counsellors, parents as well as law enforcement personnel has been developed by a specially appointed task force.

## **Discrimination against Women**

### **Civil and Family Laws**

#### *Studies*

A number of studies and seminars to review existing practises of civil (family) law and the Syariah to identify areas of injustices and grievance have been held. Based on the findings, a comprehensive memorandum on "Reform of the Islamic Family Laws and the Administration of Justice in the Syariah System in Malaysia" has been submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister in 1997. The Islamic Centre under the Prime Minister's Department is working on more effective ways of administering the Syariah in the area of division of property in the event of a divorce and has established an "emergency fund" under the Baitulmal<sup>1</sup> to aid abandoned wives and single parents without means of support.

#### *Uniformity and Standardisation of Syariah Courts*

A Special Committee has been set-up to work out procedures for the establishment of a single Federal Syariah Judicial System to replace the present state-based institutions.

#### *Review of Laws*

NCWO has also reviewed and formulated its recommendations for the improvement of the non-Muslim civil laws, and for the reformulation of those laws that continue to discriminate against women, e.g., the Distribution Act.

#### *Obsolete Act Abolished*

The 1958 Distribution Act has been replaced by the Distribution (Amended) Act 1997 in which the words "spouse" and "parent" applies equally to both men and women and no distinction is made in the rights to inheritance and pension benefits on account of gender.

<sup>1</sup> State Fund for underprivileged Muslims

### *Women's Convention*

All earlier reservations made to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women have been reviewed by the government after NCWO submitted a report following the Beijing Conference. As a result, the reservations on Articles 2(f), 9(1), 16(b), 16(d), 16(e), 16(h) have been withdrawn. Article 9(2) will be withdrawn as and when Parliament amends the relevant laws. Malaysia however, sustains its reservations on Articles 5(a), 7(b) and 16(a) giving its reasons. The NCWO has held a workshop on "Understanding the Women's Convention" for its affiliate organisations.

### *Employment*

#### *Public Sector*

In the public sector, several women professionals have made breakthroughs in securing senior appointments. These include the Director General of Inland Revenue, Director General of Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA), Director Generals of the National Library and the National Archives, Solicitor General, Accountant General, Chairperson of the Klang Port Authority, Director of the National Planetarium, Head of the National Heart Institute, Secretary General of a Ministry and Magistrates, High Court Judges and Chief Justice positions.

#### *Private Sector*

In the private sector, women corporate secretaries, executive/managing directors, company directors and divisional heads are no longer a rarity.

### *Girl Child*

#### *School Enrolment*

Improved access and affordability of education has resulted in increased enrollment of girls in primary and secondary schools and colleges and tertiary institutions. Enrolment figures indicate that while equal numbers of girls and boys are found at the primary level, the number of girls tended to exceed the number of boys at successive steps of the secondary school levels. Forty to sixty percent of college and

university students are girls. While the number of women undergraduates in the arts and humanities streams exceed the number of men, the reverse trend prevails in the sciences and technological fields.

#### *Child Abuse*

Both government agencies and NGOs are concerned about the phenomenon of the abused and battered child. The Child Protection Act has been reviewed and updated. Info-hotline strategies are being enforced to facilitate reporting by the public and early detection. Shelter homes by NGOs are also being established. Malaysia acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1994.

#### *Child Labour*

Child labour is another area that has the concern and vigilance of both governmental agencies and the NGOs. The absence of data makes assessment of effectiveness of the strategies used to curb child labour difficult. However, a recent conference organised jointly by the Medical Faculty of the University of Malaya and the Child Welfare Council has resulted in increased awareness of the negative effects of child labour.

#### *Childcare*

Much progress is being made in the provision of childcare centres and kindergarten and after school childcare. But a lot remains to be done, particularly in the monitoring and supervision of these centres.

#### *Son Preference*

Although traditionally, some ethnic communities have preferences for male children, this preference is clearly on the decline as girls are proving to be just as good providers or even more reliable than some boys in filial piety and caring for elderly parents. There have been no reported cases of female foeticide.

#### *Abandoned Children*

A matter of grave concern is the phenomenon of abandoned babies and infants. The Government has instituted a National Action Plan to address a variety

of contemporary social ills to be implemented with the cooperation of NGOs. No assessments have yet been made of the effectiveness of these programmes.

### **Strategies to address gender bias and discrimination**

#### *Legal Literacy*

A nationwide legal literacy campaign with the joint cooperation of NGOs, Department of Women's Advancement (HAWA), NCWO, and state-level women's affairs departments is now underway.

#### *Gender-sensitisation*

In order to implement gender-sensitisation programmes, a trainers' package entitled "Gender Perspectives in Development Planning" has been specifically designed for government planners, implementation officers and administrators. This programme is currently being conducted by the National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN) in collaboration with HAWA and local institutions of higher learning. To date, a total of 344 men and women have been trained.

#### *Gender Studies*

A number of institutions of higher learning have set up women's/gender studies units within their faculties and departments. Four universities in the country have centres which focus on women's advancement studies and research programmes.

#### *Mainstreaming Women's Concerns*

Under the Sixth Malaysian Plan (1990-1995) and the Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996-2000) women's concerns have been given special attention in various development programmes. These concerns range from family development to welfare, economic opportunities and entrepreneurship development. Under the Plans, various programmes for women's advancement have been given budgetary allocations.

#### *Indigenous and Minority Rights*

Access to education for the orang asli has improved tremendously under the national education policy and development plans. Although many orang asli males have attained university degrees, the first *orang asli* woman to graduate in law studies was recorded only in 1996.

#### *Women's Rights to Quality Health Care and Services*

The NCWO and affiliates have been strong advocates for quality and affordable health care and medical services under the National Health Service. In September 1997, a national-level workshop on "Women and AIDS" was jointly organized by the Ministry of Health and the Malaysian AIDS Council. A Plan of Action for the protection of women against HIV/AIDS was developed based on the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action. The Health Ministry has also pledged budget allocations for projects based on the Action Plan to be implemented by NGOs.

In October 1997, the NCWO organised a seminar entitled "Socially Accountable and Caring Healthcare System in a Market-driven Environment" which examined the various implications on women of the government proposals to privatise certain aspects of the National Health Service. The outcome was an NCWO memorandum expressing women's concerns and views on a number of policy proposals, and its recommendations to the government for action based on the Beijing Platform for Action.

# "Beyond Beijing: Taking Root and Gaining Ground"

Report of the Philippine Government's Second Year of Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

This report is based on the proceedings of the Legislative Symposium on the government's implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action held on September 29, 1997, Philippines. The Committee on Women, House of Representatives and the Philippine NGO Beijing Score Board co-organised the symposium. The Committee on Women has the mandate to conduct congressional oversight on the implementation of laws and international instruments affecting the conditions of Filipino women. The Philippine NGO Beijing Score Board is the main NGO network working with the government to monitor the implementation of the Platform for Action. During the Legislative Symposium, the report of the government was presented by Aurora Javate de Dios of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women who is also the Philippine representative to CEDAW.

## PHILIPPINES: Specific Commitments Made at Beijing

- Increase annual contribution to UNIFEM by 700%
- Mandate that all government officers allocate a portion of their annual budget to women specific and gender oriented programmes
- Intensify training of rural women and expand their access to credit
- Impose more stringent penalties for those who engage in trafficking

Source: UN Division for Advancement of Women web site

## BASIC INDICATORS

Maternal Mortality	280 (per 100,000 live births)
Female Literacy	37.0%
Female Labour Force Participation	93.9%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	11.5%

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

## INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS SIGNED OR RATIFIED

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	●
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	● <sup>a</sup>
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	● <sup>b</sup>
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	●
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	●
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	●
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	●
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

### Key:

- Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature
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Note: Status is as of 1 March 1997

a. Declaration recognising the competence of the Human Rights Committee under Article 41 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

b. Declaration recognising the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination under Article 41 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

## Overview Of 1995-96 Accomplishments

While we were in Beijing two years ago, we had anticipated the extent of work that we would have to face in transforming the output of the Conference — from a document of principles, intentions and strategies, to meaningful improvements in the lives of our women. We were aware of the vital roles that all sectors needed to play. But responsibilities were expectedly focused mainly on the government, it being the single largest institution endowed with powers and resources to get the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) implemented.

How has the government fared in meeting its responsibilities? Not so glowingly, I guess you would tell me. For up to now, there are still specific commitments in which no actions are being taken. But on the other hand, the picture is not that bleak either. So far, our government has been steadfast in getting the mechanisms for the PFA implementation in place. Right after the Conference, for instance, three highly strategic measures were quickly drawn-up to build the foundation of the Platform's implementation. Allow me to recall them as a way of contextualising my presentation.

*"Women seem to be perennially constrained by the proverbial 'glass ceiling' above their heads and a floor that seems too sticky to let them move laterally or vertically."*

First, through Executive Order 273, the government adopted the Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development (PPGD) 1995-2025, a 30-year plan which is now our main mechanism for implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. Today, it serves as the "bible" that guides agencies in translating the global perspectives of the Platform into programmes and strategies that befit national realities and situations. Second, under Section 27 of the 1996 General Appropriations Act, all government agencies were directed to allocate a minimum of 5% of their total budget for women-related programmes and projects. And third, the national women's machinery was strengthened by expanding its board to include ten key

line departments, increasing its technical and administrative positions and by providing additional funds for its organisational expansion.

The frame of reference, the resources and the national machinery are all vital ingredients that helped to cement the foundation of the Platform's implementation. With this encouraging beginning, how did we fare in the second year?

## Highlights Of 1997 Accomplishments

### *The Gender and Development (GAD) Budget*

A positive gain in 1997 was the retention of Section 28 in the 1997 General Appropriations Act (GAA), thanks to all of you who lobbied and supported our advocacy. This provision, which allocates a minimum of 5% of agency total budget to women-related undertakings, has become an effective driving force for agencies to consider GAD.

The total number of agencies that submitted reports this year is 50. This is an improvement from the 1995 and 1996 figures which were 23 and 15, respectively. However, the number of agencies that have a GAD budget is only 39. Eleven of the agencies with reports said that they do not have a GAD budget for various reasons. The 1995 and 1996 figures of agencies with a GAD budget were 19 and 15 respectively. Expectedly, the reported GAD budget figures also went up. From Peso 990.8 million in 1995 to Peso 1.5 billion in 1996 and Peso 4.9 billion in 1997. This year, 14 agencies were able to meet the minimum requirement of 5% of the total budget. The top three agencies with the biggest amount of GAD budgets during the three years in point are:

- 1995 - Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Department of Agriculture (DA)
- 1996 - DOH, DSWD, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)

1997 - DA, DOH, DSWD

During the 3-year period, 8 departments were consistent in the submission of reports. These are: DA, DENR, DTI, DOT, DSWD, DOH, DPWH, and DOTC<sup>1</sup>. The GAD budgets are allocated for institution building and programmes and projects that are either women-specific or gender responsive. Generally, the performance is still low, especially because the above figures are but a fragment of the total number of agencies in the bureaucracy and of the government's budget in general. But a number of agencies, as well as their programmes, reportedly benefit from it. Deleting this provision therefore from the forthcoming GAA will not solve the problem of low compliance but would even produce an adverse impact on the agencies who have started to use it productively.

#### Violence Against Women

Our long years of advocacy in the area of Violence Against Women (VAW) is finally gaining ground. In February, the President issued a Call to Action Against Domestic Violence, directing government heads to: (a) take personal advocacy against domestic violence; (b) strengthen front-line services to victims; (c) educate the public on the issue; and (d) press for the adoption of a law against domestic violence.

The memorandum was disseminated nationwide through the various leagues of local executives. A consultation on the implementation of this directive was held in which participants from various government agencies refined their implementation strategies. Among the fresh initiatives cited in the agencies' report to the President were the:

- a) formation of an inter-agency task force on the development of a methodology for generating statistics on VAW;
- b) adoption of a fast-lane and one-interview system in the National Bureau

- of Investigation (NBI);
- c) centre and hospital-based assistance to victims; and
- d) counselling services, both for victims and offenders.

The Department of Interior and Local Government — Philippine National Police (PNP) also reported (as of January, 1997) that a total of 954 PNP women's desks were established in its police stations. This represents 49.49% of the 1,910 targeted PNP stations nationwide. A total of 4,722 cases on crimes against women were also reportedly handled by these desks. A campaign against all forms of VAW was promoted within the bureaucracy through the celebration of the 1997 Women's Month. National and local government agencies mobilised actions around the theme, "YES TO WOMEN'S HEALTH, NO TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN".

With the support of the Belgian government, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) participated in the implementation of a Pilot Project Against Trafficking in Women. The project provided training to organisations and agencies working in the areas of prostitution, trafficking and migration. It also conducted advocacy on women's rights, undertook research on the issues, produced and disseminated information and other advocacy materials, and provided legal advice, temporary shelter, counselling and medical assistance to victims.

#### Anti-rape Law

What may be the biggest gain for women this year, insofar as VAW is concerned, is the adoption of the Anti-rape Law. The law reclassified rape from a private to a public offence (or from being a crime against chastity to a crime against person); expanded the definition of rape; degenderised rape; and recognised the existence of marital rape.

<sup>1</sup> DA (Department of Agriculture); DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources); DTI (Department of Trade and Industry); DOT (Department of Tourism); DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development); DOH (Department of Health); DPWH (Department of Public Works and Highways); and DOTC (Department of Transportation and Communications)

The NCRFW is scheduling a consultation to draw up measures on how to get this law implemented, particularly in line with educating the public and the judiciary on its spirit and provisions. We recognise, and we regret, that we did not get everything we lobbied for.

#### **Women and Poverty/Economy**

As long as women are poor and marginalised in the economic mainstream, the road to equality will always be rough and thorny. It is for this reason that we wage our advocacy for the expansion of economic resources and opportunities to our women. Line departments, like the DSWD, DOLE, DA and DTI, and all members of NCRFW board, continue to initiate measures to enhance the entrepreneurial skills of women and enhance the capital assistance portfolio for women.

Helping poor women is one thing, but articulating women's perspectives in the macro level of economic discourses is another. Thus, in cooperation with NGOs and the academic community, the government organised a series of workshops aimed at drawing up a strategy framework for the positioning of women's concerns in the APEC agenda. The Conference entitled, Gender, Trade and Investment Liberalisation, and Economic and Technical Cooperation for Sustained Growth and Development came up with a Call to Action addressed to APEC leaders to, among others, recognise gender as a cross-cutting priority in all APEC discourses and activities. The Women Leaders' Network from APEC Economies met in Ottawa to promote the consistent implementation of the Call to Action throughout the APEC processes and structures.

Corollary to this is the building-up of alliances with women leaders who could sustain the advocacy in the business sector. DTI and the NCRFW held a series of meetings and fora, the most recent of which was the Women Business Leaders' Forum in May 1997. This forum gave birth to an organisation

called Women's Business Council Philippines which is now lobbying with the Central Bank, Land Bank of the Philippines and the Development Bank of the Philippines for stronger implementation of RA 7882, a law that seeks to assist women in micro and medium enterprises. The President issued two memoranda directing the DTI and NCRFW to provide technical and financial support in support of the organisation's objectives.

#### **Women and Power and Decision-making**

While it is said that Filipino women enjoy a relatively better status, we know that this is not so, especially when we look at the representation of women in positions of decision making. Women seem to be perennially constrained by the proverbial "glass ceiling" above their heads and a floor that seems too sticky to let them move laterally or vertically. For example, available information on the distribution of women in the third level

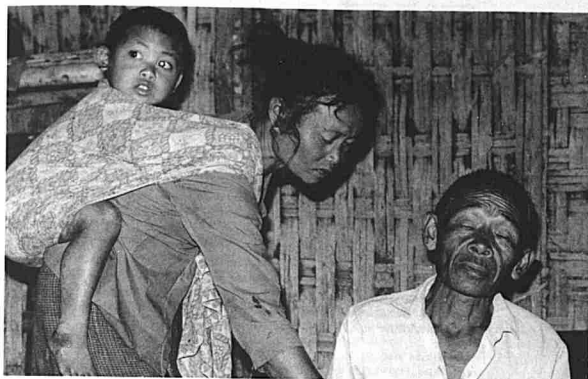
**Distribution of Women in 3rd Level Position  
(1980-1996)**

year	percent (%)
1980	26.1
1983	33.0
1990	28.8
1991	30.0
1994	31.9
1995	27.0
1996	37.0

position over a period shows that women's representation in this level has been consistently low and any increase was remarkably erratic and turtle-paced.

The Executive Branch therefore maintains a campaign to promote more women to decision making positions. A Presidential Memorandum is being proposed, as well as an accompanying framework to fast track the attainment of the targeted 40% representation of women in the third level by the year 1998. It will also provide fresh impetus to CAPWINGS, a programme designed to support the career advancement of women in government. A top level





policy dialogue on gender equity is scheduled to be held to firm up the framework and reinvigorate the campaign.

The Party List Law, an instrument envisioned to strengthen the participation of basic sectors in the legislative processes, opens fresh opportunities for women to consolidate their political forces and agenda. The NCRFW is therefore lobbying with women's groups to begin strategising for a more active participation of women in the forthcoming political exercise. A poster will be disseminated nationwide through the DILG (Department of Interior and Local Government) field offices.

#### **Strengthening of Institutional Mechanisms**

The effort to strengthen the NCRFW last year was complemented by support from the Canadian Government. The NCRFW is implementing Phase II of the CIDA-NCRFW Institutional Strengthening Project which will build the capabilities of critical government bodies and administrative regions to catalyse the

process of gender mainstreaming. The assistance will allow us to move down to local levels in the seven pilot regions.

Government offices are also in the process of assessing their implementation of GAD concerns in consonance with Memorandum Circular 97-01 issued recently by the NCRFW. These assessments will be consolidated and a workshop on National Plan Enhancement is to be held to, among others, tie-up the GAD budget with the agencies' GAD implementation plans and draw up mechanisms for coordination and monitoring of the implementation. These activities will enable us to publish a second year report on the implementation of the PFA.

#### **Concluding Comments**

On the whole, there are some gains in the second year of the PFA implementation. But, so much more remains to be done. The change is slow and hardly observable, but the point is: to carry on.

## Government Mechanisms to Coordinate and Monitor the Implementation of the Platform for Action in the Philippines

*Summarised from information provided by the Philippines government to the UN Division for the Advancement of Women and which has been posted on the UN web site.*

*The Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD) for 1995-2025 is the country's long-term plan for gender and development. The PPGD sets down the priority sectoral gender and women concerns of the country that will be addressed within the 30-year duration of the Plan. The PPGD translates the Platform for Action into national commitments and initiatives. The adoption of the PPGD is mandated through Executive Order No. 273 signed by the President on 8 September 1995.*

### Government Agencies

#### **The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women**

The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) is the primary policy-making and coordinating body on all development concerns for women. It has the mandate and authority to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD).

Given NCRFW's responsibility for the PPGD, it is also the lead agency responsible for monitoring the integration of the Platform for Action (PFA) into the various plans, programmes and projects of government as well as coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the PFA. The various line departments of the government, particularly those represented on the NCRFW Board, are the implementors of the PFA.

NCRFW is responsible for preparing all necessary reports on developments relating to the country's commitments to the recommendations made in the PFA. It consults with the various government agencies and non-governmental

organisations, particularly women's groups, on mechanisms that will facilitate the implementation of the PFA, the PPGD and key women-related laws.

#### **The Social Reform Council (SRC)**

The Social Reform Council (SRC) is responsible for the integration of the appropriate PFA provisions into the Social Reform Agenda (SRA). To ensure complementarity with the programmes and activities being coordinated by the NCRFW, the SRC monitors responses to the PFA issues falling within the SRA framework while NCRFW assumes leadership in monitoring overall PFA actions in government. The NCRFW and the appropriate government agencies provide the SRC with relevant information on their programmes and activities that fall within the concerns of the SRA.

#### **National Economic Development Agency (NEDA)**

NEDA's role for implementing the PFA is carried out with the agency's key mandate of development planning, policy coordination, investment programming, and programme/project monitoring and evaluation.

NEDA has to ensure that provisions of the PFA are considered in the formulation and updating of national as well as sectoral and regional development plans through coordinating its work with NCRFW and concerned NGOs. The agency will continue to ensure that programmes and projects submitted for endorsement to donors will integrate gender concerns.

#### **Department of Budget and Management (DBM)**

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM), as the central investment programming and budgeting agency, focuses on the monitoring and adoption of measures to ensure local government units allocate funds for gender-responsive programmes and projects.

#### **Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)**

As the government recognises the basic principles of autonomy, self-regulation and evaluation, and self-reliance which underlie every NGO operation, it has identified the National Council of Women in the Philippines (NCWP) to monitor the implementation of the PFA. Other NGOs, alliances, networks and other groups are also encouraged to implement and monitor the PFA.

#### **Specific Government Commitments**

The Philippine government has made specific commitments to translate the strategies of the Platform for Action into concrete efforts to improve women's lives. These commitments include the:

- integration of the Beijing Platform for Action in the key result areas of all heads of agencies and departments;
- inclusion of the Women's Budget Statement in formulating the national budget as this guarantees that substantial resources are allocated for women-specific programmes and projects;
- allocation of at least 20% of the national budget to social programmes and services since these are central to women's concerns and everyday lives;
- access to training and credit facilities of rural women to enable them to fight poverty and avail of opportunities that would improve their lives;
- implementation of a fast-track and systematic negotiation strategy with receiving countries to forge bilateral agreements that would protect the rights of women migrant workers, and continued lobbying of Philippine missions abroad for support on the country's offer to host an International Conference on Migration and Development;
- legislation of more stringent laws penalising those who engage in trafficking, illegal recruitment and undocumented migration as well as laws that would shift criminal liability from the prostituted women to pimps and procurers;
- setting up of support services to women migrant workers, especially for victims of violence, and for victims of trafficking to help them in their rehabilitation and eventual reintegration into society;
- access to health services of all women to address various stages of their life cycle, including access to family planning services to help couples make free and informed choices on matters regarding their fertility;
- affirmation of couples' reproductive rights so that they can decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and have the information and the means to do so. This would ensure that every child is a wanted child who would enjoy proper care and nurturing from her or his parents;
- affirmation that abortion is not recognised by government as a family planning method, rather it is a public health concern that society must address;
- implementation of the Philippine Perspective Plan for Gender Responsive Development, a 30-year framework for pursuing full equality and development for women and men, as the government's own interpretation of the Platform for Action;
- adoption of the Policy Imperatives on the Areas of Concern of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, focusing on ten areas.

## Two Years After Beijing: Promise Kept, Promise Broken?

*An evaluation of Post-Beijing Implementation in the Philippines submitted by the Philippine NGO Beijing Score Board (PBSB)*

### **The Real Score: Conditions of Women Two Years After Beijing**

The Philippine NGO Beijing Score Board (PBSB) commends the Philippines government for issuing commitments to implement the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA). Although the Philippines government has reported on progress made in implementing the PFA through a number of measures including issuing of government orders and initiating policy on Gender and Development (GAD) budgets of the government departments, concerned sectors including members of civil society, have observed that the pronouncements of the government do not seem to provide the real indicators on the status of implementation of the PFA. If at all, the following conditions of Filipino women appear to be the more credible gauge of the government's performance.

#### **Women and Children Continue to Suffer from Poverty**

Women continue to be burdened by poverty. Although there are no available statistics which establish that women are more vulnerable than men, it is clear that poverty conditions in the Philippines affect a substantial number, if not the majority, of Filipino women. Data on the poverty situation of female children are more specific.

An estimate by the National Statistics Office (NSO) pegs the number of girls in the country at over 15 million, or about half of the 32 million Filipino children.

According to a recent report of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), female Filipino children are more vulnerable and "burdened" by poverty compared to males. UNICEF and DSWD point out that among poor families, female adolescents receive the least amount of nutrients while males tend to get more food on the assumption that they need more of it because they do more strenuous work.

NSO figures also reveal that about 1.3 million female children make up the child labour force. The NSO said more working female children live away from their homes because they are employed as domestic helpers.

In the 1997 Human Development Report released by the United Nations Development Programme, the Philippines slipped from 95th. to 98th. in ranking among 175 countries in terms of human development. The report also noted setbacks to poverty eradication caused by "unmanaged" globalisation which had created pockets of poverty among sectors displaced by unbridled trade liberalisation without adequate safety nets. A particular note of concern in the Report was the economic dislocation of certain sectors in agriculture, as a result of trade liberalisation under the Uruguay Round of the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The Philippines ranked 19th. among 78 countries included in the Human Poverty Index (HPI) introduced in the 1997 Report.

Tables 2.9 and 2.10 of the 1996 Philippine Statistical Yearbook published by the National Statistical Coordination Board show that poverty incidence — by numbers of people rather than households — was 45.3% in 1991 and 40.6% in 1994. Also, while some regions showed great reductions in poverty incidence, there are other regions where there has been little progress or where poverty incidence has actually increased. In Eastern Visayas (the Samar and Leyte provinces), poverty incidence "dropped" from 45.3% in 1991 to 43% in 1994. In the country's most depressed region, Bicol, poverty incidence was 55% in 1991 and 55.1% in 1994. The rate of poverty in the Cordillera Administrative Region rose from 48.8% in 1991 to 51% in 1994. The most dramatic increase in poverty incidence was in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), where poverty incidence surged from 50.7% in 1991 to an astounding 60% in 1994 with almost two out of three people living below the poverty threshold.

A recent World Bank report entitled "A Strategy to Fight Poverty: Philippines" released in March 1996, states that the "top 10% of Filipinos earn 19.5 times more than the bottom 10%." Aside from the income disparity, the World Bank said more than one-third of Philippine households have incomes below the poverty line and that "the depth of poverty is 2 1/2 times larger in rural areas than in urban areas." The World Bank also stated, "... progress towards poverty alleviation has been slow, and the country has been losing ground relative to its East Asian neighbours and competitors". Although the economy is "capable of generating more equitable growth, government efforts to raise the income earning capacity of the poor have not been adequate to the task."

**The Social Reform Agenda (the Poverty Alleviation Programme of the government for women and other basic sectors), has failed miserably**  
Women together with other basic sectors give poor marks to the social reform commitments of the present

administration. Except for the Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS) these groups found the Social Reform Agenda of the government to be:

- poor on social reform legislation: out of the 17 social reform measures awaiting enactment, only one or two have been passed and through the intensive lobbying efforts by the basic sectors.
- limited and delayed executive action: only 15 of the 95 executive measures have been implemented, while 81 others are still "ongoing" or have not been acted upon.
- nominal increases in resource allocation: while government has boasted that Peso 85 billion has been earmarked for social reforms, in real terms, resources for social reform have not increased. Asset reform programmes are under funded, the budgetary process is not transparent and is unresponsive to needs.
- weak and confused institutionalisation of social reform structures at national, regional and local levels.

While it can be said that the agenda of economic liberalisation has brought some degree of stability to society and prosperity to a few fortunate sectors, it has also created growth that the United Nations Human Development Report has called, "jobless, ruthless, voiceless, rootless-and-futureless" for the millions who are in poverty and whose ranks swell daily. Most marginalised are the women who are further discriminated by the national development thrusts of government — women fisherfolk edged out by corporate fishing, indigenous women who lose their lands to rapacious mining interests, urban poor women pitted against development infrastructure, the informal sector that keeps the economy afloat but is highly vulnerable, land conversions that favour real estate corporations over small farmers and landholders and demolitions that relegate the urban poor to starvation without real alternatives.

### Poor Performance of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme

Particularly deplorable are the worsening economic conditions of rural women who comprise 60% of all females in the country. Rural women have to endure an increasing decline in incomes from basic grains and small farm production. This is largely due to the influx of more cheaply priced agricultural products from abroad which are licensed by agricultural free

*"While it can be said that the agenda of economic liberalisation has brought some degree of stability to society and prosperity to a few fortunate sectors, it has also created growth that the United Nations Human Development Report has called, 'jobless, ruthless, voiceless, rootless-and-futureless' for the millions who are in poverty and whose ranks swell daily."*

trade. Continuing conversion of agricultural lands and speculative land pricing, especially in the regional growth centres, are also causing greater inaccessibility to land among poor women and increasing landlessness. Almost one-fourth of lands originally slated for land reform have been slashed from distribution to farmers. As a result almost 900,000 farmers stand to lose their chances of owning land which in turn further narrows women's accessibility to land.

Rural women in the Philippines like in many developing countries spend up to 16 hours a day producing, processing, marketing and preparing food, gathering fuel and water and performing other household tasks in addition to caring for their children and extended families. Yet, most are not directly remunerated for their work.

### Increasing Trend in Casualisation and Contractualisation of Labour

For women workers, liberalisation of investments has not improved the employment situation. In fact, it has taken a turn for the worse, with the increasing trend in the casualisation of labour among big companies and multinationals in the agro-industrial sector.

In January 1996, the unemployment rate was 8.6%. Three months later the rate of unemployment reached two-digit levels

at 10.4% attributed to the entry of fresh graduates into the labour force. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has stated that the Philippine economy will have to grow by an estimated 8 to 10% annually to generate enough jobs for new labour entrants. And among women today, only 46.8% are employed, compared to 85.7% of men. Moreover, a recent policy paper of the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) confirmed reports that business firms are engaging in subcontracting, "casualisation" and other exploitative labour schemes to prepare for global trade.

Indeed there is a pressing need to review present macroeconomic policies and development strategies of the government to see that these address the needs and efforts of women in poverty and to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources. The poor performance of the government's Social Reform Agenda and the unbridled negative effects of economic liberalisation policies of the government, however, indicate that even after the Beijing Conference on Women, it may yet take a long time for women in this country to enjoy gender equality and equity in development.

### Continuing Feminisation of Overseas Employment

The Commission on Filipino Overseas workers estimates that there are about 6.5 million Filipinos abroad: 2.7 million overseas contract workers; 1.9 million permanent residents; and 1.9 million undocumented migrants. Actual figures may be higher. The last US national census already showed some 2.2 million Filipinos living there, so the number of permanent emigres should be higher. As for undocumented migrants, Malaysia alone has some 200,000 to 300,000 Filipinos, with some non-governmental organisations there estimating the number to be even higher, perhaps half a million. There could at least be seven million Filipinos overseas, easily 10% of the total population.

The most recent Family Income and Expenditures Survey showed that 7% of Filipino households depend on overseas remittances as their main income. In several provinces (Zambales, Pangasinan, La Union, Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur and Cavite), between 10 to 20% of households have such remittances as their main income. These figures would rise much higher if we include households that receive some income, not necessarily the main, from abroad.

There is continuing feminisation of overseas employment. Statistics from the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) showed that in 1987, women comprised 47.2% of the total number of deployed workers while men figured at 52.8%. By 1994 women reached the 50.58% mark and the men were down to 49.2%.

Most women fall under the vulnerable occupation category — as entertainers, domestic helpers and other service-oriented workers. It is reported that for every four Filipina overseas workers, three are service workers and that almost 92% of the service workers are domestic workers (NCRFW technical report).

NGOs such as Kanlungan in the Philippines report that the vulnerability of women domestic workers to violence is partly due to the live-in arrangement with the employer and family, the low regard given to domestic work and the women who perform it, and the exclusion of domestic work from the national labour laws and standards (unpublished Kanlungan research, "A Manual for Women Considering Domestic Work in the Middle East").

The situations of violence are not only created by society's low regard for domestic work but also results from discrimination based on gender. A position paper on RA 8042 or the Migrant Workers Act submitted by SENTRO ng Mangagawang Pilipina, an NGO involved with women migrant workers' issues, revealed that there is no explicit government policy and

framework on return migration and reintegration of women workers. The report also pointed to the absence of transparency in resource allocation for workers' livelihood programmes and reintegration programmes are, at the most, stop-gap measures such as poverty line enterprises and job carnivals.

### **Poor Health Status of Women**

Women's health status remains poor in terms of maternal mortality and the prevalence of anaemia and goitre. The health-care delivery system is inadequate and there is widespread poor functional health literacy among women. Also according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the country has one of the highest infant mortality rates in Southeast Asia and the Pacific region.

An NGO alliance of health advocates and practitioners deplored the government's plans to privatise prime medical centres which only meant passing its health care responsibilities to the private sector. "While the government was painting a bright picture of the Philippines as a newly industrialised country, 7 out of 10 Filipinos die without seeing a doctor. In the hands of private persons, health service is a business that should be bought by those who need it," the alliance stated.

The deplorable health conditions of Filipino women is also articulated by the following joint statement of the Task Force May 28 which is a group of 30 individuals associated with 26 women's organisations, community-based health organisations, and youth health organisations:

"1. The majority of our people continue to live in poverty and underdevelopment because of the economic and social inequities that pervade Philippine society and the unsustainable and unproductive use and poor management of our country's resources. Furthermore, that obsession and compulsion for wealth and power have pushed a dominant sector in the home, in

the workplace and in the larger society to utilise and perpetuate their power and control at the expense of other marginalised sectors. These factors are the underlying causes of our present ill health as persons and as a nation.

2. What is more deplorable is that the majority, especially the women and youth, have remained passive onlookers and oftentimes victims and have accepted this condition as their fate in life. A culture of silence and dependency is still very much entrenched in our social fibre despite the potent human resource and people power displayed during the dark years of the martial law and thereafter.

3. Among the poor, it is the women and their children who are particularly vulnerable to the illness that is brought about by lack of good housing, poor water and sanitation facilities, the lack of adequate food and proper protection from long working hours and dangerous working conditions.

4. Violence in all forms, especially sexual violence and other forms of violence committed by men within the home and the workplace, including the violence that results from commercial sex exploitation, is a leading cause of physical and psychological morbidity among women and children.

5. The denial of accurate and comprehensive health and especially sex education, gender-fair value formation and adequate health services, contribute to the exposure of women's bodies to a never-ending cycle of unwanted and life-threatening pregnancies.

6. Young girls in particular are victims of sexual abuse committed by those familiar to them such as male relatives, teachers, classmates and boyfriends. Furthermore, society's emphasis on youth and beauty also makes them a target for exploitation by those who prostitute women. They are also particularly vulnerable to unwanted pregnancies because of their more

limited access to services and information. Large numbers also suffer from inadequate nutrition which results in greater reproductive morbidity and mortality should they eventually become pregnant and go through childbirth.

7. Every year, thousands of women in the Philippines die as they give birth.

8. The leading causes of these deaths are mostly preventable and this includes deaths due to abortions.

9. There is a lack of programmes to eradicate reproductive tract infections and to protect women from the environmental causes of sterility faced by many women.

10. There is an absolute lack of programmes that attend to the particular health needs of elderly women who, because of their increasing age, are vulnerable to particular forms of exploitation and abuse which in turn, result in additional health problems.

11. The gift of sexuality which should be appreciated, accepted, enjoyed and respected is looked at and perceived with cultural and moral biases and prejudices and has made the very act of loving dreadful especially for the young, unmarried and those with non-traditional sexual orientation. Instead of enhancing a culture of love and compassion, these structures have further contributed to the deepening of the social stigma and discrimination against unwed mothers, single parents, homosexuals and live-in relationships.

12. The denial of the right to choose the number of children individuals wish to have and the lack of promotion of women and children's equal rights and opportunities within the home is a direct contributing factor to the violence, poor health and economic danger besetting Philippine families.

13. Unless we work together to better the situation brought about by a dominant culture that feeds on moral



prejudices and biases and promote a more liberating culture that is based on love, justice, compassion and human dignity, no adequate programmes can be put in place that could protect men, women and children from reproductive tract infections, especially sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.

14. The Catholic Church and other similarly mandated organisations have cheapened the debate around women's health, reproductive and sexual rights into judgmental name-calling against what they perceive as the immorality of women's health advocates thus preventing a true dialogue on the need for women and men to safeguard the humanity of reproduction and build families, communities and societies.

15. The Philippine government continues to fail to implement policies and programmes to effectively eradicate poverty, raise the status of women in society and address the health needs of the people especially women, the young and the elderly.

#### **Violence Against Women and the Unabated Trafficking in Women**

Some of the most common forms of violence experienced by Filipino women are domestic violence or wife abuse, rape, including marital rape, incest, sexual harassment, sex discrimination, forced prostitution and international trafficking, pornography and abuse of women portrayed by media, and custodial abuse when the woman is a patient, a ward or a detainee.

There is a growing consciousness that violence against women is not a private matter anymore and that the government has to intervene to eliminate it. Most of the government's efforts, however, focus on services such as medical assistance, counselling and legal services. The growing phenomenon of domestic violence has become so much a part of Philippine society that authorities are now sitting up to tackle and confront the problem head-on.

An advocacy forum on domestic violence revealed the alarming extent of

the problem. Findings from a joint study made from 1994 to the first quarter of 1996 by the University of the Philippines Center for Women's Studies Foundation and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), showed that 98% of victims of family violence are females and the abuse can be categorised as physical, sexual, and economic form of abuse. Most of the victims are aged 23 for married women and 11 for children.

Fifty percent of the abusers of adult women are their male partners/husbands who are roughly in their mid-30s, gainfully employed but in low-paying jobs, and are more educated than their wives. Meanwhile, 52% of the abusers of minors and children are their fathers, aged between 30 to 40-years. Some of the reasons for under-reporting include the victim's fear for their lives and safety; deprivation of their material needs; fear of economic loss; and indecision and fear of embarrassment and social ridicule. Furthermore, the ignorance of sexual and other related rights have made the victims more vulnerable to their abusers. On a similar issue, trafficking and prostitution of women continue and thrive on the increasing poverty and marginalisation of the majority of the people. Trafficking of Filipino women has even invaded the internet and cyberspace where <http://www.Filipina.com/> and other similar web sites would list the names, faces and physical characteristics of young Filipino women, most often from the rural areas and from poor families to be matched as brides and fiancées to interested foreigners.

It has been reported recently that the trafficking of Filipino women is rising sharply in Japan. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) reports from its study that a "significant

*"Most marginalised are the women who are further discriminated by the national development thrusts of government — women fisherfolk edged out by corporate fishing, indigenous women who lose their lands to rapacious mining interests, urban poor women pitted against development infrastructure, the informal sector that keeps the economy afloat but is highly vulnerable, land conversions that favour real estate corporations over small farmers and landholders and demolitions that relegate the urban poor to starvation without real alternatives."*

number" of between 100,000 to 150,000 Filipino women deployed in Japan annually are illegal and vulnerable to the operations of migrant traffickers. The IOM gave no exact figures of women forced into prostitution and bondage, but said that only 11% of the women in their study were informed in advance that they would be working as prostitutes, while 80% found themselves trapped into working as commercial sex workers. The IOM added that migrant trafficking is controlled by Japan's criminal underworld. The IOM also affirmed Filipinas with "entertainer" visas began pouring into Japan in the early 1970s, followed by Thai women in 1980s. In addition, Japan, North America and Western Europe are also major targets for migrant trafficking. To combat trafficking in Japan, the IOM recommended that legislation against trafficking be adopted by both Japan and the Philippines.

A recent "best-seller" in Hong Kong these days is the book "After Suzie: Sex in South China," which deals with prostitution in the region, particularly Hong Kong. The title refers to British writer Richard Mason's book "The World of Suzie Wong," which glamorised the life of a prostitute in Hong Kong and was made into a movie in 1960. "After Suzie" notes that among the women involved in prostitution, particularly in Hong Kong, are Filipinas who often operate on the lowest rungs in the profession. Kate Whitehead, the author of "After Suzie," is a British journalist who has lived in Hong Kong for two decades. Her study of the sex trade in South China records the rampant abuse of women that goes on in the territory. Whitehead states that Hong Kong's servant population as being 90% female, and notes that "the Filipinas have decried their treatment in Hong Kong and elsewhere as an endless source of housemaids and whores, but the Philippine government continues to encourage the exodus of women who bring in precious foreign exchange." In most commercial cities in the Philippines, the media has noted that prostitution among the young seems to

be on the rise. In Davao for instance, prostitution among teenage gangs in urban poor communities has reached alarming proportions, according to government and private social welfare organisations. Teenage prostitutes, aged 9 to 18, are called *buntogs*, a euphemism for wild quails that fly from nest to nest. Faustina Carreon, Executive Director of the Kaugmaon Foundation, opines that in some communities up to 80% of teenagers are *buntogs*. The *buntogs* charge their clients as low as Peso 10 for sex. The clients are also teenagers, some of them gang mates and neighbours. Some of the *buntogs* also engage in commercial sex with adult clients.

#### Limited Political Participation for Women

Filipino women generally enjoy equal rights in terms of participation in political and public life. The reality, however, does not reflect this as women themselves generally perceive politics to be "dirty" and basically a man's domain. They are a strong voting force, 50.3% of them voted in the 1995 elections. But very few of them run as candidates. As a result, there are only four women senators out of a total of 24. The lower House has 21 women legislators, some 10% of the total number of seats for Congress representatives. The same trend is observed in to the President's Cabinet. Out of the 22 Cabinet positions, only four are occupied by women. They head the departments of health, social welfare and development, tourism and youth commission, all traditional women's concerns. The judiciary has also less women judges and justices, just 15.3% of the total. The 14-member Supreme Court has only one woman justice.

In the community, a woman's status is also generally subordinate. Leadership in organisations and major decisions are largely in the hands of men. The same is true in the workplace. Statistics have not significantly changed from the 1992-93 figures which states that women constituted 46.5% of the total 115,889 members of registered public sector

unions. While women are still a minority in leadership positions, there were 65 women union presidents and 1,536 women union officers in the same year. In the private sector in 1993, 41.4% of union members were women, a decrease in percentage from 52.31% in 1990 even if the total number of female members increased by more than 86,000.

It is significant to note that in 1991, 58% of career service employees in government were women. However, in third level positions in government, women only accounted for 30.3%. The majority of women in the career service, 68.5%, are found in second level positions.

Although there are perceptible trends towards greater participation of women, both in elective and appointive positions, women are still very much in the minority. From 1946 to 1992, the highest percentage of women in the House of Representatives was 12.5% in 1946 and 25% in 1967 in the Senate. For the entire period 1946-1992, the average percentage of elected women was only about 6%. Among local elected officials, the ratios remain essentially the same. In the 1995 elections, the percentage of elected women officials ranged from a low of 6.2% for city mayors to a high of 17.1% for vice-governors.

The enactment of the Party List Law (RA 7941, the 12 marginalised sectors are: labour, peasant, fisher folk, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, elderly, handicapped, women, youth, veterans, overseas workers and professionals) raises hopes for the expansion of women's political horizons. However, the realisation of this expectation appears dim in view of Commission on Elections' (COMELEC) admission of lack of funds and inadequate information dissemination to fully implement the law.

Also, although elections have not yet begun, traditional politics have started the machinery for subverting the interest of marginalised sectors. It has been also reported that a major political party, not

included in the party list, is organising satellite parties to capture most of the 50 or so seats reserved for the 12 marginalised sectors in the House of Representatives. NGOs led by the Konsensyang Pilipino have circulated a letter warning of an attempt by a major party to "subvert the spirit and intent of the (party list) law." "We appeal to the sectoral organisation/alliances that will be enticed with the above mentioned financial support not to compromise their independence which may detract from their resolute pursuit of the interests and concerns of their respective sectors."

### **Increasing Incidence of Human Rights Violation**

There has been unprecedented large-scale demolition of shanties of more than 432,450 urban poor families in Metro Manila and their massive relocation to distant sites. This action which affected an estimated three million people, majority of whom were composed of women and children, is seen by many as blatantly against the Beijing Platform for Action, the Philippine commitments during the UN Habitat conference and the government's pronounced commitments to poverty alleviation.

In its 1996 year end report on the plight of squatters, the Urban Poor Associates Inc. pointed out that the government's preparation for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit last November accounted for 80% of all forcible evictions in 1996.

### **Women Suffer most from Continuing Environmental Degradation**

In the Philippines, as in other developing countries, women are the stewards of the environment. They are also the primary collectors and managers of wood fuel, non-wood forest resources and water, the main producers of subsistence food crops, and the primary users of communal lands and forests. Women therefore, suffer most from continuing

*"The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports from its study that a 'significant number' of between 100,000 to 150,000 Filipino women deployed in Japan annually are illegal and vulnerable to the operations of migrant traffickers."*

degradation of the Philippine environment.

With deforestation, erosion, deteriorating biodiversity and other environmental crimes proceeding at an alarming pace, the state of the Philippine environment has recently been described as the dark clouds of Mt. Pinatubo as it awoke violently from 400 years slumber in 1991. Of the country's 15.8 million hectares of forest land, only 800,000 hectares remain with primary or secondary growth covers: From 1989 to 1995, the rate of forest destruction was placed at an average of 130,000 hectares annually. This means that after 1995, it will only take six years, or up to 2001, for the forest cover to be totally depleted; reforestation efforts are yet to succeed at meaningful levels; half of the severely eroded areas are in Mindanao; air quality has deteriorated at an alarming rate, especially in Metro Manila. Only 24,960 hectares of coral reefs out of the total 124,000 hectares have been classified in good condition.

Other indications of worsening environmental conditions include the severe erosion of 5.2 million of the country's 30 million hectares which have no topsoil and are highly prone to landslides and the worsening air quality in Metro Manila.

#### **Inadequate Care and Protection for the Girl-Child**

The Philippines is a young nation, 1990, 45.8% of its 62 million population were children and youth and 27.2% of the population were women. A recent National Statistics Office (NSO) estimates that there are over 15 million female children in the country, or about half of the 32 million Filipino children.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), female Filipino children are more vulnerable and "burdened" by poverty compared to males. UNICEF and the DSWD said girls are more vulnerable to diseases, health and nutrition problems, HIV

infection and other sexually transmitted diseases, violence and abuse, child labour, prostitution and limited educational opportunities. "The burden of poverty falls heavily on Filipino girls," UNICEF and DSWD said in a paper presented during the League of Municipalities of the Philippines' Gathering of Child-Friendly Municipalities in Southern Mindanao and the Caraga region. The UNICEF and DSWD paper said among poor families, female adolescents receive the least amount of nutrients while males tend to get more food on the assumption that they need more of it because they do more strenuous work.

The UNICEF and DSWD paper stated that a typical victim of child sexual abuse is an 11-year-old girl. From 1991 to 1996, a total of 8,355 child abuse cases were reported to the DSWD and over 60% of the cases were of sexual abuse.

Some 60,000 prostituted girls are found in the cities of Angeles, Cebu, Olongapo, Baguio, Davao, Metro Manila, in Pagsanjan, Boracay, Puerto Galera and La Union. UNICEF, citing a 1996 paper from the World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, said a child commercial sex worker is more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS infection because they have underdeveloped tissues and immature membranes.

In education, the paper said schools through their existing curricula, textbooks and instructional materials, continue to teach female subordination. Citing NSO figures, the paper concluded that about 1.3 million female children make up the child labour force. The NSO said more working female children live away from their homes because they are employed as domestic helpers.

According to a DSWD report, the National Capital Region (NCR) ranked number one as the region with the most number of sexually-abused and exploited children. Southern Tagalog ranked second while Western Visayas ranked

third. Porfira M. Bermudez, DSWD Director for Region 5 cited poverty, broken homes, alcoholism, drugs and exposure to pornographic materials as factors that contribute to the rising incidence of sexual abuse in the provinces.

Some 742 children nationwide have fallen victim to rapists during the first nine months of 1996. Rep. Dante Liban (Lakas-NUCD, Quezon City) disclosed recently. Liban, citing a study made by the Department of Social Welfare and Development, blamed the high incidence of child rape on the continued proliferation of illegal drugs, the lack of privacy at home and unchecked "sex tourism." Liban noted that in Metro Manila, poor housing conditions are partly to blame for the rise in child rape, especially incestuous rape. "Children, particularly those in squatter communities, do not enjoy any privacy. They sleep in the same rooms as their drunk or drug-crazed fathers, stepfathers, brothers or other relatives at home," Liban said. According to DSWD study, a total of 1,170 children were reported raped in 1996. Almost half of the rape cases were in Metro Manila. The 1996 National Survey on Working Children in the Philippines says that 16.5% of the 22.4 million Filipino children aged 5 to 17 years, are in the labour force. Of the 3.7 million children illegally employed, 2.2 million are exposed to physical, social and psychological hazards of their jobs. More than half of the 3.7 million children in the labour force come from the rural areas with 2.8 million of them engaged in farming. Wholesale and retail trade employ an estimated 466,000 children. One out of 100 child workers suffers from work-related injuries and illnesses like sight and hearing impairment or respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases.

There are at least 75,000 street children in Metro Manila, according to a survey by the Department of Social Welfare and Development. The survey is confirmed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in its 1997 State of World's Children report. The report noted that

pre-teens in the Philippines comb the city streets, hawking in markets and darting in and out of traffic jams, plying their trade at bus and train stations and in front of shopping malls. Another study of the Department of Social Welfare and Development which points out that 60% of Filipino schoolchildren drop out upon reaching the second grade mainly because of poor brain development as an effect of malnutrition, is truly alarming. Many would point at poverty as the main reason why Filipino children cannot eat the right kind of food in sufficient quantities. Although this is true to some extent, malnutrition is aggravated by several factors such as the presence of intestinal parasites, poor water supply and unsanitary living conditions which cause various infectious diseases that affect children. Inadequate knowledge of proper nutrition and proper cooking, together with wrong cultural preferences and lifestyles, also contributes to malnutrition. Junk foods, which are promoted by massive advertising, aggravate the problem. Many Filipinos have poor dental health as well.

A 1996 World Bank and Asian Development Bank study states that "child health in the Philippines improved more slowly than elsewhere and that infant death rates in the Philippines are declining more slowly than those in most parts of Asia." Iodine and vitamin A deficiencies, anaemia and iron loss afflict thousands of pre-school children in the Philippines.

## Thailand Report on Government Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

*Submitted by Pawadee Tonguthai, Thai Women Watch*

Thailand's implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women can be summarised in four major groups of activities:

### Formulation of National Plan and Advocacy

- Development of the National Women's Development Plan as a component of the Eighth Five-Year National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001), incorporating issues from the Perspective Policies and Planning for Women's Development, Beijing

Declaration and Platform for Action and government policy statements;

- Organisation of seminars in Bangkok and the four regions to enlist nationwide support for implementation of the National Women's Development Plan. Participants included women's experts, representatives from GOs and NGOs in the central and provincial administration, the latter involving officials of departments responsible for rural development stationed in the provinces; members of Provincial Women's Development Committees; representatives of women's groups; and local women leaders;
- Translation of the Beijing

#### THAILAND: Specific Commitments Made in Beijing

- Develop a detailed plan for action to implement the Declaration and the Platform for Action immediately
- Integrate women and social development into the Eighth national Economic and Social Development Plan

*Source: UN Division for Advancement of Women web site*

#### BASIC INDICATORS

Maternal Mortality	200
	(per 100,000 live births)
Female Literacy	47.0%
Female Labour Force Participation	90.7%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	6.6%

*Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997*

#### INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS SIGNED OR RATIFIED

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	NA
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	•
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	NA
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	NA
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	•
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	•
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	NA
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	NA

*Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997*

*Key:*

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*Note: Status is as of 1 March 1997*

Declaration and Platform for Action into Thai for wide publicity and dissemination;

- Development of Policies and Plan for Development of the Family;
- Development of a National Policy and Plan of Action for the Prevention and Eradication of Commercial Sexual Exploitation.

### Promotion of Equality

- Retention of the provision on equality between women and men in the new constitution adopted in 1997;
- Establishment of an Ad-Hoc Committee to draft Thailand's Combined Second and Third Report on the implementation of the Women's Convention, submitted to UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as well as to GOs and NGOs and international bodies;
- Revisions of laws:

#### *Completed or in the final stage*

- \* The Prostitution Prevention and Suppression Act of 1996.
- \* The Trafficking in Children and Women Bill and related Penal Code amendments.

#### *In Process*

- \* Revision of the Nationality Law regarding the acquisition of Thai nationality by a foreigner who marries a Thai man or woman;
- \* Revision of the Family Registration Act regarding the examination of the marriage registration to prevent double registration;
- \* Revision of the marriage and family laws in the matters regarding conditions for withdrawing betrothal, rape within marriage, conditions for divorce and responsibilities for children after divorce;
- \* Revision of the criminal provision regarding rape within marriage;
- \* Support of the appointment of female military generals, female provincial governors and female district officers;
- \* Efforts to withdraw all Thailand's reservations to CEDAW and corresponding revision of laws and regulations.

### Appointment of Committees to Work on Specific Issues

- Review and establishment of a National Committee on Family Development and Violence against Women and Children
- Establishment of an Ad-Hoc committee on Laws and Regulations Pertaining to the Marital Status of Women to review marriage and family laws;
- Establishment of a National Committee on Women's labour and Social Welfare.

### Implementation of Plans of Actions and Activities in Relation to Areas of Concerns and with GO-NGO Collaboration

Important plans and activities include:

- Strengthening of the national focal point for women's development through upgrading the status of the Office of the National Commission on Women's Affairs from a division to a bureau (at present) and in future to departmental level;
- Promotion of women's participation in politics by developing curriculum for training local women's leaders to run for the election in the Sub-district Administrative Council;
- Organising seminars on human rights in Thailand with an aim to institutionalising human rights in the Thai Parliament;
- Dissemination of women's information through the Internet;
- Undertaking awareness raising, self-esteem development and risk behaviours adjustment programmes;
- Self-surveillance health programmes for ageing women through primary health care;
- Literacy programme for women;
- Monitoring the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the public and private sectors;
- A seminar on domestic violence; and
- A research project on family counselling service systems in Thailand.

## Thai Women Watch: Formation of a National Monitoring Group and Significant Achievements

*Submitted by Thai Women Watch (TW2)*

Thai Women Watch (TW2) was formed in March 1996 through the initiative of Thanpuying Sumalee Chartikavanij who was inspired by her experience as focal point of the Asia Pacific NGO Working Group (APWG). During 1992-1995, NGOs of vastly different culture, purpose, personality and working methods came together with a common goal of having the concerns of Asia-Pacific NGOs incorporated in the Jakarta Platform of Action and in the Beijing Platform for Action. It was felt that the same method of organising would work well for Thailand as four years of advanced preparation for the Beijing Conference had given Thai women valuable experiences and knowledge. After Beijing, this added strength has been an important factor stimulating Thai women to reach out more extensively and try to form new networks both within the country and with the international community.

It was agreed that TW2 would not initiate new activities of its own, but would act solely as a coordinating body. Member organisations are encouraged to concentrate on their activities and expected to come together to pool resources, share information and experiences. TW2 is open to new members while the original members act as a "working group" providing guidelines and acting as the link among NGOs and between NGOs and government and UN organisations working on women's issues in Thailand.

The main objectives of Thai Women Watch are: (1) to monitor the

implementation of the Platform for Action to the general public in Thailand and the international community; and, (2) to support and encourage activities of the Thai government and Thai NGOs towards the advancement of women in Thailand.

In order to achieve the objectives, TW2 organised the Thai Women's Forum to create awareness and stimulation and widen its network. The first Forum was organised on the occasion of the first anniversary of Beijing, in cooperation with UN ESCAP and the National Commission on Women's Affairs, with the Prime Minister attending the opening session. Seven issues were covered in the Forum: poverty, sharing family responsibilities, elimination of discrimination against women, the media, employment, violence, and the environment. On the last day of the Forum, over 1,500 participants, both men and women, finalised the Declaration for the Advancement of Thai Women and called for:

- the elimination of the use of children in the commercial sex trade;
- the encouragement of both parents to be the pillars of the family;
- the improvement of oneself constantly to keep up with the changing world.

In 1997-1998, TW2 has planned to coordinate similar fora in all regions of the country, starting with the Northeast in May 1997 and the South in November 1997. The main objective is to monitor the integration of the Platform for Action into Thailand's five-year Economic and



Social Development Plan (1997-2001), taking into consideration particular concerns of women in each region.

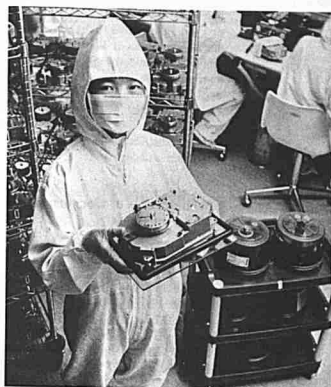
Since October 1996, TW2 has joined forces with 33 other NGOs to conduct a campaign on "Women and the Thai Constitution" to ensure that women's rights are guaranteed in the new Thai Constitution to be drafted by the 99 members of the Constitution Drafting Assembly elected nationwide. The new constitution has been submitted for debate by the Thai Parliament in August 1997. It is hoped that measures that will lead to political reform and "clean" politics will be included in the new Constitution.

To reach an even wider audience, TW2 plans to distribute a newsletter three times a year nationwide. It is hoped that the newsletter will also reach the international community in the exchange of information on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The articles in the newsletter follow TW2's objectives of reporting on the monitoring of agencies concerned with the implementation of the Platform for Action: UN, the government including the executive branch, the legislative branch and the judiciary, and NGOs themselves. The newsletter also contains a section which reports on activities of NGOs in other countries and regions.

TW2's activities have been quite successful in making grassroots women's groups recognise that there is a mutual advantage in working together, and that TW2 can act as a bridge between the grassroots and policy-making level. Thai grassroots women have had their own forum since pre-Beijing times. At their meetings, members of TW2 have been invited to give updates of the regional processes after Beijing in the Asia and Pacific region.

### Key National Achievements

A National Plan of Action on Women's Development (1997-2001) has been



submitted to the UN. Two other national plans of action in specific areas have also been completed: Family Development (1995-2005) and Prevention and Eradication of Commercial Sexual Exploitation. The translation and dissemination of both the full text and the summary version of the Beijing Platform for Action have been completed and were launched during April-June 1997 at a two-day seminar held in all five regions of the country. The issues selected for detailed discussion varied according to regional priority, for example, violence against women in the northern region and women industrial workers in the Bangkok Metropolitan area. Women in decision-making, the main issue for 1996-1997, was included in all the regional seminars.

Thailand acceded to the Women's Convention with seven reservations in 1985. Five reservations have been removed so far and the two remaining ones are Article 16 and Article 29. The reservation on Article 16 is being considered for withdrawal by attempts to amend the family law in matters regarding conditions for withdrawing

etrothal, marital rape, conditions for divorce, alternative titles to female names and the possibility for women to retain their maiden family name after marriage. The National Report on Implementation of the Women's Convention (combined second and third report) has been submitted to CEDAW. It is being distributed in Thailand and translation is underway.

### Specific Areas of Concern and Follow-up Work

With regard to the twelve areas of concern, the main activities related to their implementation are mostly joint efforts by the government and NGOs. They include:

- The setting up of a national committee on Women, Labour and Social Welfare Development was set up. The committee is drafting a five-year plan on development of women workers.
- A government conducted study on textbooks at primary education level to improve the materials and curricula that have had a gender bias. Overseas scholarships are provided for women's studies.
- Elimination of quota system in various higher educational institutions is being considered.
- A revised policy for female government officials who now receive 90 days maternity leave (with full pay) and can claim reimbursement for expenses for their children the same as men.
- Enactment of the Prostitution Prevention and Suppression Legislation in December 1996, replacing the 1960 version. The legislation now imposes higher penalties for procurers, pimps, agents and brothel owners, as well as penalties for customers of the girls and parents who sell their children into prostitution. A pilot programme has been undertaken to appoint 15 female officers as investigators at 3 police stations in cases involving violation of women and children's rights.

- Provision of scholarship and vocational training programmes to girls at risk of entering the commercial sex trade so that they can continue their education and have alternative sources of incomes.
- Development of training manuals and curriculum to encourage women's participation in national and local politics. NGOs have initiated several programmes to encourage women to stand for election and equip them with skills and knowledge.
- Revision of the rules and regulations of the Ministry of Interior and Defence to allow women to be appointed as district officers, provincial governors and military generals.
- Cabinet approval in 1997 for upgrading the National Commission on Women's Affairs from a division to a department.
- Organisation of numerous seminars, workshops, campaigns and training programmes throughout the country by both the government and NGOs in areas related to the action plans, such as legal literacy, HIV/AIDS, occupational safety and health.

# Report of Post-Beijing Implementation in Vietnam

*Submitted by the Vietnam Women's Union*

Vietnam has a national plan of action for the advancement of women. The Vietnam Women's Union has been implementing various projects which are outlined here.

## Poverty Alleviation

Before Beijing, the Vietnam Women's Union provided credit access to 2 million poor women with a total capital of 100 million US dollars. After Beijing, we have accelerated this programme by launching the campaign 'One saving day for the poor women' in March 1996. As a result, nearly US\$4 million have been mobilised as a loan fund to assist 193,727 poor women. Women's Unions at all levels are managing US\$104

million as loan funds for 2,193,727 poor women.

## Education

The Women's Union cooperates with the Education Ministry to provide literacy and post-literacy classes to many women. As a result, many women have escaped from illiteracy. A range of other training programmes for capacity building such as gender awareness for Women's Union staff as well as planners and policy-makers have been conducted. In addition, training on effective loan use, micro enterprise development and family planning management have been organised for women in many places. The Vietnam Women's Union has also

## BASIC INDICATORS

Maternal Mortality	160 (per 100,000 live births)
Female Literacy	50.0%
Female Labour Force Participation	89.9%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

## INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS SIGNED OR RATIFIED

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	●
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	●
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	●
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	●
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	●
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	●
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	NA
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

### Key:

- Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature
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strengthened and set up some vocational training centres for many provinces by providing them with equipment and skills training courses.

#### **Healthcare**

The Women's Union, in cooperation with the Health Ministry, promotes health services such as immunisation for children, goitre control, HIV/AIDS prevention, STD, RTIs prevention and family planning.

In 1996, the Women's Union actively participated in increasing the immunisation rate among children under 5 years (95%) and increasing the contraceptive prevalence rate (60% in 1996 compared to 50% in 1995).

#### **Women in Politics**

A number of training programmes on leadership skills, planning and management skills, concepts of gender and team building were conducted for women politicians and potential candidates in preparation for the election in July 1997. Before Beijing, 17 training courses were provided to 360 women. Since then up to March 1997, a number of training programmes on these topics have been organised for many women.

#### **Strengthening the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCAFW)**

Three representatives from the Agricultural and Rural Development Ministry, the Information and Culture Ministry and the Government Personnel Department have become official members of NCAFW. NCAFW has set up 41 bureaus in 51 ministries and institutions and has 44 of its bureaus in the 61 provinces.

#### **Violence against Women**

The Women's Union organised a national workshop on "Trafficking in Women and Children" to determine the problem and find possible solutions to address this problem.

#### **Mechanism to Monitor Implementation**

The Women's Union monitors implementation of its activities through periodic written reports, six-monthly field visits to all provinces by Women's Union leaders of the Central Women's Union and frequent field visits by the staff. In addition, review and evaluation workshops are held.

#### **Observations**

The Women's Union activities reflect the recommendations from the regional and international platforms for action. We face technical constraints and limitation of funds during the course of implementation.

# Implementation of the Development Strategy for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000 in Vietnam

*Submitted by the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCAFW), Vietnam*

Two years have elapsed since the Fourth UN World Conference on Women was held in Beijing, China, in September, 1995. Since then, Vietnam has been actively conducting the implementation of the Global Platform for Action and the Vietnam Development Strategy for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000. Under the direct guidance of the government, the National Committee for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam (NCAFW) has instructed ministries and Government branches in provinces and in cities to develop the National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000, specifically focusing on the objectives outlined in the Development Strategy for the Advancement of Women and defining responsibilities of respective ministries/branches in realising these objectives. The main objectives and achievements of the Development Strategy for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam are presented here.

## **National Committee for the Advancement of Women**

The National Committee for the Advancement of Women was established in February 1993. The Committee coordinates with ministries, and government branches and agencies to promote women's activities. The Committee comprises 16 members representing some ministries and concerned agencies of the Government and mass organisations such as the Women's Union, the Youth Union and the Peasants' Union. It has a financial

allocation from the government. The National Committee for Women's Decade was established in 1995.

The National Committee for the Advancement of Women carries out regular monitoring of ministries, branches and localities on the implementation of laws and policies relating to women and their activities for the advancement of women. The Committee is responsible for information dissemination, and guiding ministries and government agencies in the implementation of the national plan. The national plan has 11 specific objectives to ensure women's advancement. Crucial to the plan is the creation of favourable conditions for women to improve their living conditions by the generation of more jobs and higher incomes, improved health services, education and training.

The Committee has organised many conferences, seminars and training workshops on gender issues for ministries and government agencies to ensure gender responsive planning and implementation. Sub-committees on the advancement of women have been set up in 45 ministries and government agencies at the central level and almost all of the 61 provinces and cities throughout the country. The Committee has set up cooperative ties with government and non-governmental organisations at home and abroad. It has become a full member of the ASEAN Women's Sub-Committee (AWS) and has taken part in all regional and international activities aimed at

strengthening the national machinery for the advancement of women.

### **Poverty Alleviation through the Creation of Job Opportunities and Income Generating Activities for Women**

Woman-headed households are given prioritised access to credit, technical assistance and production skills. Many ministries and branches are providing women with job opportunities and also improving their work conditions. Some of the key achievements in the area of poverty alleviation include:

- Employment being generated for 98,000 women workers from the beginning of 1996 to June 1997.
- The government enforcing a labour law for women which stipulates the labour age, flexible labour deployment measures and training for alternative jobs for women workers. The law also outlines preferential capital policies and tax reduction for enterprises with higher percentage of women workers and calls for the re-deployment of women workers who are currently in prohibited jobs.
- The NCFAW collaborating with the Vietnam Women's Union (VWU) to implement Phase I of the project "ASEAN Skills Training Network for Women" which addresses skills training for disadvantaged women.
- The Vietnam Women's Union organising ESCAP sponsored regional and national workshops for women's promotion in economic development.
- The Vietnam Women's Union organising campaigns such as the "Women's mutual assistance for household economic development" and "A day of saving for the poor women". The campaign "A day of saving for the poor women" received positive responses from many ministries and their branches, mass organisations and enterprises — both state-owned and private. The total capital mobilised over 1 year has topped more than 40 billion Dong, which was disbursed to 193,727

single and poor women and 7,467 poor female state employees for their economic development and income generation activities.

### **Women's Equal Access to Education and Literacy**

The following programmes and measures are ongoing:

- Elimination of illiteracy was conducted among 300,000 people in 1996. In 1997, a 27 billion Dong investment in the universalisation of primary education and a 13 billion Dong investment in literacy programmes were made. Currently, there are 1,406,642 illiterate people throughout the country.
- The Ministry of Education and Training has introduced specific measures to balance the numbers of boys and girls enrolled at primary school level in order to ensure the universalisation of primary education for girls of school going age, retention of a greater number of school girls enrolled and increase the proportion of school girls at the ethnic boarding schools to 50%.
- The Ministry of Education and Training, with financial support from NCFAW, implemented a project on "integrating gender into education institutions" with the aim of enhancing the gender awareness of educational managers, teachers and students.

### **Health Care for Women and Children**

Women and children's health are priority issues of the government.

- The government focuses on improving population and family planning programmes to meet the target of reducing the population growth rate to 1.5-1.6% from the present 1.8%.
- The government cooperates with UNFPA for the 3-year reproductive health programme (1997-2000) budgeted at US\$17 million to address the reproductive health requirements of women and men.

- With financial assistance from NCAFAW and the Ministry of Health, the Thai Nguyen Medical University organised a workshop on "health care for ethnic minority women" to assess their health status and make recommendations to the government.

## Women and Decision-making

The significant achievements include:

- The increased participation of women in leadership positions of the ruling party at the national, provincial, district and communal levels, respectively.

- The central election council setting a 25% quota for women deputies in the National Assembly. To achieve this target, NCAFAW took the initiative to collaborate with press agencies to launch communication campaigns on the election and to advocate for women candidates. NCAFAW, in cooperation with VWU, also developed a training manual on leadership skills and organised training in leadership skills for 144 women candidates. One hundred and eighteen of them won seats in the election, accounting for 26.22% of the total National Assembly seats, which surpassed the quota set.

- NCAFAW collaborating with the Ministry of Labour, War Invalid and Social Affairs organised a workshop on "Enhancing the Management Capability of Women Cadres in the Market Economy". Based on the recommendations, the government instructed the ministry to work with VWU and other concerned agencies to conduct more research on the issue and future recommendations.

## Protection of Women's Rights

The following actions have been taken by the government:

- The 9th. Legislature of the National Assembly decided to impose the highest possible sentence on sexual abusers of children.

- The government is reconsidering the retirement age policies for women workers. The Ministry of Labour, War Invalid and Social Affairs is the main agency responsible for submitting a proposal on this issue to the Prime Minister for consideration.

- The government has instructed ministries and its branches to immediately stop the illegal trafficking of the Vietnamese women and children to prostitution establishments abroad.

- With financial support from NCAFAW, the Ministry of Justice has collaborated with the National Publishing House of Politics to compile a handbook on "Legal documents for the advancement of women". This is the first legal handbook providing useful legal information for women and those interested in women's issues.

- VWU organised a workshop on the trafficking of women and girls in the northern provinces with support from the International Organisation on Migration (IOM). The workshop assessed the situation and proposed recommendations.

- VWU also organised a workshop on the "Exchange of Information on Implementation of the Women's Convention".

*"For the first time, the international agenda for women's advancement and national strategies for improving women's status and situations have been linked and are beginning to be perceived and understood by the branches, authorities, mass organisations and the public."*

## The Role of the Family

Some of the ongoing programmes and interventions made include:

- NCAFAW collaborating with the central VWU in 1997 to conduct research on the "Situation of violence against women in the family". The findings will guide the recommendations which will be forwarded to agencies concerned with the protection of women's rights.

- The Ministry of Justice and agencies concerned are working on reviewing and



amending laws on marriage and the family to be submitted to the National Assembly for consideration.

### Women and Environment

Interventions include:

- The strengthening of the National Steering Committee on Clean Water and Environmental Sanitation which is under the direct guidance of the Prime Minister, through having 13 ministry/branch-members, including the VWU.
- The Mekong River Committee developing a national report on the role of gender in developing water resources and proposing a strategy to enhance women's role in developing water resources and other resources related to the countries in the Mekong downstream.

### Women and Media/Information

The following activities have been conducted:

- After the Beijing Conference, NCFAW collaborated with VWU to organise a press conference to disseminate the Conference's documents and outcomes.

- NCFAW has translated all the documents from the Beijing Conference for dissemination. It has also published 9 issues of the Women and Progress quarterly with a total circulation of 18,000 copies to provide updates and essential information on the activities for the advancement of women conducted throughout the country. NCFAW has also compiled a media kit on the implementation of the Platform for Action in Vietnam.

- The Ministry of Culture and Information has collaborated with NCFAW to organise two training courses on "Women, Gender and Development" for over 90 women correspondents and correspondents specialising in women's issues.

- VWU, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), developed the first gender training manual in Vietnam. The manual was used to train more than 300 leaders and women's union cadres from 15 provinces.

### Women and Peace

The main action in the area of women and peace was:

- The government issuing instructions



to branches, authorities and social organisations on the care of the 38,805 women who are recognised as the 'heroic mothers of Vietnam' for their role in the national salvation wars.

### National Machinery for the Advancement of Women

Measures for strengthening the national machinery for women's advancement include:

- Government approval for increasing the number of members of NCFAW by three so that NCFAW could have 16 members. NCFAW has also been able to organise four meetings in the past two years and consult with the government on policies for women.
- Organisational consolidation and operational development of the committees for the advancements of women (CFAWs) at the different ministries, its branches and local levels of government have been carried out. By the end of August 1997, CFAWs were established in 45 ministries/branches and 51 local bodies.
- Given its supervisory and monitoring functions, NCFAW has conducted supervisions of the activities for women's advancement in 27 provinces/cities and 12 ministries/branches. Eighty nine percent of local CFAWs have been implementing job creation and income-generation activities for women and 83% of CFAWs have been actively conducting literacy, education and training activities for women with particular focus on planning for women cadres. Certain ministries and branches have taken the initial steps in integrating gender perspectives into their operations. These include the Ministry of Education and Training and the Ministry of Labour, War Invalid and Social Affairs.
- NCFAW, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Training, has organised a workshop on measures to enhance the implementation of the plan of action for the advancement of women in Vietnam by the year 2000.
- NCFAW has organised 3 training courses on gender, organisation of the machinery for women's advancement and operation skills for the advancement of women for over 200 cadres of ministerial/branch and provincial/municipal CFAWs.
- Many ministries/branches and provinces/cities have organised conferences, workshops and training on the implementation of their respective plans of action and on gender awareness for their cadres and employees. These include the Ministries of Defence; Labour, War Invalid and Social Affairs; Finance; the National Administration Institute; the Committee on Ethnic and Mountainous Areas; and the Thanh Hoa and Hoa Binh provinces. The People's Committee of Ha Tay province has even issued instructions on the implementation of the development strategy for the advancement of women in Ha Tay to the year 2000.

### Observations and Assessment

After two years of implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and the Vietnam development strategy for the advancement of women to the year 2000, the following initial observations can be made:

- For the first time, the international agenda for women's advancement and national strategies for improving women's status and situations have been linked and are beginning to be perceived and understood by the branches, authorities, mass organisations and the public. Under the direction of the government, the ministries/branches at the national level and most of the provinces/cities have drawn up and begun to implement their respective plans of action for the advancement of women as an integrated part of their socio-economic development plans.
- We have made some initial gains in realising the ten objectives of the national strategy, particularly in the fields of poverty alleviation, literacy and education, and enhancing women's participation in leadership and decision-

making positions. With the women deputies filling 26.22% of the National Assembly seats, Vietnam has become the leading ASEAN country and the second Asia-Pacific country to have a high ratio of women's participation in the National Assembly.

- The implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the National Strategy has involved the participation and collaboration of local authorities, branches of government and mass organisations who work with VWU to address issues of concern to women and children.

The two-year implementation also reveals the following remaining problems:

- Branches and authorities report that getting approval for their plans of action has taken up much of their time. The implementation in certain units has been conducted in a nominal way, critical issues have not been solved and real obstacles to women's advancement persist.

- The ten objectives of the National Strategy have not been realised in a consistent way. There are no specific measures to achieve the targets set out.

- Gender perspectives as well as the essence of the Platform for Action and the National Strategy have not been integrated skilfully into the socio-economic and cultural development plans of branches and localities. Horizontal collaborative mechanisms among branches of the same level have not been as well drawn up as the vertical reporting mechanism.

The above problems have resulted in the following:

- Limited attention paid by authorities and branches to women's issues; it is common in many places to consider the activities for the advancement of women to be the sole responsibility of the administrative authorities, thus other relevant bodies become less active in the implementation; certain localities even delegate the women's unions to be the single responsible agency.

- Many of the contents and requirements set out in the Platform for Action and the National Strategy are new to Vietnam, making the understanding and implementation of certain recommendations difficult.

- There are limitations in resources and conditions for implementation.

## Future Activities

To realise the Party and State intentions and policies on women as well as the government's commitments at the Beijing Conference, branches and authorities need to continue to implement the Platform for Action and the Vietnam National Development Strategy for the Advancement of Women by the year 2000 through:

- Reviews of the implementation of the plans of action of every branch/authority. Plans of action should be developed and implemented in places where they are now absent.

- Branches and authorities working out specific measures which are based on the reality of their situations in order to realise the objectives and targets.

- A collaborative horizontal mechanism among branches, and the vertical guidance mechanism of the ministries/branches at the national level with the core role being played by women's unions and women's sections/departments at different levels to supervise the implementation of plans of action.

- The consolidation of the operation of CFAWs and allocating appropriate budgets for activities to advance women's status.

- The collection of updated information at regular intervals and monitoring of the implementation of the Platform for Action and the National Strategy through a mid-term review in 1998.

## Problems Faced by Young Rural Women in Vietnam

*Extracted from a paper presented by Nguyen Minh Tam, Centre for Young Women and Family Studies at the Youth Research Institute, at the APDC Sub-Regional Consultation for Indochina and Mongolia on Post-Beijing Implementation and Monitoring, Bangkok, May 1997*

Vietnam's transition to a market economy has implications for young women in poor rural areas as they prepare to enter the job market and make plans to start families. The following information on their situation points to the need for policy intervention.

- Women's education is low and their enrolment rates in secondary and high schools are decreasing. The illiteracy rate for young women stands at 7.9%. Whereas 35.1% of young women have completed junior secondary school and 10.36% have completed senior secondary school, only 3.35% have graduated from middle-level vocational schools, colleges and universities. A large number of school drop-outs are young girls. While 6.3% of girls between the ages of 6 and 11 do not go to school, the dropout rate increases to 54.3% for girls aged between 12 and 17 years. The low level of education is now a main factor that prevents young women from seeking employment opportunities and overcoming poverty.

- Increasing numbers of young women from poor rural areas migrate to urban centres as they find their labour in the agricultural sector becoming redundant. As young rural women do not receive job training (including in farming), they remain unskilled and have no access to information on employment and training. As a result, they often respond passively to market changes and lack the skills to adapt productive activities to the situation. They are also hesitant about getting involved in trading activities.

- Young women from poor rural areas are also less healthy than their urban counterparts. Poor access to health services has a negative impact on their labour efficiency and particularly on their reproductive health. Seventy to eighty percent of pregnant women in rural areas suffer from anaemia and give birth to malnourished babies. Because a majority of rural girls receive no health education they are unable to look after their own and their family's health.

- Early marriage constitutes an obstacle to the advancement of young women. Marriages at a young age are on the increase — 4.2% of the 15-17 year age group and 0.7% of the 13-14 year age group get married early. Early marriage leads to early childbirth, shorter birth-spacing and more abortions. In many rural areas, unmarried girls of 25 years are considered ineligible because of their age. There are now 1.2 million young women aged between 18 and 32 which is more than the number of men aged between 20 and 34. As a result, a number of rural young women find it difficult to get married. It could also be the reason why young Vietnamese women are either trafficked or go voluntarily to China to get married to Chinese men. Some of the women are also trafficked for prostitution within and outside Vietnam.

- Young women from poor rural areas have very little access to resources such as credit and land. Banks and other credit institutions are reluctant to give loans to poor women. When they do give loans,



the loan is very small, only 200,000 VND (which is equivalent to less than US\$20) for a period of 6 to 12 months. Under the Land Law, all members of a household are entitled to land allocation. In the poor areas, land per capita is also low, only 400 square metres per person. However, poor women are often unable to pay taxes and, as a result, have to transfer their land use rights to better-off people and hire out their labour. Bank loans also require them to have collateral. When they no longer have land use rights, they are unable to put up the land use certificate as collateral. In many cases, poor young women are forced to obtain loans from usurers at high interest rates. As a result, they become even poorer.

# Women in Vietnam: Status and Conditions

*Submitted by Le Thi Nham Tuyet, Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development (CGFED), Vietnam*

*The Vietnamese government, the National Committee for the Advancement of Women, the Vietnam Women's Union and all government and non-governmental organisations have taken many initiatives for the implementation of the Platform for Action. The government has approved the national development strategy for the advancement of women in Vietnam until the year 2000. Ministries, branches and local authorities are responsible for periodically reporting on the implementation and progress of the Plan.*

## Women's Situation in Vietnam

### Women and Power

Of the 450 National Assembly deputies in the 1997-2002 term, 118 are women, accounting for 26.22%, an increase of 7.74% over the last term. The percentage of women taking part in the People's Council in the 1994-1999 term is 20.4% at the provincial level, 18.4% at the district level and 14.1% at the commune level. The Provincial People's Committees has one chairwoman, 20 deputy chairwomen and 5 women secretaries, an increase of 2.5 times from the previous representation. At the state management level, there is a woman vice-president of the state, 5 women ministers, 26 women deputy ministers, 46 women directors and 84 women deputy directors of departments. Fifteen percent of the 30,000 businesses operating in the country are managed by women and the percentage of women in the leading bodies of many sectors is high: more than 50% in the textile, garment, footwear and food and beverage industries. Between 20-45% of women are leading staff of the mass organisations from the central to the provincial level.

### Women and Poverty

The poverty rate dropped from 70% of the population in 1980 to 50% at present

(about 37 million people). The average per capita income is US\$309 per year. Of the 14.5 million households, about 45% are poor and 90% of the poor households live in rural areas. Nearly 30% of poor rural households are headed by women. There are many causes for poverty. But there are five inter-related causes: first, the gaps in geographical and social positioning which results in knowledge differences; second, the high risk of crop loss, morbidity, unwanted children or animal epidemics; third, the lack of resources for production such as labour force, shortage of arable land or capital; fourth, the non-sustainable development which leads to forest destruction; and fifth, the lack of appropriate involvement in government programmes. Most Vietnamese women (78.6%) who live in the rural areas, are farmers and have low incomes. They are involved in manual, and simple work and their average wage is only 72% of their male counterparts.

Many measures have been taken by the government to eradicate hunger and alleviate poverty for women. They include the national programme on hunger eradication and poverty alleviation in which poor women have been granted loans and given technical assistance. The Vietnam Women's Union has also helped to create jobs for their members through various programmes.



### Women, Children and Reproductive Health

In 1996, 1,809,781 children of the total of 1,902,305 children under one year of age were immunised, accounting for 95.14%. The crude birth rate in 1996 was 23 per 1,000 population and the crude death rate was 6 per 1,000 population while the total fertility rate was 2.9%.

Over the past 10-15 years, the maternal mortality rate has dropped from 400/100,000 live births in the 1950s to 200/100,000 live births in the 1980s, and 135/100,000 live births at present. Infant mortality rate was 37 per 1,000 live births in 1996. Children's malnutrition rate is also down from 50% in the 1980s to 45% at present. The number of children dying of the 6 child-killer diseases, viz. whooping cough, tetanus, diarrhoea, acute respiratory infection, diphtheria and measles has reduced remarkably.

The reproductive health sector in Vietnam has considerable unmet needs. For example, inadequate access to contraceptives is reflected in the high rates of menstrual regulation and abortion. The choice of contraceptives is mainly limited to IUD and traditional methods. There is poor prevention of HIV/AIDS and other STD infections, relatively high maternal mortality, non-existent adolescent reproductive health programmes, an absence of reliable data, limited outreach to the remote

communities and a highly fragmented vertical programme structure in primary health care. Over the past 5 years, the number of annual abortions was between 150,000 and 200,000. According to the statistics reported by the 61 provinces and cities throughout Vietnam, in 1995, there were 1,363,827 abortions and in the first 10 months of 1996 alone, there were 1,009,415 abortions. According to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) Hanoi office, Vietnam is one of the five countries with high abortion rates in the world.

The Vietnam health service, in coordination with other government and non-governmental agencies, is striving to provide health services, particularly health care for mothers and children. Targets include reduction of the maternal mortality rate to half by the year 2000 and one third by the year 2020; reduction of the infant mortality rate of children under one year from 45/1,000 to 25/1,000 by the year 2000, and 10/1,000 by the year 2020 and reduction of infant mortality rate of children under five years from 61/1,000 to 55/1,000 by the year 2000 and 25/1,000 by the year 2020 and reduction of the malnutrition rate of children under five from 50% to 25% by the year 2000 and 10% by the year 2020.

The government has adopted a population and family planning strategy with the targets of population growth rate of 1.5-1.6% by the year 2000. The government has also approved the people's health care strategy until the year 2000. The Ministry of Health has been implementing many national programmes related to women's health such as anaemia and malnutrition control, primary health care, expanded immunisation programme and goitre control. A steering committee to address social vices has been set up with the President of the Vietnam Women's Union as the deputy chair.

### Women and Equality in Economics

Vietnamese women account for 51.2% of the total population and form 52% of the work force. In the education sector,

women make up more than 70% of employees, in the agriculture and food industry women form 61.7% of the workforce, the light industry employs 63.6% women and the health service has 60% women workers. Due to the shift to the market economy, 800,000 workers at state-owned enterprises have been dismissed, 60% of them are women. Rural women have to work an average of 11.5 hours a day (including farming, house work and care for children), while men work 7 hours a day on average. However, there is a severe shortage of jobs in the rural areas. Working women have low pay due to their low level of skills in professional or manual jobs.

The government has taken certain measures to help women in their economic activities including policies and laws to encourage women's involvement in small and medium businesses and family businesses. The labour code has a chapter on 'Women's Labour' which ensures women's rights at the workplace. The government also supports credit programmes for women and has incentives such as reduction in women's taxes on income.

### **Women and Education**

In 1996, there were more than 342,000 women with tertiary level education, 28 women doctors, 1,026 doctorate holders, 28 women professors and 209 associate professors. Girls form 50.7% of students in primary school, 43.7% in lower secondary and 41.3% in upper secondary school. The illiteracy rate in Vietnam is 10%. Since 1989, the number of literate women has doubled.

In 1994, the National Assembly approved the law on universalisation of primary education. By the year 2000, illiteracy will be eradicated for people in the 15-35 year age group. In 1997, the government invested 13 billion Dong in literacy programmes and 27 billion Dong in the universalisation of primary education. The National Committee for the Advancement of Women has implemented the Project 'ASEAN Network on Skills Training for Women'

to promote job training for women. Special attention is paid to a gender approach in vocational training and job training to improve professional skills for women workers.

### **Human Rights and Violence against Women**

Many measures have been taken to protect women's human rights including protecting them from violence. The law on Family and Marriage has many provisions to protect women. The government signed the Women's Convention in 1981 and tries to monitor and control violence against women. In 1994, the National Steering Committee on the International Year of the Family was established.

One of the forms of violence against women is wife battery. In the past 10 years, 30-60% of the divorce rates have been due to maltreatment of women. In 1996, 19,828 married women who were beaten by their husbands applied for divorce. Domestic violence is on the increase. In recent years, cases of trafficking of women and girls have been recorded. The main reasons for this are the open market policy, over-urbanisation and wide exchanges in the region. According to the Supreme People's Court, from 1992 to 1996, 739 cases involved the trafficking of 1,383 women. Another issue of concern is the increasing problem of sexual harassment which is considered sensitive and hence ignored in Vietnamese culture. Child prostitution is addressed in some scientific research as the consequence as well as the cause of this phenomenon.

## HEALTH

### Women's Health

Targets for women's and girls' health set out in the Platform for Action include a reduction of maternal mortality rates by at least 50% of the 1990 levels by the year 2000; reduction of anaemia rates in girls and women by one third of the 1990 levels by the year 2000; reduction of infant mortality rates and mortality rates of children under five years by one third of the 1990 levels or 50-70 per 1,000 live births by the year 2000 and malnutrition rates among children under five years to be reduced by one third of the 1990 levels by the year 2000. Other commitments on health which do not have time bound targets include making available reproductive health services for all women, paying special attention to addressing the HIV/AIDS issue, controlling and eliminating major diseases and ensuring adequate nutrition levels among women and children. How well are governments in the region faring with these time bound targets?

### Maternal Mortality

World Health Organisation (WHO) sources indicate that maternal deaths in the developing world are mostly caused by severe haemorrhaging, infections and convulsions during childbirths and abortions under unsafe conditions. Maternal mortality rates for young girls are likely to be far higher than those for women. A WHO report released for World Health Day in 1998 shows that the lifetime risk of dying from pregnancy related complications are high. Based on figures for 1996, one in 7 women in Afghanistan, one in 17 women in Cambodia and one in 21 women in Bangladesh are likely to die from pregnancy related complications. These countries are at the higher end of the scale. On the other hand, in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, South Korea and China the risks of women dying from pregnancy related complications are much lower.

The 1997 Social Watch Report, basing its calculations on the 1995 figures for maternal mortality rates, concludes that only Nepal among countries in the Asia Pacific region will be able to meet the goal/target of reducing maternal mortality rates to half the 1990 rate before the year 2000. While very few countries will be able to meet the target for the year 2000, the report notes that many countries in the region actually recorded higher maternal mortality rates in 1995 when compared to the rates in 1990. These include Mongolia, India, China, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Laos, the Philippines, Burma and Thailand.

### Infant Mortality

Countries in South Asia, particularly India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal have high infant and under-five mortality rates. The Social Watch Report gives Bangladesh and Nepal a higher index of progress on commitments made for reducing infant and under-five mortality rates than Pakistan and India. According to the Social Watch Report, Tonga and the Cook Islands made significant progress in reducing infant and under-five mortality rates. As infant and under five mortality rates are closely linked to the overall health status of the mother, the general well being of the family as well as their access to primary health care, any progress made in reaching quality health care to communities will see a significant reduction in infant and under-five mortality rates. However, WHO figures reveal that in many of the countries in the Asia Pacific region only 30-40% of women have skilled attendants during childbirth.

### Anaemia

The percentage of pregnant women who are anaemic in the region is very high. WHO, based on 1992 figures, estimates that 75% of pregnant women in South Asia are anaemic compared to 71% of pregnant women in the Pacific and 37% in East Asia. According to the 1997 UNDP Human Development Report, India and Vanuatu record high rates of anaemia among pregnant women, at 88% and 87% respectively. The percentage of non-pregnant women with anaemia is also high for the region. Given the current calorie intake and nutritional status, governments are unlikely to be able to reduce the 1990 rates by one third in the year 2000. The 1997 UNDP Human Development Report records a drop in the daily calorie supply per capita<sup>1</sup> among certain countries in the region in 1992 compared to the figures for 1965. For example, in Sri Lanka the per capita calorie supply in 1965 was 81 and had dropped to 73 in 1992; the figures for Bangladesh are 73 and 65 respectively and in Nepal the figures are 70 and 63 respectively. However certain countries registered increased per capita calorie supply: in Papua New Guinea the calorie supply rose from 58 in 1965 to 84 in 1992; in Pakistan the increase was from 61 to 74. In addition to the decrease in per capita calorie supply, other factors that have an impact on women's nutritional status are levels of poverty, family size and general state of health. Some of the NGO reports sent to the APDC Monitor observe that women's decreased nutritional levels are also related to the decrease in subsistence farming and liberal food imports. Cultural factors such as preference for the male child in South Asian societies also have an effect on women and girls nutritional status.

1 UNDP has calculated the daily calorie supply per capita for developing countries using a comparative value of 100 for northern countries.

Sources: Social Watch 1997, UNDP Human Development Report 1997



## Review of Population Policies for Asia-Pacific Countries: Is There Change?

Although the ICPD in Cairo was held well over two years ago, it appears that the majority of the Asia-Pacific countries have policies that remain demographic-centred and target-oriented in terms of quantified goals. Efforts by a few countries (India, the Philippines, Pakistan) are encouraging as they appear to be on the road to change with a shift towards a more people-centred development. The table below provides an overview of current population policy goals, and progressive changes planned for post-Cairo implementation in selected countries of the region.

The India Family Welfare Programme (IFWP), which provides family planning services, had a paradigm shift in its policy toward a reproductive and child health approach. In the Spring 1996, the Government of India eliminated method-specific contraceptive targets from the IFWP and declared that programmes for the country would be target-free. The IFWP also plans to include a gender equality component. In the Philippines, the Commission on Population (POPCOM), the policy making body of the Philippine Population Management Programme, has included a reproductive health perspective as well as a gender-sensitivity framework in its population policy. The new policy aims to be 'human-centred' rather than just 'family-centred', and recognises the issue of reproductive rights.

In ARROW's post-Cairo research project, Shirkat Gah reported that Pakistan's

Eighth Five-Year Plan (1993-1998) modified its population Programme in light of ICPD to ensure a reproductive health focus. However, the overall objectives of the plan itself remain target-oriented. In the case of Thailand, the researcher suggested that the 'success' in achieving the country's population policy goals, as rated by international population agencies, is reported to have made Thailand even more sure about being on the right track and therefore less likely to do a policy review.

The slowness of many governments in the Asia-Pacific region to begin to take decisive steps to include ICPD guidelines in their population policies indicate their lack of recognition of the importance of the inter-relations between population issues and fertility decline, and the position of women in society.

### Sources:

- Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (ARROW), 1997, *Changes in Population Policies and Programmes Post-Cairo: A regional action-research*.
- The Commission on Population (POPCOM), 1995, *Inroads to Gender Sensitivity: The POPCOM Experience*. Philippines: Commission on Population. 81pp.
- The Population Council, 1996, 'Abolishing Method-specific Contraceptive Targets in India'. Population Brief. 5pp.
- Arrows for Change, December 1996, Vol. 2, No. 3

## Health and Reproductive Rights in Japan

Women in Japan have reacted fiercely to the passage of a revised abortion law without any consultation with those affected — the women. The revised law provides for abortion only under conditions of endangerment to women's health for physical or economic reasons and requires authorisation by a physician or, in some cases, spousal consent. Moreover, the criminal law still applies to abortion, making for a confusing situation that limits women's reproductive rights. In addition to having been passed quickly and without national discussion, the revision addressed neither the restrictiveness nor the confusion of Japanese law. The Japanese Government also has postponed approval of low-dose contraceptive pills, despite indications in late 1995 that the pill would become available for distribution in early 1996. Japan remains the only industrialised nation in the world that does not allow use of the pill for contraception.

Source: *International Women's Rights Action Watch*, September 1996, Volume 10, No. 2

## Population Policies in Selected Countries

Country	Policy Goals	Changes Planned Since Cairo	TFR*
Fiji	Maintain rate of population growth at below 2% per annum	No change	3.2 ('94)
India	Achieve a net reproductive rate of one by 2000 <sup>1</sup>	Make the entire FP programme target-free (achieve in 1996). <sup>2</sup>	3.8 ('92) <sup>3</sup>
Malaysia	Slower decline in TFR from 3.8 in 1986 to 3.6 in 1990 and 2.05 in 2070.	No change. General policy review being done.	3.6 ('92) <sup>3</sup>
Pakistan	Reduce TFR, increase contraceptive prevalence, prevent 4.6 million births.	Reproductive health focus.	6.1 ('91)
Philippines	Reduce rate of population growth. <sup>4</sup>	Reproductive health perspective and gender-sensitivity framework. <sup>4</sup>	3.9 ('92) <sup>3</sup>

\*TFR: Total Fertility Rate. Average number of children that would be born alive to a woman during her lifetime if she were to bear children at each age in accordance with prevailing age-specific fertility rates.

### References:

1. Rahman, Anika, et al., 1995, *Women of the World: Formal Laws and Policies Affecting Their Reproductive Lives*. New York: The Center for Reproductive Law and Policy. 40 pp.

2. The Population Council, 1996, "Abolishing method-specific contraceptive targets in India". *Population Briefs*. 5pp.

3. UNDP, 1996, *Human Development Report*. New York: Oxford University Press. 229 pp.

4. The Commission on Population (POPCOM), 1995, *Inroads to Gender Sensitivity: The POPCOM Experience*. Philippines: Commission on Population. 81pp

Note: All other information and data is from ARROW's *Changes in Population Policies and Programmes Post-Cairo: A regional action-research*, 1997.

Source: *Arrows for Change*, December 1996, Vol. 2, No. 3

## Kits for Reproductive Health Education

Durable kits designed to serve as visual guides to learning about reproductive health have been co-developed by the Japanese Organisation for International Cooperation in Family Planning, Inc. (JOICFP) and the Japan Family Planning Association (JFPA). The first kit consists of a metal white board featuring near-life size illustrations of the male and female reproductive organs. Magnetised vinyl images can be placed on the white board to teach a range of subjects from the menstrual cycle to pregnancy through conception and STDs.

Maggie the Apron consists of a durable apron imprinted with the female reproductive organs. The apron features a transparent pocket for placing cards bearing images of such mechanisms as menstruation, pregnancy and contraception. An extremely lightweight, cost-effective material, the apron can be folded flat for portability.

Source: Japanese Organisation for International Cooperation in Family Planning, Inc. *News (JOICFP)*, March 1998, No. 285

## SINGAPORE

The Singapore Council of Women's Organisations has organised a series of Health seminars called "Know Your Health" which takes place each month. The topics covered were:

- Mental health
- Naso pharyngeal cancer
- Stress management skills for women
- Systematic hypertension
- Caring for the elderly
- Health of women at work
- Hypnosis
- Osteoporosis
- Family health

Source: *The Singapore Council of Women's Organisations*

## **Findings and Recommendations of a Research Project on Women's Reproductive and Sexual Health in Hong Kong**

*The research project examined women's perceptions of reproductive and sexual health from a social work perspective through analysing information from phone calls received by the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Women's Hotline and the Women's Care Hotline jointly run by the YWCA and the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Branch of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Information was also gathered from two focused group discussions with women at the grassroots. The key findings from the research and key recommendations on women's health to the government and the NGO sector are given here.*

### **Key Findings of the Research**

#### **Women's Reproductive Health and Connected Issues**

The analysis reveals that women in Hong Kong generally pay little attention to their health, particularly when they have no disease or pain, or have not bought any insurance. The aspects of health which concern them are mainly beauty care and physical fitness. They seem to be unaware of a holistic concept of health which includes physical, mental, emotional and social well being. Their knowledge of sexual health is also limited. Given their perceptions and experiences, Hong Kong women do not consider a medical team responsible for solving their 'non-physical disease'.

The awareness of holistic health among the medical profession is not high either. Focus on the 'physical disease' becomes the mainstream in medical service. A women-centred health service is minimal and health examinations mainly focus on diseases. The service providers are confined to the medical field only and there is a lack of multi-disciplinary team of professionals who could address women's concerns in the process of pregnancy and maternity including such issues as the conflict arising from gender roles and expectations including the feelings of guilt that some women experience after they have given birth to disabled babies.

The concept of 'women-centred' medical and health service is non-existent. The emphasis of Hong Kong's Maternal and Child Health Centre is on the well-being of babies and children. As health policies and service providers perceive women as sex partners, mothers or reproducers only, women find that they are not treated as individuals in their own right. Although it is assumed that women in Hong Kong are not discriminated against, it is evident from the study that women are constrained by limited social support and traditional values which are reflected in the distribution of housework, decisions about marriages and pregnancies.

#### **Young Girls' Reproductive Health and Connected Issues**

The study reveals that young girls in Hong Kong tend to have sex at an earlier age. Medical evidence has demonstrated a correlation between sex at an early age and a higher rate of contraction of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV infection and uterine cancer. Although a number of reasons have been cited for the high rates of sex-related infections among teens, the more important reasons are the multiple sex partners they have and their relative lack of information on safe sex. Teen sex also reflects a hidden yearning for parental love and affection. Efforts to address young girls' reproductive health therefore must be spearheaded by the family, school and media.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the research project and with a view to actualising the World Health Organisation's declaration on women's health.

- Strengthen women's health education and actively promote women's health, through a comprehensive health policy for women which would include nutrition, safe motherhood, family planning, prevention of smoking among adolescent girls and young women, promotion of sports and exercise, environmental measures and de-medicalisation of women's health during the different stages in women's lives.
- Change the medical-care culture to a more health-oriented and participatory model and raise awareness on 'holistic health' among health practitioners. Set up 'multi-disciplinary' health teams and offer comprehensive health services. Raise awareness among policy-makers, especially those outside the health domain, on the impact of other social policies on health issues.
- Promote a 'women-centred' health service through the launching and developing women's health centres that include access to health information and comprehensive health care.
- Address gender discrimination and bias, and promote women's empowerment together with a comprehensive health policy for women.
- Include sex education for adolescents, reproductive health education for newly arrived immigrant women and education on gender and development issues as part of the overall approach to women's health.
- Encourage cooperation between hospitals and social service organisations.

Source: Alice Yuk, Young Women's Christian Association, Hong Kong

# INDICATORS ON HEALTH

From: "The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics", United Nations

Country or area	Life expectancy at birth (years)						Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)		Contraceptive use among married women of reproductive age, 1990 (%)		% births attended by trained attendant	Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	Fertility rate of women aged 15-19 (per 1,000 women)
	1970-75			1990-95			1970-75 1990-95				1986/90	1990	1990-95
	w	m	Diff.	w	m	Diff.			Any Method	Modern Method			
Afghanistan	38	38	..	44	43	1	194	162	..	..	8	640	153
Azerbaijan	..	..	..	75	66	8	..	26	17	..	..	9	28 <sup>a</sup>
Bangladesh	44	46	-2	53	53	-1	140	108	40	31	7	480	149
Cambodia	42	39	3	52	50	3	181	116	..	..	47	900	108
China	64	63	1	73	69	3	61	27	83	80 <sup>b</sup>	51 <sup>c</sup>	95	17
East Timor	41	39	2	46	44	2	183	150	..	..	..	..	..
India	49	51	-2	61	60	1	132	88	43	39	75	250 <sup>d</sup>	51
Indonesia	51	48	3	65	61	4	114	65	50	47	44	450	57
Korea, Republic of	64	59	5	74	68	6	47	21	79	70 <sup>e</sup>	95	26	43
Malaysia	65	61	3	73	69	4	42	14	48	31	92	20	6
Mongolia	55	53	3	65	62	3	98	60	..	..	100	204	29
Pakistan	48	50	-2	59	59	0	140	98	12	9	70	400	44
Philippines	59	56	3	67	63	4	71	40	40	25	76	100	64
Singapore	72	67	4	77	72	6	19	8	74 <sup>f</sup>	73 <sup>g</sup>	100	7	28
Sri Lanka	66	64	2	74	70	4	56	24	62	41	85	60	11
Thailand	62	58	4	72	67	5	65	26	66	64	71	20	33
Vietnam	53	48	5	66	62	4	106	36	53	35 <sup>h</sup>	90	120	20
Cook Islands	..	..	..	73 <sup>i</sup>	67 <sup>i</sup>	6 <sup>i</sup>	..	26	38 <sup>j</sup>	38 <sup>j</sup>	..	46	89 <sup>k</sup>
Fiji	67	64	3	74	70	4	45	23	40	40	98	68	46
Kiribati	..	..	..	63 <sup>i</sup>	58 <sup>i</sup>	5 <sup>i</sup>	..	65 <sup>i</sup>	37	27	74	..	76 <sup>k</sup>
Marshall Islands	..	..	..	63 <sup>i</sup>	60 <sup>i</sup>	3 <sup>i</sup>	..	20 <sup>i</sup>	27 <sup>j</sup>	18 <sup>j</sup>	..	109	162 <sup>k</sup>
New Caledonia	..	..	..	72 <sup>i</sup>	67 <sup>i</sup>	5 <sup>i</sup>	39	15 <sup>i</sup>	25 <sup>j</sup>	..	..	68	41
Northern Mariana Islands	..	..	..	71 <sup>i</sup>	63 <sup>i</sup>	8 <sup>i</sup>	..	19 <sup>i</sup>	..	..	..	..	..
Palau	..	..	..	69 <sup>i</sup>	65 <sup>i</sup>	4 <sup>i</sup>	..	25 <sup>i</sup>	..	..	..	..	..
Papua New Guinea	48	48	..	57	55	1	100	54	4	..	20	700	38 <sup>k</sup>
Samoa	..	..	..	66 <sup>i</sup>	61 <sup>i</sup>	6 <sup>i</sup>	..	28 <sup>i</sup>	34 <sup>j</sup>	34 <sup>j</sup>	52	400	42
Solomon Islands	64	60	4	73	68	4	61	27	3 <sup>j</sup>	3 <sup>j</sup>	85	549	29
Tonga	..	..	..	71 <sup>i</sup>	68 <sup>i</sup>	3 <sup>i</sup>	..	26 <sup>i</sup>	74	56	95	300	99
Vanuatu	..	..	..	64 <sup>i</sup>	62 <sup>i</sup>	3 <sup>i</sup>	..	45 <sup>i</sup>	15 <sup>j</sup>	15 <sup>j</sup>	67	120	28 <sup>k</sup>
Nepal	43	44	-2	53	54	-1	153	99	23	22	6	1500	81 <sup>k</sup>
Lao People's Dem. Rep.	42	39	3	53	50	3	145	97	..	..	..	300	86
													51

**Key:**

- a 1989 (Excluding infants born alive after less than 28 weeks' gestation,  
of less than 1000 grams in weight and 35 cm in length, who die within 7 days of birth)
- b Excluding vaginal barrier methods and condoms
- c In hospitals
- d This figure represents the midpoint of the given range (200-300)
- e Excluding injectibles and vaginal barriers methods
- f Data refer to a year between 1980 and 1984
- g Excluding rhythm
- h Excluding vaginal barrier methods
- i Data refer to a year between 1985 and 1989
- j For all women of reproductive age
- k Data refer to a year or period within 1985-1990
- l Including women in visiting unions

**Sources:** For life expectancy and infant mortality rate, Women's Indicators and Statistics Database (Wistat), Version 3, CD ROM (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XVII.6), based on World Population Prospects: The 1992 Revision (United Nations publication, Sales No. 93.XIII.7), supplemented by Population and Vital Statistics Report, Statistical Papers, Series A, Vol. XLVI, No. 1 (United Nations publication, ST/ESA/STAT/SER.A/188) and the Demographic Yearbook, various years up to 1991 (United Nations publication). For attended births, Wistat, based on World Health Organisation, "Coverage of maternity care: a tabulation of available information", second edition (Geneva, WHO/FHE/89.2) and Health for All Global Indicators Database (1991) supplemented by United Nations Children's fund. The State of the World's Children 1994 (New York and Oxford University Press, 1994). For fertility of women aged 15-19, Wistat, based on Age patterns of fertility, 1990-1995: The 1992 revision (United Nations, database on diskette), supplemented by the Demographic Yearbook, various years up to 1991 (United Nations publication) and national reports. For contraceptive use and maternal mortality ratio, Wistat, based on various sources therein listed.

## WOMEN AND HEALTH

From: "The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics", United Nations

### Overall female and male mortality rates for the age group 5-59 years, 1990

Country	Death rate (per 1000)		
	Women	Men	F/M ratio
China	2.25	3.06	0.74
India	4.13	4.33	0.95
Other Asia and Pacific countries	2.87	3.87	0.74

Source: Calculated by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat from Murray and Lopez, "Global and regional cause-of-death patterns in 1990", WHO Bulletin, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Geneva, 1994).

### Estimated current prevalence of anaemia among women

Area	Percentage with hemoglobin level below the norm	
	Pregnant women	Non-pregnant women
Eastern Asia	37	33
South-eastern Asia	63	49
Southern Asia	75	58
Western Asia	50	36
Oceania	71	66

Source: Prepared by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat from World Health Organisation, "The prevalence of anaemia in women: tabulation of available information", second edition, WHO/MCH/MSM/92.2 (Geneva, 1992). Figures are based on estimated regional and subregional totals.

### HIV infection and AIDS among women and men up to mid-1994

Area	Estimated adult HIV infections	Estimated adult AIDS cases	Cumulative reported AIDS cases (adult + paediatric)	Estimated percentage of HIV infections who are women
South and South-eastern Asia	>2.5 million	250,000	7,195	25-33
Eastern Asia and Pacific	50,000	>2,000	1,073	14-17
World	>16.0 million	>3 million	985,119	40

Note: Estimated adult HIV infections and AIDS cases are from late 1970s/early 1980s to mid-1994.

Source: World Health Organisation, "The HIV/AIDS pandemic: 1994 overview", WHO/GPA/TCO/SEF/94.4 (Geneva, 1994).

## EMPLOYMENT

### South Korean Government's Policy for Equal Employment Opportunities

A year after the Fourth World Conference on Women (WCW), the South Korean government has boosted equal employment opportunity by allotting US\$1 million for the Women's Development Fund.

The Ministry of Labour merged two offices to form the Bureau of Working Women, envisioned to eradicate employment discrimination and ensure the reemployment of married women. The Ministry has allocated US\$28 million for daycare centres in the major industrial areas. The Ministry of Health and Welfare has strengthened the information system and the management of daycare centres.

*Source: Korean Women Today (53) Winter, 1996*

### JAPAN

Japanese women find their newly won right to work night shifts a bittersweet victory. In a purported attempt to guarantee women, equality in the workplace, the Equal Employment Opportunity Law of 1987 was amended in 1997 to allow women to work night shifts. However, some working women are afraid the reform will enable business to force them to overwork and experience the same drudgery that men do. Women are concerned that refusal to work night shifts and overtime, now that employers are allowed to request these hours, will reflect poorly in their job assessment. Meanwhile, some women workers look at the opportunity to work night shifts more positively because men who have worked at night are paid much more. Women's organisations worry that companies will switch full-time women employees to part-time status and force them to accept night shifts at reduced pay.

*Sources: International Women's Rights Action Watch, September 1997, Volume 11, No.2*

Twelve women have won a landmark sex discrimination suit in Japan. The women, employees of the Shiba Credit Association filed a legal suit in 1987, claiming that the company promoted men according to seniority while excluding women from promotion. In the first-ever decision to address wage discrimination, the court held that the company's policy of selecting only men for promotion is contrary to Japanese law. The women won 100 million Yen (approx. US\$1,000,000) in back wages. In another encouraging development, a Labour Ministry panel has recommended that the enforcement provisions of the ten-year-old equal opportunity law be enhanced by requiring that sexual harassment be specifically stated to constitute sex discrimination, that women-only job advertisements be eliminated, and that names of companies that violate the law be publicised.

*Source: International Women's Rights Action Watch, December 1996, Volume 10, No. 2*

### VIETNAM

According to the highly influential Women's Union of Vietnam, economic reform to open markets has left many women worse off than they were under the old system. The Confucian heritage of women's subservience has always been a powerful cultural counter to the gender equality principles of the Marxist revolution, and now, says the United Nations Development Programme, those values have made a marked comeback during the past decade. Women carry about 60% of the agricultural workload, in addition to working in the household, but earn just 72% of the average male wage. In rural areas, where 90% of the country's poor live, women's workloads are increasing as more men migrate to cities in search of employment.

*Source: International Women's Rights Action Watch, June 1997, Volume 11, No. 1*

### Women and Equality in Economics

Vietnamese women account for 51.2% of the total population and form 52% of the work force. In education, women make up more than 70%, agriculture and food industry 61.7%, light industry 63.6%, health service 60%. Due to the shift over to the market economy, 800,000 workers at state-owned enterprises have been dismissed, 60% of them are women. Rural women have to work an average 11.5 hours a day (including farming, house work and care for children), while the average daily working hours of men are only 7. However, there is a severe shortage of jobs in the rural areas. Working women have low pay due to their low level of professional skills or manual jobs.

The Vietnamese Government has taken many measures to help women in their economic activities including policies and laws to encourage women involve in small and medium size businesses and family business. The Vietnamese Labour Code has a chapter on "Women's Labour" which ensures the right to work of women. The government also supports women in credit and reduction of tax, etc.

*Source: Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development*

## PHILIPPINES

*Increasing trend in casualisation and contractualisation of labour*

For women workers, liberalisation of investments has not improved the employment situation. In fact, it has taken a turn for the worse, with the increasing trend in the casualisation of labour among big companies and multinationals in the agro-industrial sector.

In January 1996, the unemployment rate was 8.6%. Three months later the rate of unemployment reached two-digit levels at 10.4% attributed to the entry of fresh graduates into the labour force. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has stated that the Philippine economy will have to grow by an estimated 8% to 10% annually to generate enough jobs for new labour entrants. And among women today, only 46.8% are employed, compared to 85.7% of men. Moreover, a recent policy paper of the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) confirmed reports that business firms are engaging in subcontracting, "casualisation" and other exploitative labour schemes to prepare for global trade.

Indeed there is a pressing need to review present macroeconomic policies and development strategies of the government to see that these address the needs and efforts of women in poverty and to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources. The poor performance of the government's Social Reform Agenda and the unbridled negative effects of economic liberalisation policies of the government, however, indicate that even after the Beijing Conference on Women, it may yet take a long time for women in this country to enjoy gender equality and equity in development.

### *Continuing feminisation of overseas employment*

The Commission on Filipino Overseas workers estimates that there are about 6.5 million Filipinos abroad: 2.7 million overseas contract workers; 1.9 million permanent residents; and 1.9 million undocumented migrants. Actual figures may be higher. The last US national census already showed some 2.2 million Filipinos living there, so the number of permanent emigres should be higher. As for undocumented migrants, Malaysia alone has some 200,000 to 300,000 Filipinos, with some non-governmental organisations there estimating the number to be even higher, perhaps half a million. There could at least be seven million Filipinos overseas, easily 10% of the total population.

The most recent Family Income and Expenditures Survey showed that 7% of Filipino households depend on overseas remittances as their main income. In several provinces (Zambales, Pangasinan, La Union, Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur and Cavite), between 10 to 20% of households have such remittances as their main income. These figures would rise much higher if we include households that receive some income, not necessarily main, from abroad.

There is continuing feminisation of overseas employment. Statistics from the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) showed that in 1987 women comprised 47.2% of the total number of deployed workers while men figured at 52.8%. By 1994, overseas employment of women reached the 50.58% mark and for men it dropped to 49.2%.

Most women fall under the vulnerable occupation category — as entertainers, domestic helpers and other service-oriented occupations. It is reported that for every four Filipina overseas workers, three are service workers, and that almost 92% of the service workers are domestic workers (NCRFW technical report).

*Source: The Philippine NGO Beijing Score Board (PBSB)*

## **Facing a Crisis: Women Workers and Thailand's Economic Decline**

*By Pawadee Tongthai*

1997 should have been a time of rejoicing for Thai women. The much anticipated constitution that promises sweeping political reform was finally passed in early October. This new constitution — the sixteenth in 65 years — contains a number of articles that explicitly guarantee women's rights and can be the basis for preventing and eliminating sexual discrimination.

Unfortunately, this joyous event occurred while the Thai people were in shock. After decades of gross domestic product (GDP) growing at 8% annually, the high-flown economy suddenly crash-landed. Exports, normally expanding at 20% or more per year, stood still. Unemployment, which rarely rose above 2% became threatening as firm after firm drastically scaled down production and employment — or went bankrupt. Worse, the bad news had only just begun. Even optimists do not expect to see any sign of recovery until 1999.

Being integrated into — and therefore dependent on — the world trade and investment situations was the foundation for Thailand's success in the 1980s. To remain competitive in the export market, producers must constantly make adjustments and be flexible: accept orders of any size, offer lower prices and numerous choices. Firms have been reducing the number of permanent workers, especially the low-skilled group, and subcontracting to smaller firms or to home-based workers. Under such arrangements, wages are low, few



benefits are provided, there is no security and workers have no bargaining power. The majority of them are women, particularly mothers with young children or older ones whose choice of jobs is limited.

Upgrading product quality and production facilities is another strategy used by firms to outrun or simply keep up with the competition. When new technology is introduced, women workers feel its negative impact more than men. With lower education and less technical background, they are less likely to be chosen to receive additional training and their tasks are those easier replaced by machines.

Women have been trying to cope with the impact on their lives of the intense competition and new technologies mentioned above — and are still a long way from success. Now they are confronted with the crisis resulting from the judgement of policymakers and mismanagement that began in the financial sector and reverberates throughout the economy. A large current account deficit and dangerously low reserves forced the flotation of the baht, which quickly brought down its value by almost 40%.

The Thai government negotiated a bail out with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which is hoped to shore up the economy. But along with more than US\$20 billion initial credit line came a reform package guaranteeing that fiscal and monetary policies recommended by the IMF are strictly followed, allowing the economy to be back in good health and the loan to be paid back as quickly as possible. Plans were drawn up for extensive spending cuts and for ways to raise government revenue. The latter includes raising the value-added tax from 7 to 10%.

Although these reforms are necessary for the revival of the economy, they have already resulted in rising unemployment, declining incomes and living standards. Real GDP growth for 1997 is expected to drop, from almost 9% in 1995 and 6.4% in 1996, to just 2.5% — at best. Inflation in 1997 is expected to be twice that in the previous year. The cost of living has risen sharply, especially for low income earners in the city. Staple items such as rice, vegetables, electricity, cooking gas, tap water and bus fare have all increased.

In addition to laying off workers, factories are using all forms of cost-cutting, from reducing overtime and cancelling benefits such as free bus services to turning off air conditioning and delaying pay checks. There is a significant increase in the practise of subcontracting to small firms in the provinces where workers are willing to accept lower wages and no labour unions exist.

In consultation with the IMF, short- and long-term measures have been mapped out by the government to restructure all three major economic sectors. To bring the current-account deficit down from the high level of 8% of GDP to 3%, products which are less competitive in the world market will be phased out and the focus will be on developing the service sector — the country's strong point.

The process of adjustment entails costs that may fall unevenly on workers. The impact on women workers will be considerable, some of which will widen the gap in gender disparities. Women are known to suffer more from inflation. However, it is possible that new opportunities will be created in areas where they have an advantage.

Unemployed workers are encouraged to take whatever new job they can find — including those that are part-time or in the informal sector. The former may suit women, helping them combine paid work with home duty even better than before. But pre-existing inequalities may keep women from effectively entering entrepreneurial activities. For example, the higher interest rate affects women more than men as formal lending agencies are likely to discriminate against them due to their lack of collateral. The large drop in baht value should help boost export competitiveness in the short to medium term. That will occur in the production sector that uses low-skilled workers most of whom are women.

Given the resourcefulness of the Thai people as has been shown in the past, after recovering from the initial shocks, the economy should be up and running again soon. In the meantime, no matter how miserable the state of the economy, it must not be used as an excuse to reverse the progress women have made so far. Policymakers must instead recognise the benefits of enhancing women's participation for the sustainability of the economy's long-term competitiveness.

For the moment, there is a price to be paid and a huge burden to be shared. But every crisis brings an opportunity. Let's hope that it is an opportunity for women to exercise their potential to the fullest. People have started looking to the service sector, small firms and self-employment as a salvation and these are areas where women can demonstrate their natural advantage. What an irony that it takes an economy in decline for women to be appreciated once again for their valuable contribution.

Source: *Women in Action*, No. 3, 1997

## WOMEN AND WORK

### Economic Activity by Sex, 1994

From: UN Web site: <http://www.un.org/Depts/unsd/gender>

#### Asia and Pacific

Country or Area	Adult (15+) Economic Activity Rate (%)		Women's Share of the Adult Labour Force
	women	men	
Afghanistan	9	86	9
Azerbaijan	56	80	43
Bangladesh	62 <sup>a</sup>	85 <sup>a</sup>	41 <sup>a</sup>
Cambodia	50	85	41
China	70	87	43
East Timor	16	90	15
Hong Kong	50	80	37
India	28	84	24
Indonesia	37	83	31
Korea, Republic of	41	79	34
Lao People's Dem. Rep.	68	88	45
Malaysia	45	83	36
Mongolia	72	86	45
Myanmar	47	84	36
Nepal	42	86	32
Pakistan	14	86	13
Philippines	36	81	31
Singapore	46	80	36
Sri Lanka	29	79	27
Thailand	65	85	44
Vietnam	69	85	47
American Samoa	44 <sup>a</sup>	61 <sup>a</sup>	41 <sup>a</sup>
Cook Islands	44 <sup>a</sup>	71 <sup>a</sup>	36 <sup>a</sup>
Fiji	23	83	21
French Polynesia	37	84	29
Guam	36	84	27
Kiribati	68 <sup>a</sup>	84 <sup>a</sup>	46 <sup>a</sup>
Marshall Islands	30 <sup>a</sup>	77 <sup>a</sup>	27 <sup>a</sup>
Micronesia, Fed. States of	33 <sup>a</sup>	65 <sup>a</sup>	34 <sup>a</sup>
New Caledonia	50	85	36
Northern Mariana Islands	76 <sup>a</sup>	88 <sup>a</sup>	43 <sup>a</sup>
Palau	53 <sup>a</sup>	72 <sup>a</sup>	..
Papua New Guinea	57	87	38 <sup>a</sup>
Samoa	49	84	37
Solomon Islands	51	86	36
Tonga	17 <sup>a</sup>	68 <sup>a</sup>	21 <sup>a</sup>
Vanuatu	51	85	38

**Key:**

<sup>a</sup> Data are results of the 1990 census round or the latest available national labour force or households survey, as reported in International Labour Office, Year Book of Labour Statistics (Geneva, various years up to 1994) or in national census and survey reports and national statistical yearbooks.

Sources: Prepared by the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat from estimates and projections provided by the International Labour Office.

**Distribution between women and men of unpaid housework**  
 From: *"The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics", United Nations*

Unpaid housework (%) share of women and men

Country or Area		Preparing Meals		Child Care		Shopping		Other Housework		Total	
		w	m	w	m	w	m	w	m	w	m
Japan	1976	..	..	..	..	90	10	96	4	..	..
	1981	..	..	..	..	86	14	96	4	..	..
	1986	..	..	93	7	82	18	90	10	..	..
	1991	..	..	87	12	79	21	94	6	..	..
Korea, Republic of <sup>a</sup>	1987	98	1	90	10	89	11	82	18	89	11
	1990	98	2	79	20	90	11	83	17	89	11

**Key:**

<sup>a</sup> Data for 1987 are based on weekdays only

**Sources:** Compiled by Andrew Harvey as consultant to the United Nations Secretariat from national reports and studies on the following surveys.

Japan: Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities (data for 1976, 1981, 1986 and 1991) Statistics Bureau, Management and Coordination Agency, Japan (1991), (Tokyo, Bureau of Statistics)

Basic Survey on Social Life, 1976, Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities, 1981, 1986 and 1991 (Tokyo, Bureau of Statistics)

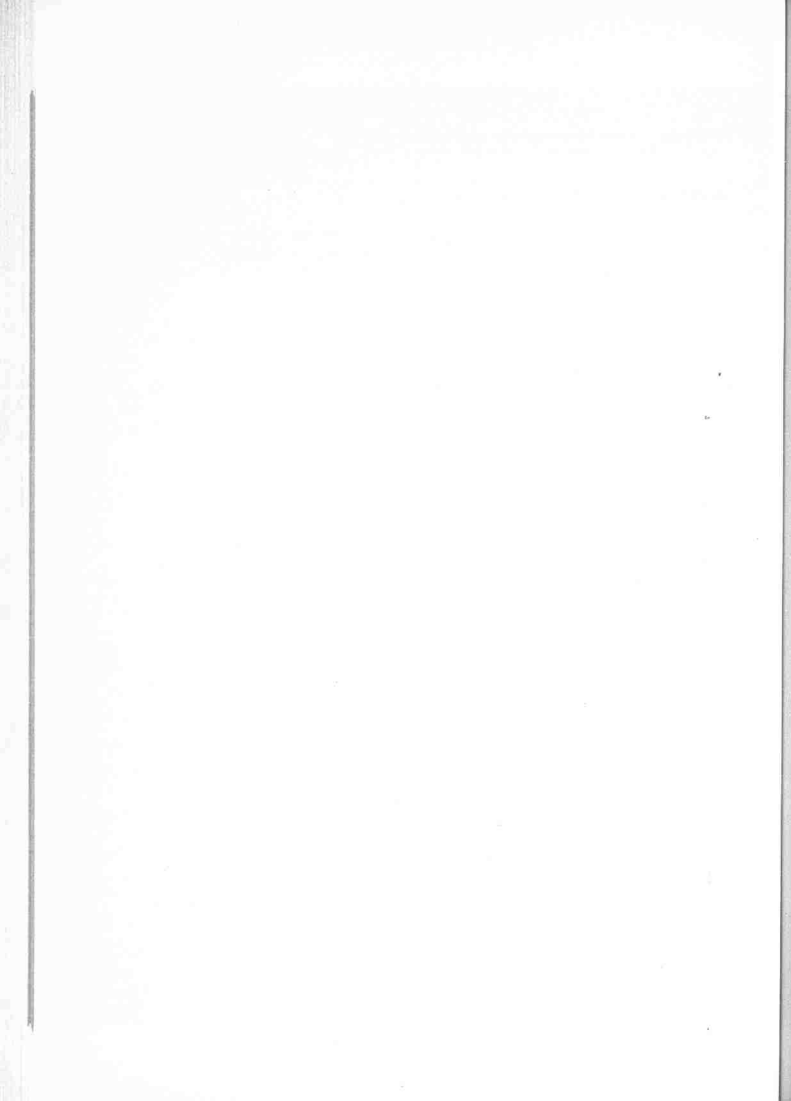
Korea, Republic of: Time Use Survey of Korea, 1987, and Korean Time Use Survey, 1990 (Seoul, Korean Broadcasting System)

**Production and employment in the informal sector, selected country studies**

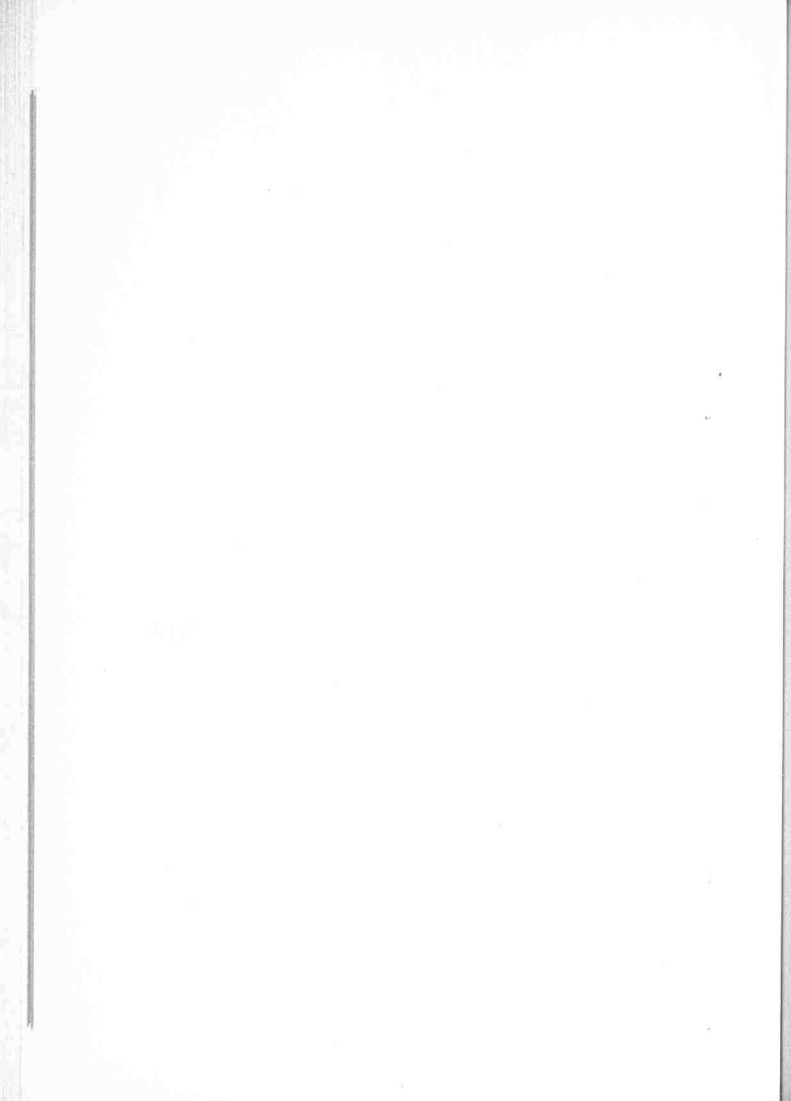
Women in the informal sector

Country or Area		% of informal sector labour force which is women			
		Manufacturing	Transport	Services	Total
Indonesia	1985	51	1	52	48
Korea, Republic of	1989	25	8	34	31
Malaysia	1986	54	2	43	42
Thailand	1990	44	3	56	48
Fiji	1986	18	1	30	22

**Sources:** Prepared by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat from information compiled by Lourdes Ferran as consultant to the United Nations Secretariat.



**EAST ASIA**



# Follow Up Activities to the Fourth World Conference on Women in China

Summarised from information posted on the UN Division for the Advancement of Women web site

The Chinese government has always attached importance to the development and progress of Chinese women and regards equality between men and women as a basic national policy to promote its social progress. Shortly after the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, the Chinese government has carried out its commitments through the following main activities:

## Complete and Strengthen National Machinery for the Advancement of Women

- The National Working Committee on Women and Children (NWCWC) of the State Council has urged local governments of all provinces, prefectures and counties to gradually complete and strengthen their corresponding committees and to

### CHINA: Specific Commitments Made at Beijing

- Ensure women's full participation in economic development
- Eliminate illiteracy among the young and middle aged women by the year 2000
- Reduce the drop-out rate among school aged girls and increase the proportion of women receiving secondary and higher education
- Improve laws and regulation for the protection of the rights and interest of women
- Support and assist the health care institutions for women and children in both rural and urban areas
- Launch legal literacy campaign
- Increase women's participation in politics
- Improve women's institutions at all level
- Establish a system for monitoring women's conditions in all spheres

Source: UN Division for Advancement of Women web site

### BASIC INDICATORS

Maternal Mortality	95 (per 100,000 live births)
Female Literacy	45.0%
Female Labour Force Participation	70.0%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	21.0%

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

### INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS SIGNED OR RATIFIED

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	NA
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	NA
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	•
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	•
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	•
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	•
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	•
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	•

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

#### Key:

- Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature
- Signature not yet followed by ratification

Note: Status is as of 1 March 1997

appoint a key leading member of the same level to take care of this work. By the end of 1995, working committees on women and children at various levels were set up in all 30 provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities and all prefectures and cities under their jurisdiction.

- The Committee for Internal and Judicial Affairs under the National People's Congress has established a special working group on women and children and has also urged people's congresses at provincial, autonomous regional and municipal levels to set up corresponding groups. Up to now, such groups have been set up in 16 people's provincial congresses.

#### **Publicise and Implement the Programme for the Development of Chinese Women, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

The Programme for the Development of Chinese Women (1995-2000) was formally promulgated by the State Council in July 1995. Soon after the Beijing Conference, a campaign was launched to study and publicise the Programme. The Programme serves as a document giving guidance and provisions for the protection, all-round development and well-being of Chinese women.

- On October 26, 1995, a meeting of persons-in-charge of relevant departments under the State Council and all provinces was held by the Working Committee on Women and Children of the State Council, specially for planning of the follow-up action to the Beijing Conference and implementation of the Programme. It called on governments at all levels to work out detailed plans for local women's development in the light of their actual conditions, to integrate them into their respective overall plan for economic and social development and to ensure implementation of the Programme, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by providing human

resources and material and financial assistance. The meeting also called upon member departments of the National Working Committee on Women and Children (NWCWC) to initiate their annual working plan and carry out their own tasks in accordance with their functions and the targets set in the Programme. Up to now, 20 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities have developed their own development plan for women.

- From October 1995 to January 1996, three training courses were conducted for 549 county heads, who were requested to integrate the publicity of the Programme into their local government annual working plans.

- A nation-wide month-long campaign was launched to publicise the Programme, Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action through the mass media, and other seminars, lectures and cultural performances.

- On May 13 1995, a meeting for promoting the implementation of the Programme and follow-up action to the Beijing Conference co-sponsored by National Working Committee on Women and Children (NWCWC) and the Beijing Municipal Government was held in Beijing. Nearly 4,000 people attended the meeting and large-scale consulting services were organised.

- From October 1995 to October 1996, two training courses were conducted for the media practitioners, on the above mentioned documents.

#### **Government Departments Formulate Priorities for Development**

In the light of the targets set in the Programme and the critical areas of concern defined in the Platform for Action, many government departments have formulated their priorities for development. These include:

- The Ministry of Labour which has taken various measures to provide



employment opportunities for women by giving guidance to enterprises, creating new employment fields suitable for women, encouraging township enterprises to have more jobs for rural women, making efforts to keep the percentage of training women who are awaiting employment above 50%, and at the same time, carrying out general education and practical skills training among 10 million women in poor areas.

- The State Education Commission plans to give priority to the education of women in its future annual plans for the development of education. It also hopes to create preferential policies to develop women's education, as well as to form and implement regulations, policies and appropriate measures in this area.

- The Ministry of Public Health has suggested that it will make rational allocations, provide necessary support of personnel, material and funds and make preferential policies for poor, mountainous, remote and ethnic minority areas. It will enhance and perfect the capacity and quality of services of the maternity and child health institutions, make careful studies of the needs different groups of people for health care, provide multi-level health services and expand the health service areas.

In carrying out the Programme and follow-up action to the Beijing Conference, Chinese women from all circles and ethnic groups as well as many non-governmental organisations have taken positive actions. For example, the All-China Women's Federation initiated a series of "women's actions (1996-2000)" throughout the whole country in November 1995 in accordance with the major targets set in the Programme and the 12 critical areas of concerns of the Platform for Action. The main aspects of ACWF's programmes are:

- action to help poor women out of poverty;
- action to assist laid-off women workers to be re-employed;
- action to eliminate illiteracy among women,

- action to help women to become competent and skilled persons; and
- action to promote cultural and ethical progress.

The Capital Women Journalists' Association has made proposals to media practitioners to portray women's images in a positive way and eliminate conscious or subconscious discrimination against women.

## Report on Post-Beijing Implementation

*Extracted from a report by the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF)*

### Introduction

After the Conference, various follow-up activities have been initiated and carried out with meticulous planning at various levels throughout the country. Activities such as publicity campaigns, information and experience sharing, promotion of women's political and economic participation and their social status and initiatives in gender-sensitive policy-making continue extensively. Through the convening of the Conference in Beijing and because of various follow-up initiatives undertaken, more and more Chinese people, men and women, have come to understand gender issues in a new light. Those who had not seen women's issues as an issue are now making the change. And more importantly, policy-makers are getting more gender-aware and sensitive.

### Follow-up Action from the Government

Immediately after the Fourth UN World Conference on Women, the Chinese government took actions to realise its commitments made at the Conference. In the light of the Program for the Development of Chinese Women (PDCW) (1995-2000), the official document for the advancement of Chinese women and the areas of concern and strategic objectives set out in the Platform for Action, the Working Committee on Women and Children of the State Council (WCWCSC), organised a meeting. The WCWCSC is a mechanism for the coordination and promotion of government departments in safeguarding the rights and interests of women and children. The meeting

convened by the WCWCSC was attended by leading officials from relevant commissions and ministries of the State Council and all provinces and municipalities directly under the central government for the implementation of PDCW and the Platform for Action.

Governments at various levels were required to formulate, according to their respective local conditions, programmes for the development of women in their own areas. They were asked to integrate the programmes in their overall economic and social development plans, and ensure that personnel, material and financial support were in place. Up to now, 19 provinces (including autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government) have initiated such programmes. On May 13, 1996, WCWCSC and the Beijing municipal government co-sponsored a counselling service on the implementation of PDCW and the Platform for Action. About 4,000 people attended the counselling session.

Many government departments had defined, in accordance with the targets set in PDCW and the Platform for Action, their respective priority areas for development based on their duties and routine work. For example, the Ministry of Labor would adopt measures to guide enterprises of various types to explore new employment forms and areas suitable for women so as to provide them more job opportunities and to maintain the growth rate of employment for female workers at the same level as their male counterparts. According to the Ministry, township enterprises would be further developed such that more

Special Group and the Commission for Women and Youth (founded in 1988 and now called 'Commission of the Legal System Society') are under the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

It is stipulated in the PDCW that the government should 'enhance the awareness of women on their political rights through all means to enable them to participate on an equal footing with men in the management of state and social affairs and in making decisions on major issues'. This means that while formulating policies and projects, governments at all levels should listen to suggestions and demands of women's organisations, give full consideration to the special interests of women, and guarantee their legitimate rights and interests; do a good job in training and selecting women cadres, strengthen their training and education of and improve leadership abilities and participation in politics.

Governments at all levels have formulated relevant policies and appropriate measures in this regard. Now women are in leadership positions in 30 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government). The goal that 100% of counties and 50% of townships have women leaders has been basically achieved in 19 provinces. Over 370 women have been elected as mayors and deputy mayors in more than 640 cities nationwide. The State Council has one woman councillor and 18 women ministers and vice-ministers.

### **Follow-up Actions from the All China Women's Federation (ACWF)**

#### ***Making Known the Outcomes of the Conference***

Making known the outcomes of the Conference to the public was seen as an essential task in the follow-up by ACWF. Report-back meetings were organised through the women's federation in many

places such as Tianjin, Changsha and Hefei. These meetings introduced the Conference and its documents to a vast number of women staff, women leaders and professionals including men. Training classes were conducted for middle-level women leaders and chairpersons of women's federations at the county level.

Leading members of the ACWF went to Guangzhou to meet women representatives from Hong Kong and Macau to share with them information about the Conference. At the invitation of some organisations and institutions in Beijing, the ACWF gave a presentation on Chinese women's liberation movement and gender issues at present time. Together with WWCSC and the Beijing municipal government, the ACWF also convened a mobilisation meeting in Beijing which was attended by nearly 4,000 people. The meeting addressed the implementation of PDCW, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Counselling services were organised and a lottery-attached contest of article-writing entitled "I Attended the World Conference or NGO Forum on Women" was organised with the China Women's News.

More than 10,000 copies of the document "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" were sent by ACWF to the women's federation at lower levels and other relevant organisations.

In June 1996, a book entitled "Laws and Regulations Concerning Women and Children" was published by ACWF which covered the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The contents of the book were compiled into the national "Third Five-Year Elementary Law Dissemination Programme (1996-2000)", as basic information. The book was distributed to women's federation at various levels, professionals working for women and people in various fields.

Currently, ACWF is compiling a series of books of 10 volumes on the conference and NGO Forum on Women

with a view to getting them published by the end of the year. The books will cover the main documents of the Conference, list of participants, speeches, domestic and foreign news reports concerning the Conference, and other relevant articles or materials.

#### *A Series of Actions Initiated*

In November 1995, ACWF, in line with the targets set out in PDCW and the 12 critical areas of concern in the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, initiated a plan for a series of women's actions to be undertaken by the women's federation during the period 1996-2000. The actions are as follows:

- *Women's Action to Help the Poor:* the women's federations at all levels are requested to continue their cooperation with relevant government departments for the development of women especially women in remote, poverty-stricken and ethnic minority areas. They have to help 1 million women solve their problems of inadequate food and clothing, carry out hand-in-hand mutual-aid activities between the eastern and western regions, and run female personnel training courses. An effort is under way to get the Poverty-Eradication Office of the State Council to approve the integration of this action into the National Program for Poverty Eradication and to follow the principle of "women first if under same conditions as men" when establishing poverty-elimination projects. In May 1997, a symposium on Women's Action to Help the Poor and Double Learning and Double Competing Campaign was held in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province. Over 200 participants from 29 provinces, cities and autonomous regions all over the country attended. Peng Peiyun, State Councillor and Director of WCWCSC, and Yang Zhong, Deputy Director of the Leading Group for Poverty Elimination and Development of the State Council, attended the symposium. The purpose of the meeting was to share experiences in poverty alleviation work, study new situations and new problems and discuss how to further mobilise women's

involvement in the poverty alleviation drive. The main concerns and strategies outlined were:

- *Women's Action to Engage in Pioneering Work:* to assist labour departments in helping female workers laid-off from large- and medium-sized enterprises to seek new employment, support them for vocational and technical training, help them develop a new outlook on job selection and develop tertiary industry, so as to ensure re-employment of one million women.

- *Women's Action to Eliminate Illiteracy:* the elimination of illiteracy is an important part of the activity of "family cultural construction". Women's federations continue to coordinate with the State Education Commission to fulfil the task of eliminating illiteracy among 3 million young and middle-aged women annually through helping the government to achieve the objectives outlined in the National Program of Action for Child Development in China in the 1990s, and to mobilise the whole society to carry out the "Spring Bud Project". The project helps girls finish schooling by providing financial support with funds raised from the public and protects girl's right to education. This year, 150 "Spring Bud" classes have been set up, enabling over 7,000 girls to go back to school. A total of 100,000 girls have already received help from the project.

- *Women's Action to be More Capable:* in collaboration with the government and departments concerned, women's federations help women build-up and develop a stronger sense of political participation, set up a women's skills database and strive to promote more women to posts of leadership, decision-making, management and in the field of high technology. In July 1996, the ACWF convened an Urban Women's Working Conference. The Conference emphasised that women's federations should, while continuing to focus on the campaign of "Female Contributions", bring into full play their important role in promoting and strengthening solidarity and contact among female talents in



various fields and recommend women for leadership positions.

● *Women's Action to promote Cultural and Ethical Progress:* Women's federations shall advocate the establishment of more civilised, equal and harmonious families, correct outlooks on marriage and love, on child birth and child education, and on women's rights and interests; fight against acts infringing upon the legal rights and interests of women and children, especially crimes of violence against them. The ACWF has made investigation into the work done by the Rural Women's Association on the banning of gambling, disseminated its good experiences through the mass media, and organised exchanges of work experiences to ban gambling in August 1996. Work towards a ban gambling has become an important part of the Action. In addition, the campaigns for "Model Families of Five Virtues" and "More Civilised Families" are extensively carried out by women's federations in rural areas. The State Education Commission and the ACWF have jointly designed the "Ninth Five-Year Work Plan for Family Education", and are starting the "Fourth Selection and Appraisal of Good Families" for advice on good family models and fine local customs.

# Report on Post-Beijing Implementation in Japan

Submitted by Mitchiko Nakamura, International Women's Year Liaison Group

## Government Implementation

### Structural and Planning Initiatives

In December 1996, the Japanese government announced the National Plan of Action until the year 2000, which was based on the Council for Gender Equality's report entitled "Vision for Gender Equality — Creating New Values for the 21st Century" and also took into account the recommendations made in the Platform for Action from the Beijing Conference.

The national machinery for women's advancement in Japan now comprises the headquarters for the promotion of gender equality, the Council for Gender Equality, the Office for Gender Equality in the Prime Minister's office and the

Liaison Conference for the Promotion of Gender Equality.

In June 1997, the government established a new Gender Equality Council after the previous council's term expired in March 1997. The new Gender Equality Council, a permanent body, promotes a gender equal society and focuses on issues concerning violence against women such as trafficking in women for purposes of commercial sex. The Liaison Conference for the promotion of gender equality has been established in the Prime Minister's Office by the Office for Gender Equality. In addition to the 13 members who comprise the Planning Committee of the Liaison Conference, 67 persons representing women's organisations and

### JAPAN: Specific Commitments Made at Beijing

- Promote women in public services
- Support women entrepreneurs
- Promote women's participation in decision making in agriculture communities
- Improve women's educational standards, health and promote social participation of women
- Strengthen the 'Asian Women's Fund' to combat violence against women
- Strengthen partnerships with NGOs
- Review legal system pertaining to marriage

Source: UN Division for the Advancement of Women web site

### Basic Indicators

Maternal Mortality	NA (per 100,000 live births)
Female Labour Force Participation	NA
Female Literacy	99.0%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	7.7%

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

### International Instruments Signed or Ratified

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 ●
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 ●
- International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969 NA
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948 NA
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 ●
- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979 ●
- Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984 NA
- Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951 ●

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

### Key

- Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature.
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Note: Status is as of 1 March 1997.

labour and business groups are also members of the Liaison Conference.

The Office for Gender Equality provides the Liaison Conference with information related to gender equality. The Conference is expected to be a place for the exchange of information and views, as well as to draw on NGO perspectives on a gender-equal society in order to reflect all views on gender equality in government policies. The Conference also holds public meetings to provide information related to gender equality.

#### *Legislative Initiatives*

The government has revised certain legislation including the Eugenic Protection Act, the Equal Employment Opportunity Law and the Labour Standards Law. The Eugenic Protection Act is now called the Maternal Protection Act and the sections concerning eugenics have been deleted in consideration of human rights. The Equal Opportunity Law now guarantees equal opportunity and treatment of women and men in the labour market. Under the revised Labour Standards Law, women will no longer enjoy protective measures as in the past except in cases related to motherhood (pregnancy, child-bearing and child-rearing).

#### *Donor Initiative*

At the 51st. Session of the UN General Assembly, Japan announced a contribution of US\$1 million to the UNIFEM established fund for the elimination of violence against women.

#### *NGO Efforts*

After returning from the Fourth UN World Conference on Women, NGOs, women's centres and local governments have held meetings to report on the Platform for Action. Numerous study groups in connection with the Platform for Action have also been formed. One notable organisation is the Beijing Japan Accountability Caucus which grew out of the Japan Caucus at the Beijing Conference (see separate write-up).

The efforts of the International Women's Year Liaison Group, a coalition of 51 women's organisations nationwide, are elaborated here:

- A post-Beijing conference for Japanese women's NGOs was organised in October 1995. The conference adopted 35 goals and 15 resolutions which are now being followed-up with action.
- A campaign and lobbying effort in collaboration with NOW (National Organisation for Women) of the USA was held in June 1996 to press for action on an incident of sexual harassment which took place at Mitsubishi Motors in Illinois, USA.
- A meeting with the Prime Minister to advocate for a revised Civil Code to allow wives and husbands to choose either their own family name or use a common name took place and NGOs and women's groups worked closely with policy-makers on the issue. However, the Diet rejected the proposal.
- Advocacy and lobbying campaign against nuclear testing is ongoing.
- Support for UNIFEM's projects in developing countries.

# Japan Accountability Caucus

## - Beijing

*Summarised from a report presented by Yoko Kitazawa at a WEDO convened meeting in New York, September 1996*

### Introduction

The Japan Accountability Caucus - Beijing (JAC) comprises individuals (NGO activists, women scholars, media representatives and women parliamentarians), women's organisations, feminist groups, networks and groups working on women's issues. The group is a broad based coalition of existing networks which were created from previous UN conferences.

The purpose of the JAC is to foster further networking, information exchange and lobbying. It specialises in lobbying with the national and local governments for the implementation of the Platform for Action.

As JAC's main concerns are on strengthening of the national machinery for women's advancement and lobbying for legislation on violence against women, the group has formed two teams, each with a specific work focus. While the first team conducts fact finding studies and research on laws, the second team studies the functions of women's ministries in different countries.

The JAC drafted and presented a comprehensive proposal of NGO perspectives on Japan's national development plan for gender concerns as part of its post-Beijing work programme. An important point to note in the process adopted for formulation of both the 'Vision for Gender Equality' and the 'Year 2000 Plan for Gender Equality', is the active involvement of NGOs at different stages of drafting, finalising and final passing of the plans.

### JAC's Areas of Focus

- Lobbying for the strengthening of the national machinery for women's advancement.
- Lobbying for the enactment of legislation to prevent and eliminate violence against women.
- Working for the implementation of the national plan of action.
- Lobbying for increased awareness of gender issues in bureaucracy including the review of existing mechanisms for fiscal and legislative processes.
- Working with the Agency of Economic Planning for the project on 'counting women's unpaid work'.



# Ten Policy Priorities for the Advancement of Korean Women

Summarised from a report submitted by the Ministry of Political Affairs, Republic of Korea, to UN DAW and posted on the UN DAW web site

## Introduction

On October 11, 1995, a month after the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, the Committee for Globalisation Policy, a consultative body to the President, brought out its recommendation of ten medium-and long-term policy priorities for women. They provide the framework for the government plan of action to facilitate the participation and advancement of women in Korean society. The goals and the related policy areas are:

- To provide the social environment in which women can be free from domestic chores;

- To set in place institutional support for women's employment;
- To develop women's ability to work outside the home and their access to information;
- To strengthen the social milieu that discourages gender discriminatory practices and perceptions.

## Lifting the Burden of Domestic Labour

Expansion of Child-Care Facilities through the Mobilisation of Private Resources

### Basic Indicators

Maternal Mortality	130 (per 100,000 live births)
Female Labour Force Participation	39.0%
Female Literacy	96.3%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	3.0%

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

### International Instruments Signed or Ratified

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	●
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	●
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	NA
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	●
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	●
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	NA
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	NA
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

#### Key

- Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature.
- Signature not yet followed by ratification.

Note: Status is as of 1 March 1997.

#### *Child-care Co-ops*

The cooperative set-up, in which parents become directly involved in the establishment and management of child-care facilities, has proven effective in controlling the quality of care and education. The main features of the co-ops are:

- 30 to 40 families with young children pool the financial resources to rent or purchase the space for the nursery to enroll their children and directly manage its daily operation; and
- the investment is returned to the co-op members when their children become old enough to no longer require its service.

The necessary funds for the project will be raised from the National Pension Fund, in the amount for 1.3 trillion won for the 3-Year Child-care Facility Expansion Plan.

#### *Utilising Religious Facilities*

With some government assistance, religious establishments nationwide can become ideal child-care centres. To promote this option:

- the current limits placed on the use of religious establishments as child-care facilities will be eased, and the administrative paper work will be simplified; and
- the ceiling on government subsidy for child-care facilities will be increased to encourage religious groups to sign up.

#### *After-school Care Programmes*

After-school care programmes for primary school children, currently limited to a few private schools, will be expanded nationwide. Key features of this programme are:

- making maximum use of the available community facilities such as schools and community centres; and
- mobilising certified teachers awaiting appointment, as well as mothers with a certain level of educational background, after receiving the required training, to instruct the children.

#### *School Meals*

The school meals programme will be expanded to all primary schools by the end of 1997. The necessary fund will come from the education budget of local governments. A system of cooperation among the related government offices is being worked out for the school meals programme.

### **Institutional Support for Women's Employment**

#### *Setting a Target Percentage for Women's Participation in the Public Service Sector*

Flexibility (for example a quota system), will be added to the recruitment screening in the 5th. and 7th. class (middle-level) public administration service and 5th. class foreign service so as to increase the percentage of women recruits.

The methods will include giving an incentive of 3 to 5 extra points to female candidates. This system allows the women who fall short of the passing grade only by 3 points (5th.) or 5 points (7th.) to be employed in order to achieve the quota. The quota will increase annually: 10%, in 1996, 13% in 1997, 15% in 1998, 18% in 1999 and 20% by the year 2000.

The ceiling on female recruits at the Taxation College, the Police Academy, the Railway Junior College, and other educational institutions educating civil servants will be raised towards an ultimate phase-out: from the current 11% of new admissions to 20% in 1997, 30% in 1998, and 50% in the year 2000 for the Taxation College; from the current 3% to 50% by 1999 for the Railway Junior College; and from the current 4% to 10% or above after 1997 for the Police Academy.

Women's participation in various government committees will also be increased by 2005.

### *Incentives for Recruitment of Women in Public Enterprises*

State-run or subsidised enterprises will also introduce an incentive system to recruit more women:

- In the written test, female applicants will be awarded the same 5 extra points given to male applicants who have finished military service; and
- Measures will be worked out so that female applicants who passed the written test will not be discriminated without due reason in the interview.

### *Social Sharing of Maternity Protection Cost*

As the sixty-days of paid maternity leave tends to discourage employers from hiring women, the National Welfare Planning Board is actively seeking ways for the public sector to share the cost. The child-care leave allowance paid from the Employment Insurance Fund which now applies to workplaces with over 70 employees, will be extended to include workplaces with over 50 employees by 1998 and to those with five or more in the long-run.

### **Developing Women's Abilities and Access to Information**

#### *Expanding Education and Training for Women's Employment*

Keeping in step with the changing needs of society in the information age, vocational training in the regular secondary education curricula will be diversified and strengthened.

For example:

- Girls' liberal arts and commercial high schools will be encouraged to change into specialty schools in industrial design and computer science;
- Assistance will be offered to the opening of new engineering high school for girls and to the existing all-boys' or all-girls' schools for turning co-ed;
- Women's universities will be encouraged to establish science and engineering colleges, and the student enrollment for departments and

majors particularly suited to women's abilities and characteristics will be increased;

- An office in charge of women's education will be established within the ministry of education.

### *Promote the Reemployment of Women who had Stopped work due to Child-birth and Child-care*

- Job training programmes will be strengthened by opening short-term job training programmes for married women at public vocational training institutes;
- Subsidies will be provided to such institutes from the Employment Insurance Fund; for strengthening the programmes of the various community facilities and women's welfare centres.

### **Women's Information Networks**

A women's information centre will be established at the Korean Women's Development Institute to strengthen women's access to information. Communication linkages between national and local community facilities and women's welfare centres will be set up. The long-term plan is to compile a comprehensive database concerning women, to be linked to information super-highway networks for easy access from anywhere in the country and beyond.

### **Strengthening the Social Milieu Against Discrimination**

#### *Women's Development Act*

To enhance women's social status and to ameliorate the outdated discriminatory practices and perceptions against women in society, the Women's Development Act was passed in December 1995. The Act spells out the basic principles guiding the policies for women's advancement and provides the legal basis on which to rectify gender discriminatory factors in employment, education, social welfare, human rights, and other areas of national life.



### Mass Media

Women's participation in mass media-related decision-making processes will be increased, and the cooperation of the media will be enlisted in the efforts to correct discriminatory perceptions. Specifically:

- women's presence in the various committees overseeing the broadcasting field will be increased to 30% by 2005;
- objective standards to evaluate gender-based stereotypes in mass media will be worked out; and
- the production and distribution of public advertisement dealing with women's issues will be expanded.

the efforts of the related government ministries, with the Office of the Prime Minister in reviewing and monitoring progress.

For successful implementation, the cooperation and participation of citizens are crucial. Thus, close consultation with women's NGOs and the public sector will be sought.

1 Statements before the effects of the financial crisis were felt.

### Institutional and Financial Arrangements

To promote these ten policy priorities for women, the needed legal amendments will be completed by the first half of 1996. The related financial requirements will be reflected in the government budget from 1996 to 1998<sup>1</sup>.

The Ministry of Political Affairs (II), national focal point for the advancement of women, will coordinate and integrate

# Post-Beijing Implementation Report

*Submitted by the Korean National Council of Women (KNCW)*

## Introduction

The Korean National Council of Women (KNCW), the umbrella organisation for women's NGOs in Korea has made significant progress in lobbying and advocating for women's issues after the Beijing Conference. This brief report summarises the key programmes and projects of the Council between 1995 and 1997.

## National Convention of Korean Women

The annual national convention brings together over 3,000 representatives of women's organisations nationwide to set the agenda and direction for the women's movement in the nation and to adopt recommendations to be submitted to various sectors of society for the improvement of women's status and social welfare. The convention, the single most important event in the annual calendar of women's activities in Korea, is attended by key policy-makers of the nation including the President and members of the National Assembly. The theme for the 1995, 1996 and 1997 conventions were "Women as Economic Actors: Life Strategies for the Twenty-first Century", "The Information Society and Women" and "Women Decide the Next Presidency", respectively.

## Leadership Training

Over 100 leaders of women's organisations from across the country are brought together every year for a two-day leadership training programme. The goals are to cultivate leadership skills, strengthen bonds, and define the

directions for women's organised activities. The focus of the programme varies from year to year. Participants brief one another about activities and plans of their organisations, discuss likely themes for the upcoming national convention and strengthen the existing ties of information exchange and cooperation.

The 1995 Leadership Training was held under the themes of "Globalisation and Reforming Women's Awareness" and "Economic Justice in Everyday Life". In 1996, the participating organisations discussed quality-of-life issues in the information age. At the 1997 training retreat, directions for the women's movement were set and themes identified included "rationalisation of the home economy" and "OECD membership and the Korean economy".

## Expanding Women's Participation in Politics

As co-chair of the Korean Women's Alliance for Quotas, the Council has actively sought ways to expand women's participation in the political process. Some of the major activities of the Alliance in 1995 were

- A survey on the perception of elected members of the National Assembly, revealed their positive attitude toward the introduction of quotas for women in the National Assembly; and
- Recommendations to political parties, urging them to specify a certain percentage of their proportional representation candidates in the provincial council elections.

The activities of the Alliance have resulted in an increase from the average 0.9% female representation in the local and provincial councils after the 1991 elections to 5.67% and 1.58% representation in the provincial and local councils, respectively, after the June 1995 elections. The increase would not have been possible without the concerted efforts of the Alliance. Though small, it has laid the foundation to further advance women's representation in the political arena. The Alliance also contributed to a wide networking of women's organisations in Korea, strengthening their lobbying powers vis-à-vis the government and political parties and providing an impetus for needed changes in voters' perception.

In the run-up to the April 1996 elections for the 15th. National Assembly, the KNCW joined hands with other women's organisations in campaigning for clean and fair elections. In preparation for the presidential election on December 18th. 1997, a one-day workshop was held with women experts and professionals from diverse areas participating to develop a series of policy alternatives for the advancement of women, which were then conveyed to the government and the major political parties. The Council also held a series of street campaigns in Seoul and local cities to urge women to vote and raise public awareness about the importance of women's votes in the election.

### **Media Watch**

The Council has continued its watch over media content for stereotyping and discrimination. The Council's media monitors analyse television, radio, and magazine content as well as commercial advertisements. The results are regularly written up into reports and sent to newspaper editors, producers, writers and media related organisations. The publication of the 100th. media monitoring report since the work began in 1984 was marked by a ceremony in May 1996.

In addition to mediawatch reports, seminars and public discussions on media content and viewership are held.

### **Lobbying and Advocacy**

As part of its lobbying and advocacy work on gender and development issues, the Council holds regular meetings with policy-makers including ministers who respond to questions and comments from the participating women leaders. These meetings have become an effective forum to review public policies concerning women and to convey the views of women's organisation to government authorities.

A discussion was also organised to evaluate the government's accomplishments on women's issues in the light of the pledges made during the 1992 Presidential election. For those areas where progress was found lacking, recommendations urging prompt action were sent to the relevant government offices.

### **Women and Employment/Labour Issues**

Since 1986, the Council has operated a relief office for working women. On an average, some 130 cases a year are reported to the office, mostly on forced retirement due to marriage, conception, or childbirth, violation of the equal-pay-for-equal work requirement, sexual harassment in the work place and delayed payment of wages. Since 1986, the Council's Women Workers Petition Centre has received annually an average of 120 petitions from women workers appealing against sexual discrimination and unlawful practices at the work place. The recent focus has been on sexual harassment and discrimination against part-time women workers. Joining voices with 12 other women's and labour organisations, the Council submitted a petition to the National Assembly in 1996 urging amendments to address the shortcomings of the Equal Employment Law. The draft revision was the result of

three months of extensive research efforts, focusing on the issues of indirect discrimination, gender discrimination in personnel policies and sexual harassment in the work place.

Despite the fact that an increasing number of women are joining the work force, meeting the needs of the changing society and economy, the value of women's work is not being given due attention. The Council therefore organises research studies and seminars to address women and employment issues.

As background data for women in the work force, the Council surveyed 460 girls and 100 teachers in vocational high schools concerning their perceptions of women's employment, gender roles, the labour market and school life. Based on surveys of the economic and voluntary activities of home-makers, their evaluations of retraining programmes and on-site study of occupational training centres, the Council published a report in 1996 suggesting ways to incorporate married women into the work force. According to the report, 74% of women in their thirties and forties desire employment outside the home, 80% seeking part-time work. Forty three percent indicated their immediate availability for employment, but most lacked experience or qualification, indicating a pressing need for training opportunities.

The Council also invited experts from various fields to discuss the barriers facing women college graduates in getting employment, such as the practice of excluding women in internships offered by big corporations.

## Women/Girls and Education

The Council has undertaken the following activities/programmes:

- Launched a campaign against the discrimination of girls in the ranking system of co-educational schools where girls with the same score as boys are ranked lower. The campaign
- called for a single ranking system.
- Lobbied successfully to change government policy which encourages high school boys to get into the liberal arts stream and discriminates against girls by offering them places in occupational / vocational schools.
- Compiled a report on discriminatory practices in the education sector. The report analyses the educational curriculum, primary school textbooks, education policies and practices and proposes ways to address gender discrimination in the education system.

## Surveys and Campaigns

- The Council surveyed over 60 licensed wedding halls and some 330 married couples after the amendment of the family rites law in order to document the changing perceptions of wedding customs.
- Interviews on home safety awareness were conducted with 1,000 housewives throughout the country. Based on the findings of the survey, a seminar was held on ways to reduce accidents in the home.
- The Council surveyed schools, homes, and communities for effective energy conservation and education programmes as energy consumption has outpaced economic growth. When electricity consumption peaked, the Council spearheaded an energy conservation campaign.
- The Council's campaign against gender discrimination in civil service recruitment was successful when the National Meteorological Observatory changed its advertisements calling for more male applicants.

# Report on Post-Beijing Implementation in Mongolia

*Paper presented by Dr. Kh. Enkhjargal, Director, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare at the APDC Sub-regional Consultation for Indochina and Mongolia on Post-Beijing Implementation and Monitoring, Bangkok, May 1997*

## Introduction

Mongolia has a population of 2.4 million people and in the early 1990s, Mongolia undertook the process of democratisation of the political system and the transition to a market economy. This process was legally guaranteed by the new Constitution of Mongolia adopted at the beginning of 1992.

The democratisation process brought about a major transformation in all spheres of Mongolian life. A number of structural reforms and measures aimed at economic stabilisation included

privatisation, decentralisation, liberalisation of prices, flexible credit and deposit interests, new tax laws and the floating currency exchange rate. Mongolia's new political, social and economic environment has created both new opportunities and challenges for women. There are more opportunities for women to participate in the democratic process, to exercise freedom of choice and to own property. In recent years, several women's NGOs and new community groups have emerged. There are also severe negative effects of

### MONGOLIA: Specific Commitments Made at Beijing

- Improve and expand health and social services for women
- Reduce MMR by 50% and IMR by 33% by 2000 as measured against the 1990 rates
- Reform education system
- Convene national assembly on women's development in the early 1996 to formulate national strategies for the implementation of the Platform for Action

Source: UN Division for the Advancement of Women web site

### Basic Indicators

Maternal Mortality	65
	(per 100,000 live births)
Female Labour Force Participation	46.0%
Female Literacy	75.8%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

### International Instruments Signed or Ratified

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	●
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	●
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	●
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	●
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	●
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	●
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	NA
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

#### Key

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poverty and unemployment on the advancement of women in Mongolia.

### The National Programme for the Advancement of Women and Priority Issues

Recognising the active integration of women into national economic and social development, the Government of Mongolia has given importance to gender-sensitivity of policy and implementation of the Platform for Action. In March 1996, the National Forum on "Women in Development" held in Ulaanbaatar, discussed the draft of "The National Programme for the Advancement of Women". Policy-makers from different ministries and representatives from non-governmental organisations, private enterprises and researchers were actively involved in the development of the National Programme. The National Programme was adopted by the Mongolian government through Resolution No. 145 of 1996.

The following critical areas of concern for the advancement of Mongolian women have been identified in the National Programme:

- Women in economic development
- Women and poverty
- The advancement of rural women
- Women and education
- Women and health
- Women and family
- Women in power and decision-making
- Violence against women
- National machinery for the advancement of women
- Women and mass media

Strategic objectives and actions for the period 1996-2000 are provided for each of the critical areas of concern mentioned above.

The following basic objectives by the year 2000 have been set up in the National Programme to:

- promote employment creation schemes for women and reduce

unemployment to 5.8% of economically active women;

- reduce the rate of poverty among women to 50% of the 1994 level, or 10% of female population and eliminate extreme poverty;
- reduce school drop-out rates, and to achieve enrolment rates of school-going age girls and boys of 95% in primary school and 90% in secondary school;
- improve access to vocational training and tertiary education;
- develop a system of lifelong non-formal education for women;
- reduce the maternal mortality rate to 50% of the 1992 level and decrease infant mortality by 33% through the improvement of access and quality of health services;
- promote the equal sharing of home responsibilities including child care between men and women;
- increase at least 20% in the representation of women in Central and Local state and government top decision-making levels;
- develop services to prevent violence against women and to protect women subjected to violence;
- improve and strengthen the institutional capacity of national and local machinery for the advancement of women;
- develop the national capacity to undertake gender analysis;
- promote the community participation and involvement of NGOs in implementing strategies of action plans.

The implementation strategies of the national programme have focused on the following principles:

- Integration into development plans: the objectives and actions of the programme have to be integrated into long- and short-term national and local development plans.
- Decentralisation: local governments have the primary responsibility and authority for the implementation of the actions in the framework of the principle of decentralisation.
- Mobilisation of resources: the financial resources required for

implementation of the programme have to be mobilised through annual allocations from the central and local budgets and contributions are encouraged from private and non-governmental and international organisations.

- Community participation: government to pay particular attention to ensuring the active participation of the community and NGOs in the implementation strategies.

### National Machinery for the Advancement of Women in Mongolia

*"Poverty is reflected not only in income, but also in the decline in human capital through deteriorating health and education. One third of the total school drop-outs in 1996 were from poor families, and the majority of them were from single parent families. The emergence of many, so called, 'street' children is also an indication of escalating poverty. One of the critical areas of concern therefore is the feminisation of poverty."*

Prior to 1990, the Mongolian Women's Federation was executing both a government and non-governmental function in its capacity as the national machinery for women's concerns. The current national machinery for the advancement of women in Mongolia is located in the Population and Social Protection Department of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. It was established in 1992 and has direct responsibility for the coordination, and monitoring of women's affairs and serves as the secretariat of the National Council for Women. The Cabinet Member in charge of Health and Social Welfare

is responsible for overseeing the national machinery's programmes. In addition, a "Youth, Family and Women's Agency" which is an implementing organisation has been established under the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

By a government resolution in 1996, "The National Council for Women" chaired by the Minister of Health and Social Welfare was established. The National Council for Women is responsible for coordination of

intersectoral policy development and implementation of the National Programme of Action. The Council consists of 39 members such as Members of Parliament, Department Directors of Ministries, representatives of academic institutions, NGOs and community organisations.

In the State Great Khural, the areas of women's concerns come under the jurisdiction of the Standing Committee for Social Policy. The chairperson of the Standing Committee is focusing specific attention on women's issues and has organised a review group. In addition, women Members of the Parliament have also established a Parliament Group. At the local administrative levels, the areas of concern are a direct responsibility of the Social Policy Department of the aimag and the city Governor's Office and its staff in charge of population related issues.

Non-governmental organisations play an important role in the advancement of women. Under the current process of democratisation, many new organisations have come into existence and there are now more than 20 women's NGOs.

The gender information network is being coordinated through the central and local statistical offices. Nearly 40 statistical indicators are collected and analysed on the basis of gender and a special booklet on gender-disaggregated information has been produced. In addition, the "Women's Information and Research Centre", an NGO, plays an important role in the development of gender analysis.

The national machinery for the advancement of women is under-staffed and under-equipped and its international cooperation is limited. Due to inadequate resources governmental and non-governmental women's organisations are unable to carry out sufficient activities among women, particularly vulnerable groups. Priorities to further develop the national machinery for the advancement of women include:

- Strengthening the intersectoral approach through strengthening the National Council of Women and its secretariat;
- Developing the programme management and monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the National Programme for the Advancement of Women;
- Increasing the resource mobilisation for national and community based programmes and projects;
- Improving international cooperation in areas of women's concerns at the subregional and regional levels;
- Strengthening the capacity of the Women's Information and Research Center for the development of gender-analysis.

### **Priority Issues for the Implementation of the National Programme on Women and Poverty Alleviation**

The increasing trend of women's poverty has become the most acute problem in Mongolia. The causes of the emergence of poverty during the period of transition are the decline of economic growth, unemployment, inflation, rapid increase in prices and the drop in income and access to social services. Women, particularly those who head households with many children, have been affected more seriously by poverty. A study of poor households reveals that 24.8% are female-headed families, 23% are families where none of the family members is employed in any economic unit or entity. Poverty is reflected not only in income, but also in the decline in human capital through deteriorating health and education. One third of the total school drop-outs in 1996 were from poor families, and the majority of them were from single parent families. The emergence of many, so called, "street" children is also an indication of escalating poverty. One of the critical areas of concern therefore is the feminisation of poverty.

The government has been implementing the national programme on poverty

alleviation since 1995. Special attention is given to the alleviation of women's poverty. The poverty alleviation programme integrates such issues as the creation of a separate microcredit scheme to promote employment opportunities and income generation for women and training them for obtaining skills in business. A Women's Development Fund has been established for this purpose. The fund also has a special window for the promotion of women's NGOs. It is felt that such measures are important for women's contributions to the eradication of poverty. The inclusion of local authorities and promotion of NGO participation have been strategies followed in the implementation of the programme. The priority issues under focus now are:

- the mobilisation of financial resources, including domestic and international resources;
- increasing the access of poor people to the programme, particularly to the microcredit schemes;
- capacity building in the development of community participation and in the involvement of the NGO sector;
- strengthening of programme management and monitoring, especially at the local level.

### **Women in Decision-making**

Since the early 1990s, the political and administrative system of the country has been restructured as whole, creating a new democratic system according to the new Constitution of Mongolia. Currently, women consist of 11.8% of Parliament Members. Compared with the proportion of women elected to the highest state power under the previous system, there is a fall from 24.9% to 11.8%, i.e., more than half. The Government of Mongolia consists of 9 ministers, but there is no female representative in the Cabinet. Women constitute about 40% of the total employees in Ministries. Compared with 1992, there is an increase in the proportion of female Parliamentarians, directors of government departments and central agencies and soum Governors elected or appointed in 1996. Under the

current situation there is an inadequate proportion of female representatives at the highest level of political and economic powers. The priority issues to be addressed therefore are:

- development of public awareness and political commitment to increase women's representation in leadership and decision-making;
- strengthening women's sustainable career development through management training and promotion;
- providing appropriate information and mounting advocacy campaigns.

### Women's Health

The national health policy of Mongolia reflects the goals of the global strategy on health for all by the year 2000 and is based on the PHC (public health centre) as the cornerstone of future health policy. The new Constitution of Mongolia which was adopted in 1992 sets down the basic rights and freedom of citizens, including the right to live in a healthy and safe environment, to have social benefits during pregnancy, child care, old age, loss of working ability and to have access to and protection from medical care and other health services according to legal regulations. All pre- and post-natal care are provided free of charge. The revised health law in 1989 removed the ban on abortion. In 1991, the health law introduced the possibility of having privately funded health services. Other laws/regulations on health which were introduced in 1993 include the health insurance law, the law on AIDS and the regulation on alcohol and tobacco. In 1995, the government introduced the social insurance law directed to maintain and improve the existing coverage and accessibility of the entire population to health services regardless of their income and other position.

The Government has been implementing a number of national programmes in collaboration with international organisations for improving women's health, particularly reproductive health. Other aspects of the health programme

are the expanded programme on immunisation, the adolescent health programme and the nutrition programme which includes the promotion of breastfeeding. Although Mongolia has made some advances in building the medical infrastructure, the rural sector continues to provide challenges because of its scattered population. The government is undertaking special services for pregnant women and since 1960, has established Maternity Rest Homes in rural areas.

The previous coverage of immunising more than 90% of the population from infectious diseases has decreased. Although there has been an improvement in life expectancy, and in the infant and under five mortality rate, the maternal mortality rate continues to remain high. While there have been improvements in Mongolian women's health status and in coverage by and access to health services, not all women have benefited equally. In addition, other factors to be considered in the formulation of health policy and programmes include:

- Life style factors such, as alcohol abuse, poor diet and lack of exercise which contribute towards increasing morbidity and mortality rate — for non communicable diseases.
- Significant effects of unsafe water and inadequate sanitation which have an impact on health status of women and children. Inadequate nutrition, especially of pregnant women, remains a major problem.
- High rates of maternal mortality and abortion and the lack of knowledge on reproductive health are also priority issues.
- The high rates of STD prevalence and the increasing phenomenon of prostitution are becoming critical areas of women's health. HIV/AIDS is, as yet, not a major problem.

# Report on Post-Beijing Implementation

*Extracted from paper presented by Erdenichmeg J., the Mongolian Women's Federation, the APDC Sub-Regional Consultation for Indochina and Mongolia on Post-Beijing Implementation and Monitoring, Bangkok, May 1997*

The Mongolian Women's Federation (MWF) has made the public aware of the Beijing Conference decisions through translating the Platform for Action into Mongolian and dissemination of the document.

The members of the MWF were included in the working groups of the National Committee on Women's Issues that prepared a draft programme to be discussed at the National Assembly on Women in Social Development, which was held in Ulaanbaatar from 7th. to 8th. of March, 1996. The Mongolian government endorsed the programme through its Resolution No. 145 of 1996.

After the Beijing Conference, the MWF and its member organisations have been taking practical actions on improving women's involvement in social life by providing them with information on improving their quality of life. A brief report of the main activities of the MWF is given here.

- Prior to the last parliamentary elections, all NGOs merged into a coalition to nominate women candidates for the elections and worked jointly to somehow influence political parties. That was the first ever action of its kind in Mongolia.

- The first assembly of women's NGOs was held at the initiative of the Liberal Women's Brainpool and approved the NGO Programme of Action.

- The MWF in cooperation with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation and the Asia Pacific Market Committee, organised a seminar on the Life of Rural Women and Market for their Products.

- A Workshop on the theme "Poverty Alleviation by Appropriate Means" and 2 other workshops called "Women's Participation in Social Life" and "NGO Activities for Development" have been held with the help of the United Nations Social and Economic Commission for Asia and Pacific and the European Union involving all soums of over a dozen provinces.

- The Ministry of Health and Social Protection supported the initiative of the MWF to carry out month-long campaigns on the National Programme of Action for Women, particularly on issues such as "Protection of the Rights and Health of Women and Mothers", "Supporting Family Welfare", "Population and Development" and "Combating AIDS and Infectious Diseases". A positive response to the campaigns was that many girls and women in the provinces underwent medical check-ups and were given free treatment.

## Issues to be given Priority Attention in Post-Beijing Implementation

Although the Mongolian government has endorsed the National Programme on Improving Women's Situation and has set



up a national committee, there is still the need to create a mechanism that would realistically evaluate and discuss the implementation of the national programme. Growing numbers of women and families have become poorer and their income is decreasing. In such conditions, it is obvious that it would be hard to talk about issues such as education and health of women and their involvement in decision-making. Therefore, it is crucial to take into account the following proposals:

- The need for practical strategies in development planning to influence the lives of women, children and families.
- The need for forming working groups to address gender and development issues and bring them to the attention of the government and legislative bodies.
- The need to organise local training for officials of women's NGOs on the ways to evaluate the social status and the quality of life of women.
- The need to form a monitoring group jointly with the government which would check the programme implementation on particular issues or a group of issues and to report the result to the National Committee, the Cabinet or the

Parliament. A mechanism should also be created to consider the responsibility of a local government for the implementation of the programme. Local women's organisations and local women should be involved in the work.

- The need to encourage identification of appropriate methods to increase public awareness of the spirit and decisions of the Beijing Conference that would suit the specifics of a given country and help change the thinking and awareness of the people.
- The need to increase the involvement of NGOs in providing women with information.

The MWF has been doing some work in providing information on gender issues to women activists. We have realised the importance of working not only with women but of cooperating with the local authorities and changing their understanding and increasing their awareness of women's issues.

# Role of Research and Information in Monitoring Implementation

*Presented by Darisuren Amarsanaa, Women's Information and Research Centre, Mongolia, at the APDC Sub-Regional Consultation for Indochina and Mongolia on Post-Beijing Implementation and Monitoring, Bangkok, May 1997*

## Introduction

After 70 years under the ruling communist regime, Mongolia chose a democratic and market-oriented way of development in 1990. The victory of the Democratic Coalition at the Parliamentary Elections in June 1996, reaffirmed this new choice of development agenda for the country. A profound transformation of the economy is now being implemented. The immediate tasks are the privatisation of the rest of the 60% of mixed-state and share-holding property, restructuring of different sectors of the economy, promotion of private business through liberalisation of customs duties and reforms in the field of health and education.

However, objections to these wide-ranging reforms have stemmed from the life experiences of the people. The most dramatic one is that a large portion of the population cannot adapt to the economic changes. With the economic and fiscal difficulties affecting the country, the living standard of most Mongolians has deteriorated. Poverty and unemployment have emerged as serious social problems affecting survival. Mongolia's drop from 88th. to 100th. place on the UN Human Development Index reflects the severe impact of the economic crisis on people and the curtailment of social and health services. There is evidence that some of the factors that are reflected in this deteriorating quality of life, impact more

adversely on women than on men. Therefore, the formulation and execution of policy that better balances human and economic development is urgent.

Accurate data and information on gender-related issues are essential for the development of social policy towards gender equality. Under the centrally-controlled economy, gender equality was assumed. Consequently, statistical data was not gathered which would document gender discrimination. Gender disparities are still apparent in Mongolia. They have now been sharpened during the recent period of transition to an open-market economy. Identification of such gender gaps in socio-economic indicators through gathering all relevant data and analysis of the situation is necessary to formulate actions for the improvement of women's situations.

Mongolia has already developed a data collection system and infrastructure for such issues as population and household income and expenditure. However, government produced gender-disaggregated data is only available in a few areas such as education and reproductive health. Many indicators that would reflect the real socio-economic situation are still unavailable.

The National Programme of Action for the Advancement of Women emphasised

*"WIRC recognises the importance of lobbying government bodies to produce gender-disaggregated data."*

that there are difficulties with the formulation of gender fair development policies because of the lack of accurate data and statistics on gender related issues. Therefore, the initial period of implementation of the National Programme in 1996-2000 focuses on deriving gender-sensitive data from national surveys for the analysis of the status of women. The National Plan points out that information collected will provide the basis for developing a systematic policy to ensure equal rights of women and men and to improve the status of women within the context of the market economy.

The need for establishing an independent nationwide information and research agency for women was realised when the project for setting up the Women's Information and Research Centre (WIRC) was initiated by three women's NGOs: the Liberal Women's Brain Pool, Women for Social Progress Movement and the Women Lawyer's Association. WIRC started operation on July 1st, 1995, with funding from AusAID.

### **Women's Information and Research Centre**

Women's Information and Research Centre's (WIRC)'s main objectives are:

- to gather all existing official statistical data and information on gender related issues;
- to conduct sociological surveys and collect information independently and in collaboration with other agencies on the priority topics;
- to provide all interested agencies and individuals with the information collected;
- to establish a network between women's NGOs and other groups for their better and more effective operation;
- to organise distant and direct training of women for their empowerment.

The spheres of WIRC's activities are research, gathering, processing and dissemination of information and training. The activities of WIRC facilitate the identification of immediate

and long term needs of Mongolian women. The Centre contributes to the improvement of the legislation and public policies affecting women and their status in society, enhances the effectiveness of women's service and advocacy groups working to achieve women's political and economic empowerment, and raises public awareness of gender-related issues by providing independent data and information. Research and information are closely interrelated disciplines directed towards the gathering and processing of gender-disaggregated data from different sources, both governmental and non-governmental, in order to analyse such data for research.

During the first year of operation, WIRC gained some experience in conducting surveys on the identification of priority issues of Mongolian women. These included the study of household income and expenditure, women's entrepreneurship rate, and female criminality. The results from the studies were presented at the first National Forum of women's NGOs in October 1996.

In 1997, WIRC initiated the first nationwide survey on the economic position of Mongolian women in the transition period. We attempted to generate gender sensitive data on the role of women in the economy including participation in the labour force. Particular focus was on the informal and private sector and the agriculture sector. Data was sought in areas such as positions, difference in salaries and wages, access to loans, women's entrepreneurship and portrait of women entrepreneurs, obstacles met by women entrepreneurs, time-use, unpaid work, burden of women, women's opportunities to improve skills and discrimination in labour relations. All the information generated from this survey was collected for the first time.

A database on gender-sensitive statistics has been created with information from all the governmental and non-governmental agencies such as the State Statistical Office, Ministry of Education,



Statistical Service of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Population Policy and Labour, Institute of Sociology and Philosophy (Mongolian Academy of Sciences), State Taxation Office, Research Institute of Marketing, Department of Sociology of the Mongolian National University, Centre of Civic Registration, and different women's NGOs.

## Areas of Focus

### *Advocacy and Publicity*

WIRC disseminates gender information through the mass media and through its in-house publications such as the Gender Issues bulletin, the annual guide on gender-sensitive statistics which includes findings from WIRC surveys and information from magazines and newsletters.

Three issues of the Gender Issues bulletin containing articles on theory and practice of gender studies, information and data on women's status and problems facing women, have been prepared and distributed to raise public awareness about gender and development issues.

An important aspect of WIRC's work programme is the assistance given to women's NGOs by providing them information on women focusing on empowerment issues. In addition to methodological consultancy in research, WIRC conducts some surveys jointly with women's groups. Volunteers of the Liberal Women's Brain Pool collected invaluable information about women's political participation at the local level in rural areas. The Women Lawyers Association and WIRC have started a survey on the implementation of the new labour legislation in the market economy, particularly its impact on women's employment. WIRC's joint survey with the Mongolian Association of Single Mothers focused on the most vulnerable social group and actions for empowerment of female-headed households are now being planned.

WIRC has also initiated gender studies in the country through giving lectures to academic staff and students of the Mongolian National University involving independent researchers from the Academy of Sciences and mass media as well as government officers. The training of activists of women's NGOs in gender analysis of policy, especially at grassroots level, to contribute to improved monitoring, is ongoing. At the same time, WIRC recognises the importance of lobbying government bodies to produce gender-disaggregated data.

It is too early to evaluate WIRC's activities in monitoring the implementation of the Platform for Action as the organisation has only been set-up recently. Briefly, WIRC could set up a basic database showing some priority indicators for women's empowerment in the future.

### *Some Insights from WIRC's Efforts on Data Gathering and Analysis*

Efforts of women's NGOs to increase their political representation is reflected in the 50% increase in women who wish to become political leaders as compared to figures for the 1992 elections. However, the proportion of women candidates is still low: at the parliamentary elections of 1996, only 8.6% of all candidates were women; at the provincial level women accounted for 10.2% of the candidates and at district level, 14.7% of the candidates were women. Among government officers, women's representation is almost equal to men's, but at the top positions their rate is ten times less than that of men. At the most important economic decision-making posts, women are not represented at all.

One of the priority topics of research is women's attitude in the private sector. Economic empowerment of women is reflected in the growing number of women engaged in private business in the form of self-employment, small-and

*"The double burden on women has significantly increased during the first years of transition. Privatisation of livestock has led to an overload of work on herds women and urban women have to work extra hours to earn additional incomes."*



medium-scale production and services. Income generated from part-time, occasional, seasonal and unregistered employment is also considered as sources of income. When registered employment is significantly underpaid, more and more people have to find additional sources of income. Gender equality in proprietorship is also an emerging problem during the transition period as the privatisation of enterprises, livestock, land and apartments affect family property jointly owned by members of households.

The double burden on women has significantly increased during the first years of transition. Privatisation of livestock has led to an overload of work on herdswomen and urban women have to work extra hours to earn additional incomes. In 1996, women constituted 23.5% among the owners of registered private economic entities. In rural areas, women's ownership of private enterprise is even lower - 14%. Similar to other countries, women-owned enterprises are smaller and mostly engaged in the services sector.

#### *WIRC's Future Plans*

With the intention of developing research on gender issues, WIRC plans to strengthen its cooperative links with all women's NGOs through assisting them in methodology and providing necessary data and information for actions. WIRC also recognises that the linkage of macro-economic management development with human development issues in training and retraining of women is extremely important for women's empowerment during the transition to a market economy.

# Report on Post-Beijing Implementation

*Submitted by the Women for Social Progress, Mongolia*

## Introduction

The movement, "Women for Social Progress" (WSP) is an advocacy, oversight and public education organisation concerned with the issues of democratic governance and gender equity. WSP is a non-governmental, non-partisan and non-profit voluntary organisation founded in 1992. From October 24th. to November 7th. 1997 the WSP coordinated a regional workshop on the role of NGOs which brought together representatives of Mongolia and the 5 countries of Central Asia including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The regional workshop provided an opportunity for constructive dialogue among women's NGOs of Mongolia and Central Asia and identified issues of importance to women in these countries and the region as a whole. The regional workshop served as a forum to discuss the role of NGOs in addressing these issues, to strengthen advocacy skills, and to recommend strategies to address the priority issues in effective ways. The participants also explored regional and international cooperation as a means of increasing the effectiveness of programmes aimed at strengthening women's civic participation and legal rights.

## Women's Status in Mongolia

Over the past 70 years, there have been significant improvements in women's literacy and education, life expectancy, health status, employment experience, and social freedoms. Compared to women in many other developing countries, women in Mongolia have a far

better position, both in an absolute sense and relative to their male counterparts. The state has also helped women to pursue their interests, for example, the state's investment in day care centres gave women greater freedom to pursue their careers. With the state meeting many of the practical needs of women, more strategic gender shifts have been observed in Mongolia, such as the socially accepted right of women to undertake paid employment.

Yet, alongside these achievements, a surprisingly large part of the social relations between men and women have remained intact, especially in terms of child-rearing and household duties. In many respects, gender issues in Mongolia are more like that prevailing in industrial countries (where the most obvious elements of sex discrimination have been removed and deeper issues of power imbalances remain), and less like developing countries (where sex-biases in basic services and welfare outcomes remain).

According to the 1997 UNDP Human Development Report, Mongolia has a human development index (HDI) value of 0.661 and is ranked 101. The HDI considers four indicators — life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rates, combined gross enrolment rates for all levels and GDP per capita. The gender development index (GDI) adjusts the HDI to take into account gender differences. Mongolia has a GDI value of 0.650 and is ranked 80th. among the 175 countries listed. A lower GDI value indicates female capabilities to be worse than the national average which is indicated by the HDI value. The gap

between the HDI and GDI in Mongolia is not as wide as in other developing countries. Furthermore, a positive value in the difference in global ranking by HDI and GDI is taken to imply that relative to other countries, a country's human development performance is comparatively better once achievements in gender equality are taken into account. Mongolia shows positive values, reflecting the close parity between males and females in the main indicators of human development.

The formation of capabilities are also indicated by other data, showing a large measure of equality in terms of women's education and health. As is usual in most

countries, female life expectancy in Mongolia is higher for women than for men (65 and 62 years respectively). Increases in life expectancy in recent years have been identical for men and women. Male-female inequality in literacy rates has been nearly eliminated, though there remains a big difference in educational attainment, with women being under-represented at the tertiary level of education. Nevertheless women form an important part of the professional workforce. In 1996, women constituted 43% of doctors, 31% of economists, 80% of medical doctors, and 70% of lawyers. Notably these figures do not show the position of women on the career ladder. Females

also comprised 46% of the workforce in agriculture, 42% in industry, 56% in trade, 65% in hotel and catering, 64% in education, and 67% in the health sector. But the rate of unemployment is higher amongst women than men.

In the rural areas, women's roles are prescribed differently than in urban areas. Men and women divide labour relating to animal breeding and grazing, with women generally performing the physically less demanding tasks such as milking, making dairy products and

looking after young animals. They also have chief responsibility in the domestic sphere. In general, rural women tend to be less educated than their urban counterparts and are at higher risk from maternal mortality. Female-headed households in rural areas, due to the shortage of labour, tend to have less diversified and smaller herds, making them more vulnerable.

Despite impressive progress in the formation of women's capabilities, issues of political, economic and social power as well as violence are still of concern to women.

### Women's Participation and Political Decision-making

Mongolia joined the Convention on Women's Political Rights in 1965, giving equal rights to women and men in voting, in being elected, and in holding office in government. The previous system, which gave political support to women's "election" to the government, has been abolished, and this may help explain why more women did not get elected in the 1996 parliamentary elections.

In the 1996 elections, Mongolian women won 10% of the parliamentary seats and there are now 7 women members of Parliament. Whilst still below the 20-50% target set by the UN, this result is above average globally. There are no women members in the cabinet and women do not hold any of the 9 state secretarial positions. Mongolia has no women ambassadors as well.

In terms of voting rights, women and men have been able to exercise their rights. The gender ratio of the voters in the 1992 and 1996 democratic elections were the same as the gender ratio of the total population of the country. It is widely accepted that Mongolian women vote freely without pressure from males. But men dominate the highest posts of decision-making in Mongolia. Representation of women in other decision-making posts such as heads of

*"In the past, men in the urban areas in particular, did not have to think about their roles in relation to family responsibility, as the state supported women in their child-bearing and child-rearing functions through generous benefits and the provision of day care centres. Since transition, such benefits have been withdrawn and day care facilities have declined dramatically from 441 to 71 between 1990-96."*

government departments, or local governors, is lacking. Statistics reveal that there are only 9 women governors out of a total of 373 governors in the various administrative levels. There are no women *aimag* governors. Only 7.5% of departmental and divisional heads in central government are women.

These figures may be interpreted as reflecting the incomplete re-balancing of gender roles between men and women, which have become all the more apparent with the retreat of the state after transition. In the past, men in the urban areas in particular, did not have to think about their roles in relation to family responsibility, as the state supported women in their child-bearing and child-rearing functions through generous benefits and the provision of day care centres. Since transition, such benefits have been with-drawn and day care facilities have declined dramatically from 441 to 71 between 1990-96. Women's perceived roles as "care givers" in the household continues, and hence many now face a "double-burden" encompassing their responsibilities both in and out of the household. For many women, these double burdens create role conflicts, which then translate into lower career mobility as women attempt to balance the different demands placed on them.

### Violence against Women

It is claimed pressures have led to an increase in domestic violence. Police treat domestic violence as a private matter within the household. More generally, the issue of domestic violence is not socially acknowledged and therefore victims find it hard to voice their problems. One nationwide survey by the Centre Against Violence covered 1,900 women, of which:

- one-third reported psychological and physical pressure in their lives;
- one-fifth attributed this to alcohol-related reasons;
- one-third reported the pressure from husbands/partners and one-quarter from in-laws;



- three-quarters reported violence along with the pressure, and one-tenth reported sexual pressure;
- nearly half the women claimed to have taken no action to deal with their problems, and one-fifth left home.

The situation appears to be worse in Ulaanbaatar and *aimag* centres. Statistics show that the percentage of divorced women citing husband's alcoholism and domestic violence as reasons for divorce in Ulaanbaatar was 23%, 50% in *aimag* centres, 14% in *soum* centres and outside *soum* centres, 20%.

## POVERTY

### Poverty and Asymmetry

With 192,543,000 people, Indonesia has the fourth largest population in the world. The Ministry of Population and Central Bureau of Statistics estimates that the population will rise to 2000 million people in February 1997. The Family Planning Programme (Keluarga Berencana - KB), the population growth could be reduced between 1990 and 1995 to 1.71%. There is almost no change in the composition of the population, where women were 50.14% of the total female population in 1990 and 50.10% in 1993. It is claimed that 13.67% of the total female population in 1993 was living under the poverty line.

The government-run Central Bureau of Statistics (Biro Pusat Statistik - BPS), determines the poverty line based on the expenses to obtain 21.00 Kcal for each person a day, and the fulfilment of basic minimum needs such as housing, gas/oil, clothing, education, sanitation/healthcare and transportation. Using the 1990 National-Economic Survey, the Bureau determines the lowest monthly income Rp 13,295/capita and Rp 20,614/capita in the rural and urban areas respectively as being on the poverty line (exchange rate US\$1 = Rp 1,901 in 1990). By this measurement the Bureau went on to claim that in 1990 there were only 27.22 million people or 15.08% out of 179.38 million people living in poverty. Three years later the measurement was revised and the lowest monthly income becomes Rp 18,244 and Rp 27,905 in the rural and urban areas respectively (exchange rate US\$1 = Rp 2,100 in 1993). By this standard the number of poor people has been even reduced to 25.9 million or 13.67% of the whole population. The question is what can be obtained with Rp 18,244/month in the rural areas and Rp 27,905/month in the urban areas. If the price of rice in 1993 (in 29 major cities) is Rp 640.65/Kg what can one get with such a low income? Moreover, how can people survive and obtain other basic needs?

Generally speaking, if the poverty line is raised and rounded off to Rp 40,000/month for both urban and rural areas, then the number of the poor population will increase to 49.69% of the total population in 1993. If rounded off to Rp 60,000/month (which means Rp 2,000/day), then number of the poor population will climb to 76.45%.

Using other official indicators issued by the government, many people above the poverty line are still grouped as "near poor". Based on the decision issued by the Department of Manpower (Department Tenaga Kerja - Depnaker), the amount of the monthly average minimum physical requirement of unmarried man a month in 1994 was Rp 96,968. That increased to Rp 104,490 in 1995. If we regard this an indicator of poverty then 90% of the population in Indonesia are living in poverty.

The gap between rich and poor people in Indonesia has been admitted. The Vice Governor of the National Resilience Institute (Lembaha Pertahanan Nasional - Lemhanas), Dr. Juwono Sudarsono mentioned that the established number of people having sufficient food and clothes is less than 2.5 million (Kompas, 12 December 1996). It has also been reported that there are 4,553 individuals who earn more than Rp 100 billion a year (Jakarta Post, 20 December 1996).

Source: *Social Watch*, No. 1, 1997

## **India: The Poor as Statistics vs the Poor as People**

*By Jagananda, Sundar N Mishra and R D Gopa Kumar*

The percentage of India's poor reaches 40% of the total population, and if we consider the poverty of capabilities, poverty increases to 60%. While 229 million people are poor due to their income, 554 million are poor due to other possibilities. In all of India, the real average of per capita spending in 1991 remained stuck at the 1990-91 level for the rural population and reduced markedly by 5.5% 1992. The relative inequality also grew according to the Gini coefficient in 1991 and 1992, compared with the 1990-91 period. The impoverishment of the rural population due to the reduction of per capita expenditure was worsened by the increase of relative inequality.

If the right to life is interpreted as the right to dignified life, then 90% or more of the homes do not enjoy this right. The National Sample Survey (NSS) classifies homes with outgoings of Rs. 385 per capita per month as the largest group in the rural zones. According to the NSS, only 11.4% of the population belong to the highest spending group. This figure is lower than the per capita National Net Income 1992-1993 (Rs. 521) which is already in itself very low by international levels. Some 90% of the rural population live below this level.

There is no integral plan to eradicate poverty, but the government considers the eradication of poverty a top priority. The government has recommended the adoption of the Lakdawala methodology to measure poverty and thereby formulate the development strategy for the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002). According to the Lakdawala methodology, the population below the poverty line reaches 36%. This is a good starting point from which to forget the statistical cosmetics and confront the reality with our feet on the ground.

*Source: Social Watch, No. 1, 1997*

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## **Women and Poverty in Vietnam**

The poverty rate dropped from 70% of the population in 1980 down to 50% at present (about 37 million people). The average per capita income is US\$ 309 per year. Of the 14.5 million households, about 45% are poor and 90% of the poor households live in rural areas. Nearly 30% of poor rural households are headed by women. There are many causes for poverty. But there are five inter-related causes: first, the gaps in geographical and social positioning which results in knowledge differences; second, the high risk of crop loss, morbidity, unwanted children or animal epidemics; third, the lack of resources for production such as labour force, shortage of arable land or capital; fourth, the non-sustainable development which leads to forest destruction and fifth, the lack of appropriate involvement in government's programmes. Most Vietnamese women (78.6%) live in the rural areas, are farmers and have low incomes. They are involved in manual and simple work and their average wage is only 72% that of men.

*Source: Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development (CGFED)*

## FOOD SECURITY

### **Food Security and Nutritional Status of Women and Girls**

Although the Platform for Action does not have any particular target for food security other than calling for a reduction in the levels of malnutrition among women and girls, it nevertheless urges governments to ensure food security for women and girls through implementing the recommendations made at the International Conference on Nutrition in Rome in 1992. Even as governments in the region implement food programmes, NGO reports sent to the APDC Implementation Monitor point out that malnutrition is still a major problem of women's health in poor rural areas in the region. The urban poor too have a low calorie intake and register high rates of anaemia. The malnutrition among women and girls in the region is exacerbated by socio-cultural norms including the devaluation and non-recognition of women's unpaid work and strong preference for sons in Asian families. However, the more imminent threat to women's and girls' food security stems from liberal policies on food imports and support for the production of cash crops and monoculture.

### **The Philippines Experience**

The need for food security implies that men and women in agriculture work jointly for a system of sustainable agriculture — one that uses their knowledge and skills, and builds on it through education and innovation. Women's participation in production and reproduction need to be valued by the community in order that the goal of food security is met within a framework of gender justice. This implies equal access to resources such as education, information, knowledge and land.

*'I am Leticia Bulaa'at, a peasant woman from the remote village of Dupag in the Cordillera in northern Philippines. In my community of about 800 people, we are all subsistence peasants. Our agricultural system, is a combination of rice farming in irrigated fields and in the swiddens and legumes, vegetable and coffee production, as well as raising pigs and chickens. We produce these for our families and the community. Rice is planted in terraced fields, which our forefathers developed probably centuries ago. Constructing a rice field is a difficult task which entails months or even years of back-breaking work like stone-walling and filling in. That is why, it is only used for the prestigious rice that is planted there.*

*Farming is what we know. Since I was born, my parents brought me with them to the fields. At about the age of five, my*

*mother taught me how to weed and open the irrigation canal. I was later taught to plant, harvest, bundle and tie up the rice straws. She and my father taught me how to be a farmer, including observing the necessary holidays and performing the rituals in order to ensure a good harvest. I also participated in labour exchange groups composed mostly of women. This is a common practice in our village. Here I learned more about farming through exchange of ideas with my friends.*

*When I got married at 16 years, I was already a full-fledged farmer. The knowledge handed down to me helped me cope with life when I was widowed at the age of 23 with two children. We produce our rice and other crops, both in the rice fields and swiddens, without the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. We have heard of stories from our lowland sisters about how their skin, eyes and genitals have been affected by chemical fertilisers and pesticides. They are forced to use more and more of these because their soil is destroyed.*

*With the late rains, there is no irrigation. Our lowland sisters have not been able to plant the last two croppings. But because their soil is destroyed they cannot plant just any other alternative crop. If they want, they still have to use pesticides. But they are also poor like me so how can they buy the poisons. That is why when*



*we have a small rice harvest, we plant legumes to add to our food. At the same time, we maintain our root crops. Although our farming methods are very tiring because it is manual, even the poor can produce their own food. So although we have no money, we have food, good simple food on our tables.*

*Rice is the food that sustained generations of our people. But it is not just any rice we want. We want the rice that is aromatic, delicious, the traditional varieties we have. Rice that is produced by our own hands and which we are sure is safe to eat. With the rice crisis in my country, even if people have money, they *uy* rice.*

*As to the government plans to increase our income through cash crops, we do*

*not need cash. WE NEED FOOD. We have experienced the effect of depending on cash crops for our need when coffee was introduced in our village.*

*The poor are entitled to eat good food even if they do not have money. They can only do this if they have control over their production — the resources, the land, the processes. We would oppose any plans to make us produce what we do not need. We still will farm to ensure that there is good food on our tables and for our communities. This we can do by demanding that subsistence farmers who are the majority in our communities be given substantial support in order to ensure food security."*

Source: Excerpted from Leticia Bulaat's paper presented at the Pesticide Action Network for Asia and Pacific Seminar on "Women and Agriculture" during the Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing on September 5, 1995.

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## MONOCULTURES: Expressions of Race, Class and Gender

Vandana Shiva

In the fields of Third World women farmers, the most conspicuous element is the diversity of crops. In India, we have named an agricultural biodiversity conservation programme "Navdanya", which means nine seeds. Navdanya is a system of polyculture as well as a microcosm representing the complexity of the cosmos.

In the rainfed areas, this system uses a cropping pattern called Baranaja, which literally means twelve seeds. The seeds of twelve different crops (often more than twelve, but never less) are mixed and then randomly sown in a field fertilised with manure. The relationships among different plants leads to symbiosis, which contributes to increase productivity of the crops. Cultivating diversity can therefore be part of a farming strategy for high yields and high incomes. Diverse species in partnership and in symbiotic interaction create the self-organisation capacity of living systems, a central feature of polycultures and agricultural ecosystems. As part of these agricultural systems, human communities work in partnership with other species to maintain ecological processes and meet human needs. Diversity-based agriculture is decentralised, ecologically stable, and economically productive.

However, the monocultural mind sees polycultures as low yielding and inefficient. But the "improvements" of monocultures, as defined by corporations and western agricultural or forestry research, are often a loss for the Third World, especially for the poor. The productivity of monocultures is high only in a restricted context where the output forms a discrete part of the forest and farm biomass. For instance, "high yield" plantations cultivate one-tree species among thousands in order to exploit the yield of just one part of the tree (e.g., the pulpwood). By comparison, overall productivity and sustainability is much higher in mixed systems of farming and forestry that produce diverse outputs.

But transnational corporation (TNCs), international research systems, and multilateral agencies — largely run and controlled by white men — find in monocultures an essential tool for control and accumulation of capital. Third World women, peasants and forest communities find in diversity both a source of abundance and freedom.

### Intellectual Property Rights and Knowledge Monopolies

The free trade practiced by TNCs depends on protectionist and monopoly measures such as the patents on life forms emerging from intellectual property rights (IPRs), which rob farmers of their freedom to produce, modify and sell seeds. Herbalists, forest dwellers, fishing communities and pastoralists who depend on biodiversity to survive, and whose resources and knowledge are freely used by the TNCs, will also be severely affected by IPRs in so-called free trade agreements.

Most discussions around the concept of trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPs) in GATT assume that only the intellectual contributions of corporate-sponsored scientists require property protection and compensation. However, no attention has been paid to how IPRs will encourage the uncompensated free flow of resources and knowledge from South to North. Nor does anyone ask why the concept of IPRs in GATT defines as knowledge and innovation only that which can generate profits. Knowledge and innovation applied to social ends such as health care and sustainable agriculture is discounted as an intellectual contribution.

A more just framework for IPR would recognise that traditional farmers who have selected, improved and conserved biodiversity, or traditional healers who have used plant diversity for medicine, also have prior intellectual property rights that need protection. When this knowledge and biodiversity is exploited commercially, these contributors need to participate in determining whether such exploitation should occur and how it should be compensated.

The corporate demand for IPRs to biodiversity is based on the false assumption that it is their investments alone that lead to innovation, and which therefore need to be rewarded with monopoly control. Thus, the centuries of investment of time and creativity by Third World farmers in domesticating, breeding and conserving biodiversity is negated.

Farmers' seeds are rendered valueless by a process that makes corporate seeds the basis of wealth creation. The indigenous varieties, or land races, evolved through natural and human selection, and produced and used by Third World farmers world-wide, are called "primitive cultivars". But the varieties created in international research centres or transnational seed corporations are labelled "advanced" or "elite". The tacit hierarchy in these categories becomes explicit in the process of conflict.

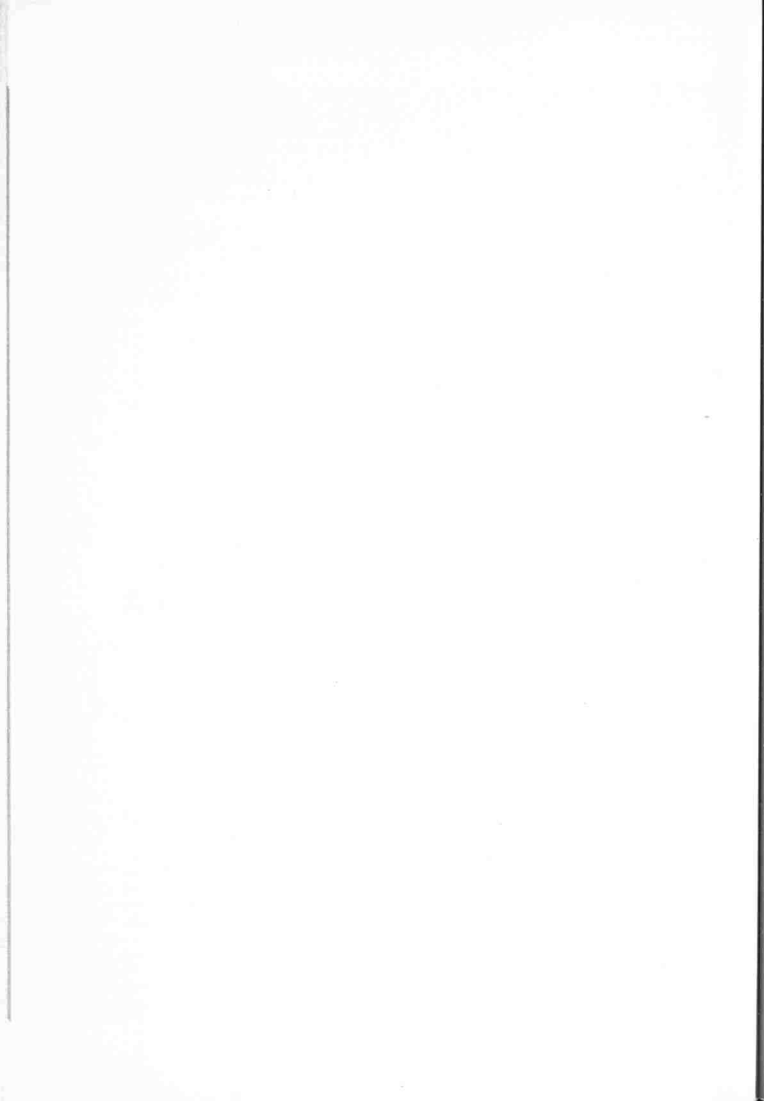
The issue of patent protection for modified life forms raises several political questions about ownership and control of genetic resources. One problem lies in the fact that the process of manipulating life forms does not start from scratch, but from existing life forms that belong to others — perhaps in a system of customary law. Secondly, genetic engineering does not create new genes, it merely relocates genes that already exist. In this process, complex organisms that have evolved over millennia in nature, and through the contributions of Third World peasants, tribal societies and healers are reduced to mere inputs for genetic engineering. This reductionism and fragmentation may suit commercial concerns but it violates the integrity of life as well as the common property rights of Third World people.

Countries like the United States are now using trade as a means of enforcing their system of patent laws and intellectual property rights on the sovereign nations of the Third World. The US accuses Third World countries of engaging in "unfair trading practices" if they fail to adopt US patent laws that permit monopoly rights over life forms.

In fact, it is the US that engages in unfair practices related to the use of Third World genetic resources. It has freely taken the biological diversity of the Third World to spin millions of dollars of profits, none of which have been shared with the original owners of the germplasm. A wild tomato variety (*Lycopersicon chomrelewski*) taken from Peru in 1962 has contributed US\$8 million a year to the American tomato processing industry by increasing the content of soluble solids. Yet none of these profits have been shared with Peruvian small farmers. IPRs have thus become an instrument of recolonisation more than 500 years after Columbus. Third World people who struggled to escape colonisation will not give up that freedom without resistance.

Source: The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Reports, Volume 23, Number 2, July 1995

**SOUTH ASIA**



# Post-Beijing Implementation in Bangladesh

*Submitted by Maheen Sultan, Naripokkho, Bangladesh*

## Introduction

Bangladesh's National Action Plan (NAP) for implementing recommendations from the Beijing Conference approved in November 1997, represents the culmination of a cooperative GO-NGO process for its formulation and finalisation. The national machinery for women's advancement, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, established an interministerial task force in December 1995 to follow-up on plans for implementation. In addition, the Department of Women's Affairs (DWA) set up a Core Group in January 1996 to coordinate the planning for Beijing follow-up. The Core Group comprising individual women who were involved in the Beijing process, formulated a proposal which led to the setting up of

sectoral needs assessment teams which carried out reviews of 14 sectoral ministries/divisions.

## The Process Adopted for drafting the National Action Plan

A GO-NGO collaborative process was adopted for the drafting of the national action plan and included the establishment of Sectoral Needs Assessments Teams, review of the WID capability of the government and the use of a broad-based and gender-sensitive approach for the drafting of the national action plan.

### BANGLADESH: Specific Commitments Made at Beijing

- Establish gender focal points in the relevant sectoral ministries and agencies
- Reduce the drop out rate and increase the rate of enrolment of boys and girls through the Food for Education Programme
- Establish Committees at district, sub-district and union levels to bring women into the mainstream of development
- Convene national assembly on women's development in the early 1996 to formulate national strategies for the implementation of the Platform for Action

*Source: UN Division for the Advancement of Women web site*

### Basic Indicators

Maternal Mortality	850 (per 100,000 live births)
Female Labour Force Participation	42.0%
Female Literacy	24.3%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	9.1%

*Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997*

### International Instruments Signed or Ratified

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	NA
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	NA
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	•
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	•
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	•
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	NA
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	NA
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	NA

*Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997*

#### Key

- Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature.
- Signature not yet followed by ratification.

*Note: Status is as of 1 March 1997.*

Sectoral Needs Assessment Teams (SNATs) were set up to review the WID capability of 14 sectoral ministries/divisions. Each team comprised the WID Focal Point from the line ministry, a representative from the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and consultants with expertise in relevant fields. Beginning August 1996, the teams carried out assessment exercises of the government machinery and finalised their reports in February 1997. The teams ensured the participation of individuals and organisations outside the government in the consultations, particularly, women's organisations, human rights groups, research organisations, the private sector and professional associations.

The teams' report identified 12 ministries that would have direct responsibility of implementing post-Beijing recommendation on a priority basis. The ministries are:

- Social Welfare
- Education
- Home Affairs
- Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs
- Industry
- Agriculture
- Environment and Forestry
- Fisheries and Livestock
- Labour and Manpower
- Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives
- Health and Family Welfare
- Information

The final draft of the national action plan is based on the draft of the national policy and plan of action, a synthesis of pre-Beijing consultations and the sectoral reviews. The national action plan also takes into consideration the assessment of the WID capability of the government which was conducted by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. The national action plan outlines the need for inter-sectoral actions, linkages and coordination as well as mechanisms and strategies for implementation and monitoring.

## Strategies Used in the Preparation of the Plan

### *Mainstreaming of gender issues*

As women's development and advancement is not the responsibility of the Ministry of Women's Affairs alone but that of the entire government, the need to ensure that all policies, programmes and projects address women's needs and interests adequately have been stressed. Further the need for institutions to have adequate numbers of women staff at all levels, especially adequate numbers of women in decision making positions, is underscored.

### *Women's rights perspective*

The approach taken in the entire NAP is that women are entitled to full and effective implementation of their rights — political, social, economic as well as legal and civic. Therefore the measures envisaged are not based only on the fact that women are a disadvantaged category who need to have their welfare needs addressed but recognition has also been given to women's interests and needs which have been identified as their rights.

### *Following through of government commitments*

The NAP stresses that the government had already made a number of commitments at different international fora and become a signatory to various international instruments. The NAP seeks to translate these commitments into action.

### *Ensuring government ownership of the NAP*

The process through the NAP seeks to ensure government ownership of the document through adopting an inter-sectoral, inter-ministerial and broad-based approach.

*Using an inter-sectoral, inter-ministerial and broad based approach*

As most issues concerning women's development require a multi-sectoral approach, the NAP emphasises the need for intersectoral linkages, coordination and collaboration. The shared responsibility for women's development by all partners in development including various government machineries, local government bodies, NGOs, women's organisations, research and training agencies is outlined in the NAP.

## **Implementation and Monitoring of the National Action Plan**

### *Responsibilities*

As the implementation and monitoring of the National Action Plan (NAP) is the responsibility of the government, all sectoral ministries have to take an active role in implementing the NAP. They will also need to strengthen linkages with servicing ministries, local bodies and regional and international agencies to facilitate implementation of the NAP. Ministries are required to actively participate in promoting the policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all of their sectoral programmes with a view to ensuring sustainable development through the fulfilment of the objectives of the Platform for Action.

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA) is to facilitate coordination, follow up and monitoring of the implementation of the NAP. NGOs, grassroots organisations, women's groups and activists will also have important roles to play in the implementation and monitoring of the NAP. Their contribution will be required in the various consultative processes as will their expertise in the process of implementation and monitoring of the NAP.

The NAP requires the following pre-conditions for its successful implementation :

- commitment of all ministries to the concept of mainstreaming women's

issues for the advancement of women;

- adoption of a comprehensive, coordinating and multi-sectoral approach by all actors to women's development;
- integration of women's development in all development agenda by all actors;
- allocation and reallocation of resources for the advancement of women; and
- complementary and supportive roles of the agencies outside the government in reducing gender inequalities.

### *Actors of the National Action Plan*

Five major categories of actors are responsible for the implementation of the plan. They are:

- National Machinery for Women's Advancement: MOWCA, WID Focal Points and the National Council for Women's Development (NCWD);
- Servicing Ministries: Ministries of Establishment, Planning, Finance and Cabinet Division.
- Sectoral Line Ministries: Ministries of Agriculture, Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Industry, Information, Education, Environment and Forestry, Health and Family Welfare, Social Welfare, Fisheries and Livestock, Labour and Manpower, Home Affairs, and Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.
- Non-Governmental Organisations: women's groups, research organisations/institutions; human rights organisations, legal aid organisations.
- Elected bodies: Parliament and its members, local government bodies, etc.

## **Implementation Strategies**

### *Policy Formulation/ Revision and Incorporation of Women's Issues*

In order to develop comprehensive, integrated and sustainable institutions the NAP proposes the formulation and enactment of sectoral policies or revision of existing policies which will integrate and incorporate equity and equality measures for women, taking into consideration their interests, needs and priorities. The NAP foresees formation of a body at each sectoral ministry with

GO-NGO representation to monitor policy formulation/ revision and implementation as well as dissemination of information regarding policy issues to all staff of the relevant ministries and its agencies. The NAP also emphasises the role of MOWCA to ensure that the sectoral plans to incorporate women's needs, interests and concerns in all sectoral policies and monitoring implementation.

#### *Revision of Mandate*

Since the mandates of the sectoral ministries and its agencies do not specifically mention their responsibility for the advancement of women, the plan proposes that the responsibilities of the sectoral ministries/agencies be revised to explicitly acknowledge the role of the ministries or its agencies in furthering development and advancement of women.

#### *Women's Representation in Policy Making Bodies*

Considering the need for incorporating a gender perspective in policy decisions, the NAP proposes an adequate representation of women in all policy making bodies such as governing boards, executive committees, local government bodies and committees for project formulation, implementation and monitoring at the sectoral ministries and their agencies. In order to ensure effective and active participation of women members in various policy making bodies, the NAP calls for special orientation training of the women members on their roles and responsibilities and the organisations' objectives and activities.

#### *Increase Number/Proportion of Women Officers at all levels*

Considering the low percentage of female staff at all levels, the NAP stresses the importance of employment and promotion of increased number and percentage of women at entry, mid level and particularly at senior management positions. Provision for lateral entry at

senior levels from within the government and on contract service from outside is emphasised. To enhance management role and capacity of women managers, the NAP stresses the need for management training and retraining.

#### *Improving Working Conditions for Women*

The NAP stresses the need for improving working conditions for women in service to enable them to carry out their work responsibilities in a better way. Improved working conditions consist of provision for maternity leave including leave during probationary any period, creche and day care centres, adequate number of separate toilet facilities, better transport facilities especially for night work and accommodation facilities for out of station tours.

#### *Building Gender-Awareness*

Strengthening the capacity of WID focal points: to ensure effective and coordinated efforts in implementation of NAP by the sectoral ministries and its agencies, the NAP stresses the need for strengthening the capacity of WID Focal Points as an important component of the National Machinery.

#### *Gender Sensitisation Training of Staff and Beneficiary Members*

The NAP proposes training of staff at all levels, both men and women, to raise awareness on gender, women's empowerment and human rights and make available skills training necessary to translate such concepts into programmes and projects. Emphasis is given to the formation of an internal gender integration team and the integration of gender sensitisation training in the training curricula of sectoral training institutions. Gender sensitisation training has also been proposed for the beneficiary group members with whom the sectoral ministries work.



### *Management Training for Women Managers*

The rationale behind this is that with increased and improved skills in management, women managers will perform well and this will encourage the agencies to recruit more women.

### *Gender Specific Indicators and Sex-disaggregated data in Monitoring Formats*

The NAP emphasises development and strengthening of the monitoring mechanisms of the sectoral ministries especially to incorporate gender specific indicators and sex disaggregated data. This is in order to assess the effects of the programmes and projects on men and women, make policy decisions and take corrective actions.

### *GO-NGO Linkage and Coordination*

In order to address problems and issues related to women's development in a more comprehensive way, the NAP strongly emphasises the need for development of an institutional mechanism to promote not only interministerial collaboration but also to establish linkages and coordination with NGOs, human rights groups, women's organisations, legal aid agencies, professional associations, private sectors, and local government bodies. It also proposes the revision and improvement of project formats and checklists through a more participatory process so that all project documents reflect needs, interests and priorities of women. The NAP stresses the need for review of existing research done by various research agencies of the sectoral ministries and independent research institutions. It also emphasises the identification of research needs in the field of women's development through consultations with different partners in women's development.

### *Monitoring*

To monitor implementation of the NAP, periodic progress reviews should be made through both formal and informal monitoring mechanisms in each sector.

Quantitative as well as qualitative data collected through appropriate monitoring formats are to be compiled and made accessible to MOWCA, WID Focal Points, National Council for Women's Development (NCWD) and other relevant bodies to assess the progress of implementation. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) of the government and other statistical and research institutes will provide input for monitoring progress of the implementation of actions in different sectors for the advancement of women.

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs is in the process of setting up a committee for the monitoring of the implementation of the NAP. It is to include women from outside the government. Its composition and terms of reference have not yet been finalised. The Core Group has also proposed the setting up monitoring committees with NGO and women's organisations' representation for each ministry.

## **Conclusion**

As the NAP has only recently been approved it is too early to say how the implementation process will take place. The various ministries have yet to review their respective action plans for determination of priorities and allocation of resources. However, the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs has made an attempt to encourage the various line ministries to make resource allocations and incorporate programmes and projects into the Fifth Five Year Plan, covering the period July 1997 to June 2003 based on the NAP.

It can be said that the process by which the NAP was formulated was through the successful efforts of various women's organisations and activists. The process was participatory and broad-based resulting in an increased awareness of and commitment to the goals of advancement of women and implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, at various levels.

## Recounting Efforts for Women's Advancement and Assessing Post-Beijing Responses in Nepal

*Submitted by the Legal Aid and Counselling Centre (LACC), Nepal*

After Beijing, the Legal Aid and Counselling Centre (LACC) has been implementing post-Beijing activities which draw upon the commitments made at the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, September 1995. LACC has conducted policy oriented studies to make recommendations for policy change in the area of legislation. LACC led the mission of drafting the property rights bill which was an important issue discussed in Parliament. The bill addresses provisions for legal reform to

provide equal property rights for Nepali women. In Nepal, women are deprived of such economic rights and have few opportunities to participate and contribute to the mainstream development of the country. The recommendations are strong and the proposed draft bill for the property rights and other amendments to the civil code were submitted to the Ministry of Law and Justice and subsequently to parliament. It has now been directed to the Foreign and Human Rights Committee for further amendments. We

### NEPAL: Specific Commitments Made at Beijing

- Amend laws that violate equality enshrined in Nepal's Constitution
- Develop legislation amending ancestral property laws
- Strengthen enforcement agencies dealing with trafficking in women and girls
- Expand credit supply and income generating programmes for women
- Develop programmes to combat iodine deficiency and anaemia among women
- Reduce maternal mortality rate by 50% by the year 2000
- Provide 90% immunisation coverage by the year 2000
- Implement programmes to achieve universal literacy and reduce the drop-out rate within the next five years

Source: UN Division for the Advancement of Women web site

#### Basic Indicators

Maternal Mortality	1500 (per 100,000 live births)
Female Labour Force Participation	40.0%
Female Literacy	12.6%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

### International Instruments Signed or Ratified

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	●
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	●
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	●
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	●
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	●
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	●
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	●
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

#### Key

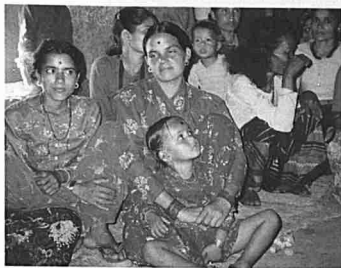
- Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature.
- Signature not yet followed by ratification.

Note: Status is as of 1 March 1997.

are waiting for the next session of the House to begin, in order to initiate our lobbying activities.

Although a lot of effort is made by NGOs to put forth their perspectives, the government has not been able to take steps toward amending the civil code. Establishing a Women's and Children's Council or a separate Women's Ministry to address women's issues is not the solution to our problems. We realise this and want the government to address these issues strongly. As an outcome of our lobbying activities, an ordinance on the decentralisation bill was passed and there were local elections held under this ordinance. The elections brought in 34,448 women members at the village development committee level. This has been one of the important post-Beijing achievements. Women can now occupy decision-making positions at the village level. But again, according to a survey conducted with these women members, leadership skills and development of training modules are needed to prepare the women for their new roles. Women's groups who would like to assist these women, face financial constraints.

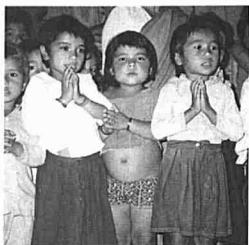
With the property rights bill in parliament, we have held yet another needs assessment session and identified various priority issues of concern. As counselling was one of the major issues identified for action, counselling training was conducted and a formal family counselling centre has been established. Furthermore, various networks have been established to address the problem of trafficking in women and to combat the prevalence of violence against women. Efforts have focused on domestic violence which is largely under-reported. Bilateral alliances have been built to address these issues in a more effective manner. Thus, various activities and efforts have been undertaken by NGOs to address the commitments made in Beijing. We are particularly lobbying the government to implement what has been identified as needed for those affected by trafficking and violence.



#### WOMEN AND THE LAW

In a landmark decision, the Supreme Court of Nepal has ordered the Government to draft a new inheritance code that eliminates discrimination against women found in the current code. The court stated that the current provisions, giving women the right to inherit only if they attained the age of 35 and had remained unmarried or were married for more than 15 years was discriminatory to the Constitutional guarantee of equality. Lawyers challenging the code also argued that it is contrary to the provisions of the Women's Convention, which Nepal has ratified. The court determined that simply rendering this provision void could result in other inequities as to inheritance, and that in such a patriarchal and traditional society as Nepal a dramatic change in the law would be extremely disruptive unless it were thoroughly discussed within the society. Therefore the court ordered that a new code be presented after "making necessary consultations with the recognised women's organisations, sociologists, the concerned social organisations and lawyers as well."

Source: International Women's Rights Action Watch, April 1996, Volume 9, No. 4



## The Girl Child in Nepal

By Yubraj Sangraula, Anil Ragubangshi  
and Chhetan Yunjan

A statistical glimpse of the general situation of the girl child in Nepal shows that girl children under 14 years constitute 20.7% of the total population. Nepalese girls between the ages of 6 and 14 years work almost 75% more hours more than boys each day. Only 38.33% of schooling age girls have access to education compared to 61.66% of boys. Of girls aged 6 years who enroll in primary school, only 42.28% continue more than one year. Only 33% of secondary students are girls, while boys comprises 67%. Although marriage below the age of 16 years is illegal, 40.5% of girls get married under the age of 14 years and 7% below 10 years.

Discrimination against the girl child is evident within the home. The treatment of a son and daughter in terms of education, nutrition and inheritance rights differ widely. There are many forms of exploitation of the girl child in Nepal. These include child labour, child marriage, domestic violence, illegal earning (such as trafficking by relatives or making girls beg), inhuman treatment (such as tattooing, dedication in temples, child circus, entertainment through the badi and gyane system), rape/incest/sexual harassment and prostitution.

Since legally, daughters are not considered members of the family, the investment in education for girl children is often avoided. The disparity in education and high rates in early marriage of girls indicates this reality. Since women are not given equal legal status, girl children are engaged in labour from childhood. It is these two factors which operate as driving forces for early marriage which itself violates the right of a girl to self-determination.

Discrimination against the girl child should be viewed within the framework of the general legal position of women in Nepal. Women's legal position becomes clear after an analysis of the Nepali law and the relationship between person and property. As the source of property ownership and entitlement is ancestral kinship, women and men have differential rights. Men acquire inheritance rights at birth while women are only accorded inheritance rights after marriage.

The right to property can also be seen as part of one's right to identity. A woman's right to identity is deprived at the time of birth. The identity of a woman is governed by her husband's identity. The denial of women's right to identity has deprived women of the right to contract and the right to property. The denial of a self identity for women is at the root of the discrimination against the girl child. The legal position of women is defined in terms of marital status (meaning that it is marriage which makes her a person): unless married, women have no legal status at all (meaning that an unmarried woman is a liability) and at marriage she receives a status in her husband's care (meaning divorce or adultery can terminate this status).

Given the grave situation and poor status of the girl child, it is crucial to keep in mind that all inequality starts from our thoughts and beliefs. Therefore we have to first change our own thoughts and beliefs. We have to acknowledge that while the law sees all as equal, it gives men and women different positions. However, as laws are made by society, we also have the capacity to change it. This is one of the steps we can take to bring about a better life for the girl child in Nepal.

Source: *The Mini Beijing Conference Report, 1997*

## Follow-up Activities by the Government of Pakistan

Summarised from a report submitted by the Beijing Follow-up Unit, Government of Pakistan

### Introduction

The government set up a follow-up mechanism in Pakistan through establishing the Beijing Follow-up Unit in the Ministry of Women's Development, Social Welfare and Special Education (MoWD) in Islamabad in October 1996. The follow-up unit is run by a Coordinator. There are four provincial level follow-up units established in the provincial Women's Development Divisions (WDD). In addition, there are Core Groups in each province and a National Core Group.

The role of the national and provincial core groups is to coordinate all follow-up

efforts to implement and monitor the National Plan of Action (NPA) which is based on the Beijing Platform for Action. The national core group is involved in policy formulation and implementation of the national plan of action; advocacy, lobbying, review and monitoring of the implementation of the plan of action at the national level, while the core groups in the provinces carry out the same functions at the provincial levels.

### Major Activities Coordinated by the Beijing Follow-up Unit

The Beijing Follow-up Unit (BFU) has so far convened workshops and activities

#### PAKISTAN: Specific Commitments Made at Beijing

- Create a separate and independent Human Rights Ministry

Source: UN Division for the Advancement of Women web site

#### Basic Indicators

Maternal Mortality	340
	(per 100,000 live births)
Female Labour Force Participation	24.0%
Female Literacy	23.3%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	3.4%

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

#### International Instruments Signed or Ratified

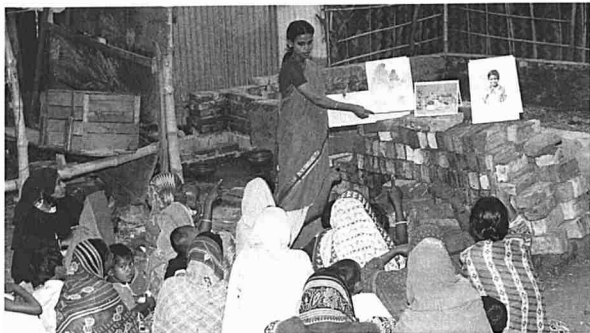
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	NA
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	NA
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	●
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	●
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	●
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	●
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	NA
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

#### Key

- Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature.
- Signature not yet followed by ratification.

Note: Status is as of 1 March 1997.



for the implementation of the national plan of action, including information sharing sessions. These are:

- a workshop for NPA formulation, November 3-4, 1996.
- a meeting of MoWD's focal points in federal ministries, February 17, 1997.
- the formation of the National Core Group, 1997.
- development of a resource pool and networking with organisations working in the WID/GAD field.
- liaison with the Provincial WDD Secretaries on a regular basis on issues related to Beijing Follow-up.
- review of the Ninth Plan WID Working Group in Islamabad to make the Ninth Plan more gender sensitive. Inputs were sought from experts in various fields.
- orientation to the Women's Convention was provided to provincial core groups.
- translation and distribution of the Platform for Action and the national report have been undertaken.

An important part of the BFU's work has been the establishment of task forces to plan for and finalise the implementation strategy of the National Plan of Action. At a national level preparatory meeting in September 1996, the methodology and

format to be adopted for the NPA was developed. This was followed by a two day workshop on the formulation of the National Plan of Action in November 1996. The first draft of the NPA has been reviewed, reformatted and edited into a consolidated document and disseminated to Core Group Members and resource persons in the four provinces and Islamabad, for feedback.

### Next Steps in the NPA Process

The Planning Commission has to be given an orientation on the concept of the NPA and is working on:

- making the Plan a working document at the federal and provincial level;
- making it possible to implement the Plan through the Ninth Five-Year Plan and Annual Development Plans (ADPs).

The Draft NPA has to be finalised at a national level meeting with:

- provincial focal points and nominees participating;
- the Planning Commission being requested to nominate concerned officers to participate in the finalisation of the relevant chapters of the Draft NPA.

# NGO Report on Post-Beijing Implementation, Pakistan

*Summarised from a report forwarded to APDC by Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Centre, which first appeared in the WEDO publication, "Mapping Progress: Assessing Implementation of the Beijing Platform 1998."*

## Government Plans and Initiatives

The government of Pakistan has formulated a national plan of action and resources are to be allocated once the plan is adopted by the government. The national plan of action has time bound targets and strategic objectives covering priority areas of concern up to the year 2005. The Ministry of Women's Development, Social Welfare and Special Education is the lead Ministry responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the national plan of action.

Although there is no significant change in the government budget because Pakistan has had to make structural adjustments to the economy since 1988 under IMF conditionalities, there is substantial support from bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors for the implementation of the Platform for Action.

Mechanisms set up to facilitate the tasks of the lead ministry include:

- the setting up of focal points in 13 ministries such as the ministries of education, health, population, interior, labour and manpower, law and justice, information and planning and development; and
- the formation of core groups at the national and provincial levels.

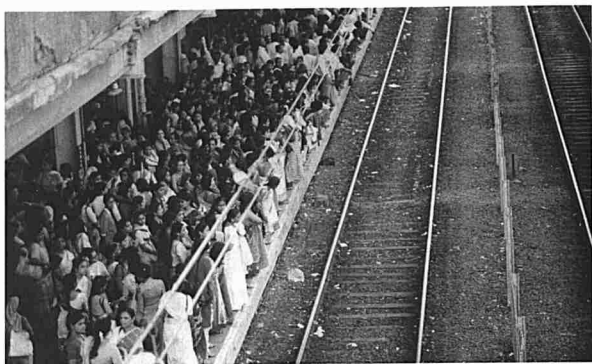
The core groups' expertise covers such areas as health, education, community development, environment, women's rights, banking and credit, and rural development. Whereas the national core group has NGO representatives from the provinces, experts and representatives from various ministries, the core groups

from the provinces comprise representatives of NGOs and line departments coordinated by the Directorate of Social Welfare and Women's Development at the provincial level.

## Impact of Economic Globalisation on Women's Rights

Women have been adversely affected by IMF conditionalities which were imposed in 1988. The structural adjustment programme has recently become more stringent particularly with the increase in oil prices which has affected other sectors of trade. Removal and reduction of subsidies on staples and agricultural outputs and increased dependency on imported basic food items has affected the food intake and nutritional levels of the people. Women and children are particularly affected and health workers have suggested that levels of malnutrition could rise sharply.

Basic services are inadequate and access to water has become problematic. Poor rural women have to traverse long distances to get water. Budget allocations for the health and education sectors have decreased over the years. Reproductive health services have been particularly affected by budget cuts. Although considerable private investments in medical services has resulted in many hospitals and clinics, the poor cannot afford such services.



Poor women have no access to credit except in certain areas where NGOs operate such schemes. Whereas in urban areas, factory work and home-based employment remain poorly paid, in the rural areas paid work for women is non-existent. The programme of privatisation followed by the government will leave between half a million and a million people jobless.

The government has very few housing programmes for the poor and women have not benefited from government programmes for distribution of agricultural land to the poor.





# Post-Beijing Implementation in Sri Lanka

*Submitted by the Sri Lanka Women's NGO Forum*

## Introduction

The Ministry of Women's Affairs is the primary agency responsible for policy formulation on women's issues. The national machinery for women's advancement comprises the Women's Bureau and the National Committee on Women which are under the Ministry of Women's Affairs and are considered to be the implementing arms of the Ministry. The national machinery has the mandate to review problems faced by women and formulate policies that address these problems.

The Sri Lankan National Plan of Action (NPA) on Women is based on the global Platform for Action. The NPA was

formulated through an NGO-Government collaborative effort and covers the following eight critical areas of concern:

- Violence Against Women and Armed Conflict
- Education and Training
- Economic Activities and Poverty
- Health
- Environment
- Decision-making
- Girl Child
- Media

For each issue, the NPA outlines the different aspects of the problems faced by women and identifies strategies to deal with each aspect. The strategies are

### Basic Indicators

Maternal Mortality	140
	(per 100,000 live births)
Female Labour Force Participation	34.0%
Female Literacy	86.9%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	5.3%

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

### International Instruments Signed or Ratified

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	●
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	● a
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	●
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	●
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	●
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	●
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	●
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

#### Key

- Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature.
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a. Declaration recognising the competence of the Human Rights Committee under Article 41 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

directed at relevant actors, for example, government bodies, NGOs and semi-government institutions and have time bound targets for short, medium and long term actions. Although there is no clear information available on the exact allocations in the national budget for women's programmes, the National Committee on Women has been allocated some funds to raise awareness about the 1993 Women's Charter amongst the divisional secretariats of the government.

### Monitoring Implementation

There is no clearly set out government mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the NPA. NGOs have been invited to make recommendations for strengthening the capacity of the Women's Ministry. Although the NPA clearly sets out the issues which need to be addressed, who should address these and in what period of time, there are no clear indicators with which to assess the progress in relation to achievements. The indicators to measure progress on implementation are also general in nature.

So far, monitoring efforts have been primarily carried out by NGOs over the last two years and only in relation to specific issues. The Sri Lanka Women's NGO Forum is in the process of preparing a Shadow Report to CEDAW which incorporates some aspects of monitoring.

### Women's Priority Issues and Concerns

The key areas of concern that urgently need to be addressed in Sri Lanka are:

- Discriminatory personal laws governing areas such as inheritance, marriage, divorce and maintenance matters and custody of children which deny women equal rights, e.g., Muslim women and women governed by Kandyan law do not enjoy equal inheritance rights as their men.
- Administrative practices that are discriminatory against women, for

example, Sri Lankan women do not have the same rights as their men in transferring citizenship to their foreign spouses or to their children born within a legal marriage and women in government settlement schemes are discriminated because the patriarchal principles of male inheritance guide such schemes.

- Protection of women migrant workers and women workers in the Free Trade Zones.
- Gender imbalance in the areas of vocational training.
- Specific needs of women affected by armed conflict.
- Recognition of marital rape.
- Abortion remains illegal. Efforts to allow abortion in cases of rape, incest and foetal abnormalities have been unsuccessful.

Sources from networks of women's organisations and community-based organisations indicate an increased awareness of women's concerns. This is reflected in media coverage of some of the issues such as rape, sexual harassment, incest and abuse of migrant workers.

Women have been lobbying on such issues as statutory rape, custodial rape and sexual harassment. They continue to lobby for implementation of laws on violence against women. The Penal Code was amended in 1996 after continuous lobbying by these groups. Penalties for rape were increased and sexual harassment and incest were criminalised.

The Beijing experience has allowed women from different ethnic, religious and socio-economic groups to network and work together to achieve their common objectives. It has also enabled some of them to realise the implications of global policies and actions at national and local levels.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The Platform for Action outlines various actions and measures for combating violence against women. Women's interventions at the 42nd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York, March 1998, point to the following forms of violence against women which are particular to the Asia-Pacific region:

- increase in trafficking of women and girls
- prostitution
- exploitation and torture of migrant women workers
- murder of women through dowry practices and disfigurement of women by throwing acid on them
- wife/partner-battery and other forms of domestic/family violence including incest that lead to women's/girls' deaths
- sex selective abortions, female foeticide and infanticide
- rapes, sexual harassment and sexual assaults of women
- violence against women in situations of armed conflict
- violence against women refugees
- sexual exploitation of women by both state military and armed insurgents
- religious fundamentalism and ethnic and caste based gender violence that target women
- violation of women's social and economic rights by state and non-state actors

Although some governments have passed post-Beijing legislation on violence against women and there is considerable support from women's groups and governments for women survivors of violence, women continue to face structural, political, socio-cultural and ideological barriers when they seek to protect their rights to personal safety and security. The facts and figures presented in this section speak for themselves.

### BANGLADESH

An acid attack is the kind of violence Bangladeshi women dread most. Attackers are young men whose romantic advances are rejected, or dowry-hungry husbands. The Coordinating Council of Human Rights Bangladesh (CCHRB) reported 89 acid attacks in 1996. However, according to Nasreen Huq, Convenor of a Dhaka-based feminist group that helps acid victims, many more incidents are not reported in the newspapers or brought to the notice of the law. Though the death penalty was introduced for acid attacks several years ago, implementation of the law has been slow. Human rights workers say such cases are difficult to prosecute because it is difficult to gather evidence and victims' families are often threatened with retaliation.

Source: International Women's Rights Action Watch, September 1997, Volume 11, No.2

### INDIA

The Supreme Court of India has outlawed sexual harassment in the workplace. In a ruling on a petition filed by women activists after a social worker was gang-raped by her colleagues, the court banned both direct and indirect "unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature", including physical contacts, requests for sexual favours, suggestive remarks and showing of pornography. In the absence of legislation prohibiting sexual harassment, the court outlined steps to be taken to deal with it: appropriately advertised the definition of sexual harassment, avoid retaliation for claims made by victims and give victims the option to seek their own transfer or that of the perpetrators. Complaints should be handled by a committee headed by a woman, and half of the committee members should be women as well. An employer is duty-bound to take supportive and preventive action on behalf of female employees even when sexual harassment comes from an outsider. However, the court did not recommend punishment for offenders.

Source: International Women's Rights Action Watch, September 1997, Volume 11, No.2

### JAPAN

The first monument for Korean women who were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese army in World War II was recently erected in Tokashiki Island, Japan. Funded by public donations, the monument is covered with 5000 pieces of porcelain baked by volunteers. Artist and fund-raiser Hamako Kitta hopes the monument will help Japanese people remember history. She became involved in the issue of sex slaves after she talked with a Korean woman who was brought to work as a prostitute on Tokashiki Island.

Source: International Women's Rights Action Watch, September 1997, Volume 11, No.2

## VIETNAM

One of the forms of violence against women is wife battery. In the past 10 years, 30-60% of divorce cases cited maltreatment of women as the reason for divorce. In 1996, 1,97,828 married women who were beaten by their husbands applied for divorce. Domestic violence is on the increase. In recent years, cases of trafficking of women and girls have been recorded. The main reasons for trafficking are the open market policy, over-urbanisation and wide exchanges in the region. According to the Supreme People's Court, from 1992 to 1996, 739 cases involved the trafficking of 1,383 women. Another issue of concern is the increasing problem of sexual harassment which was considered sensitive and hence previously ignored in Vietnamese culture. Child prostitution is addressed in some scientific research as the consequence as well as the cause of this phenomenon.

Source: Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development (CGFED)

## Cambodia: Prostitution Worsens Amid Peace

The prostitution of women and girls in Cambodia has shot up dramatically in the last few years, but the country's still-unsettled government has yet to get a grip on this social time bomb. Activists say the country's sex industry — which has thrived amid Cambodia's transition to a democracy and market economy — is still in its early stages. They say this gives the Cambodian government the chance to act now to arrest the country's emerging image as a place "where one can have easy and inexpensive access to women and child prostitutes" and a transit point for the trafficking of these sex workers.

But the Human Rights Task Force on Cambodia, in a new report, says that despite evidence of the rise of prostitution and sexual trafficking, the government still has "no clear policy and programmes to deal with it". So far, it says, officials have failed to go beyond raids on prostitution dens. It also added that there have also been no prosecution of brothel owners, agents, pimps and customers.

"Instead, most of these intervention actions have only led to the harassment of sex workers, reinforcing further the conception that they are the culprits and not the victims", says the task force, an international NGO that works with human rights, women and community groups. There are a few education efforts being made to address the needs of women and children caught in the sex industry, not to mention health and employment programmes for them. The few that exist are often initiatives by NGOs.

Yet evidence of Cambodia's growing sex industry and its emergence as a trafficking point for women in Indochina is unmistakable. "Although the problem is still at its early stage, having appeared in its more organised form only within the last two to three years, the trafficking and prostitution of women is spreading fast", the report explained. "Women are also trafficked into and out of Cambodia from Vietnam, Thailand and China", the report pointed out, adding that this became apparent some two years ago.

A November 1995 survey by another NGO, the Human Rights Vigilance of Cambodia, identified over 6,100 sex workers in more than 1,200 establishments in Phnom Penh as well as 11 provinces. Other estimates give a higher number. Analysts find worrisome the fact that the survey found 30.74% of the 6,100 girls to be minors aged 12 to 17 years old, showing that women in prostitution are getting younger.

Prostitution has been around for decades, even during Cambodia's two decades of civil war. The Khmer Rouge barred prostitution during its bloody reign two decades ago, but the problem has resurfaced. The arrival in 1992 of about 20,000 mostly male personnel with the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia who oversaw the 1993 UN brokered polls as part of an international peace accord created a huge market for commercial sex. By end 1992, the number of sex workers in Phnom Penh alone had shot up to more than 20,000. After UN troops left in 1993, although the number of sex workers declined, there were more younger women in the occupation.

Studies and surveys by the Human Rights Task Force show a large number of women are tricked or abducted into prostitution or sent outside the country by international sex traders. The studies, conducted as early as 1993, show that half of the sex workers were sold to brothels and that 86% were sold by parents, other relatives, neighbours or friends. Today the percentage is lower, at about 55%. The remaining 45% were deceived by pimps or abducted into prostitution.

Facilitated by Cambodia's long and largely unsupervised borders with Thailand and Vietnam, the entry of international sex traders into the picture in recent years complicated the problem. Apart from Cambodian women and girls, Vietnamese and Chinese women and children are reportedly being brought into Cambodia for prostitution. "It is not unlikely that many of them are also trafficked to Thailand", the Human Rights Task Force said.

In the years since the 1993 Cambodian polls, the country has been preoccupied with political infighting between the two parties that share power in a coalition — the royalist Funcinpec Party and the Cambodian People's Party. The country is preparing for general elections in 1998, but activists say the government had better look beyond political matters and heed the nation's social problems immediately.

"Alarming as it is, responses to these problems have been weak and largely uncoordinated", says the task force. The "transitional nature" of Cambodian society is a key factor in many of its problems, including a still-weak economy, lack of resources and lawlessness in some areas. But the report warns that the country must adopt a "multi-disciplinary and coordinated approach" to curb the sex trade, addressing issues ranging from poverty to weak laws to the fragmentation of families which is a legacy of the war years. After all, the Human Rights Task Force points out there is a clear cry among Cambodia's women victims: 84% of sex workers interviewed say they want to leave the trade.

Source: Johanna Son, *Inter-Press Service*, Manila, February 1997, No. 42

## Violence against Women in Mongolia

In the past, men in the urban areas in particular, did not have to think about their roles in relation to family responsibility, as the state supported women in their child-bearing and child-rearing functions through generous benefits and the provision of day care centres. Since transition, such benefits have been withdrawn and day care facilities have declined dramatically from 441 to 71 between 1990-96. Women's perceived roles as "care givers" in the household continues, and hence many now face a "double-burden" encompassing their responsibilities both in and out of the household. For many women, the double burden creates role conflicts which then translates into lower career mobility as women attempt to balance the different demands placed on them.

It is claimed pressures have led to an increase in domestic violence. Police treat domestic violence as a private matter within the household. More generally, the issue of domestic violence is not socially acknowledged and therefore victims find it hard to voice their problems. A nation-wide survey by the Centre Against Violence covered 1,900 women and reported that:

- one-third of the women surveyed experienced psychological and physical pressure in their lives;
- one-fifth attributed this to alcohol-related reasons;
- one-third reported the pressure from husbands/partners and one-quarter from in-laws;
- three-quarters reported violence along with the pressure, and one-tenth reported sexual pressure;
- nearly half of the women claimed to have taken no action to deal with their problems and one-fifth left home as a consequence of violence.

Source: *Women for Social Progress*, Mongolia

## Trafficking and Sexual Abuse in Nepal

Gauri Pradhan

Trafficking in young Nepalese girls to India for the sex trade has become a lucrative business. Taking advantage of our social problems and perversion, the Nepalese girls are lured into prostitution by means of various attractive promises such as money, employment and prosperity. Nepalese girls are being used as if they were commodities. In India, it is said that every 'red light area' has Nepali girls.

At present not only is there Indo-Nepal border trafficking but also intra-country trafficking and inter-state trafficking in young girls for prostitution. Similarly, the customs of Deuki, Badi and Jari, all serve as a facade for prostitution in the name of tradition.

Some parents willingly send their young daughters to India for 'big money'. For them Bombay is their dreamland which will put an end to their lives of poverty and hardship. Moreover, trickery, cheating and fake marriages are the common ploys traffickers use to procure girls. Ethnic minorities, particularly the Tamang people, those who are uneducated and those naive and sincere by nature, fall easy victim to the ploy of crafty business people.

The number of trafficked Nepali girls vary from 100,000 to 200,000 excluding the children being sold for child labour and bonded child labour. Young children in the Indian red light areas are in very high demand. It is estimated that 4,000 to 5,000 Nepali children, mostly girls, are trafficked into India and sold for prostitution, bonded labour and child labour every year. Many girls accept the life, some try to escape, a few are rescued but rejected by their families, many land in hospitals with venereal diseases and HIV and AIDs. Many die young and a handful of them become brothel owners themselves.

The prevalent male chauvinist concepts encourage discrimination against daughters in society. The practice of isolating daughters and women from the outside environment and withholding education and skill training is guided by the notion that an investment in women is useless. Therefore the political will and democratic participation in decision making is important to control growing crimes such as rape, child prostitution, child marriage, child servitude, kidnapping of children and exploitative child labour.

Changes such as democracy and human rights which took place in Nepal, should bring prosperity for women, children and exploited people in the real sense. The sexual abuse of children is a consequence of feudalism, capitalism and anti-humanism. The sexual abuse of children is the most inhuman violation of a child's rights. Citizens' groups, communities and people from all walks of life should make an effort to combat child prostitution. Political parties, human rights organisations, trade unions, NGOs, media, women's pressure groups and government agencies should take the initiative for playing a very important role for advocacy, welfare and rehabilitation for sexually abused and exploited women and children.

Source: *The Mini Beijing Conference Report, 1997*

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

All Tables from: *"The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics", United Nations*

### Survey results on percentage of adult women who have been physically assaulted by an intimate partner

Asia and the Pacific	%
India, southern Karnataka (3 villages)	22
Jullundur District, Punjab (1 village)	
• scheduled (lower) caste	75
• higher caste	22
Korea, Republic of	38 <sup>a</sup>
Malaysia	39 <sup>a</sup>
Papua New Guinea	
• urban	58
• rural (19 villages)	67
Sri Lanka, Colombo (low income)	60

#### Key:

- <sup>a</sup> Percentage physically beaten within last year

Sources: Compiled by Lori Heise as consultant to the United Nations Secretariat from the following national reports and studies:

India: A Mahajan, "Instigators of wife battering", in *Violence Against Women*, Sushma Sood, ed. (Jaipur, India, Arihant Publishers, 1990); and Vijayendra Rao, personal communication (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Population Studies Center, 1993).

Korea, Republic of Kwang-iei Kim and Young-gyu Cho, "Epidemiological survey of spousal abuse in Korea", in *Intimate Violence: Inter-disciplinary Perspectives*, Emilio C. Viano, ed. (Washington D.C., Hemisphere Publishing Corporation, 1992).

Malaysia: Women's AID Organisation, "Draft Report of the National Study on Domestic Violence" (Kuala Lumpur, 1992)

Papua New Guinea: S. Toft, ed., "Domestic Violence in Papua New Guinea" Law Reform Commission, Occasional Paper No. 19 (Port Moresby, 1986).

Sri Lanka: Deraniyagala Sonali, "An investigation into the incidence and causes of domestic violence in Sri Lanka" (Colombo, Women in Need (WIN), 1990)

## National action in response to violence against women

Country	No of NGOs working on violence against women	Rape reform law(s) passed	Domestic violence reforms passed?	Specialised rape crisis services/ centres available?	Specialised shelters/ refugee available for victims	Gov't body responsible for anti-violence programming
Bangladesh	21-50	No	Yes <sup>a</sup>	1	1	No
Fiji	1-5	No	No	Yes	other	No
India	100-250	Yes <sup>b</sup>	Yes <sup>a</sup>	No	other	Yes
Israel	11-20	Yes	Yes	7	7	Yes
Korea, Rep. Of	11-20	Pending	No	1	Yes	No
Malaysia	6-10	Yes	Pending	Yes	2	No
Pakistan	6-10	No	No	No	4	No
Philippines	21-50	Pending	Pending	Yes	Yes	No
Sri Lanka	6-10	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Thailand	11-20	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Turkey	1-5	No	No	No	Yes	No
Vietnam	1-5	..	..	No	other	No

Note: Pending -- a bill has been introduced in Congress or Parliament, but not yet passed. Other -- although no specialised shelters exist, other services for battered women are available, including crisis counselling, legal advice and hotlines.

### Key:

<sup>a</sup> No general domestic violence law, but law prohibiting dowry harassment and cruelty to women passed.

<sup>b</sup> Rape law amended so that burden of proof is on accused rather than on victim in cases of custodial rape.

Source: Compiled by Lori Heise as consultant to the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, based on a global survey of anti-violence activists, service providers, and lawyers. Based on information provided as of September 1993. Where possible, answers were verified through published sources.

## Survey reports on women in selected large cities who were sexually assaulted in a five-year period

Asia	Percentage sexually assaulted in the period 1987-1992 <sup>a</sup>
India, Bombay	2
Indonesia <sup>b</sup>	14
Philippines, Manila	1
Papua New Guinea <sup>c</sup>	14

Note: These data were derived from an international crime survey that focused on "stranger" crimes such as burglary, car theft and muggings. Estimates are unlikely to include sexual assaults by intimates or family members.

### Key:

<sup>a</sup> "Sexual assault" includes rape attempted rape and indecent assault.

<sup>b</sup> Survey includes eight cities.

<sup>c</sup> Survey includes three cities: Port Moresby, Lae and Goroka.

Source: Special tabulations from 1989 and 1992 International Crime (Victim) survey prepared by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (Rome).

## EDUCATION

### Action to Wipe Out Women's Illiteracy

At present 13% of the population in China are illiterates or semi-literates, of whom 70% are women. The goal set by the All China Women's Federation is to eliminate illiteracy among 3 million young and middle-aged women annually. Women's federations at all levels continue to list the literacy campaign as an important part of the activity of family cultural construction and make it a common responsibility of the government, public organisations and every family. In order to fulfil the task, women's federations introduced the "Spring Bud" project as part of an effort to assist the government to realise the goals of the National Programme of Action for Child Development in the 1990s. The federation mobilised fund-raising activities to aid drop-out girls return to school. Some 100,00 girls benefited from this project by the end of 1995. In 1996 alone, the project provided funding for 150 classes nation-wide, enabling more than 7,000 drop-out girls to return to school. Women's federations at various levels also cooperated with the government's educational departments in organising literacy classes for women illiterates. The All China Women's Federation organised a group of formerly illiterate women who had proved their capabilities during the literacy training, to tour Beijing and other cities and report on their successful experience.

*Source: All China Women's Federation Report, 1998*

### JAPAN

The Japanese Ministry of Education disapproves textbooks that advocate alternative family values. In Japan, all textbooks for elementary, junior high and high schools must be screened and approved by the Ministry of Education every four years. In 1997, four home economics textbooks did not pass the screening. All four were found "inappropriate" because they emphasised diversity in the family structure and values, individual growth, ecological concerns and human rights issues. The "inappropriate" descriptions include a paragraph saying: "Home economics education in the past was intended only for girls who studied how a family should be. Today's students have come to appreciate life as human individuals."

*Source: International Women's Rights Action Watch, September 1997, Volume 11, No.2*

### The Effect of Education

It has often been said that educating women is the single most important step governments should take. This is because:

- Literacy and numeracy among women is associated with the adoption of improved farming methods, data from 70 developing countries suggest that increasing girls' secondary schooling from 4 to 16% would increase women's participation in the labour force by over 12%. In Thailand, an additional year of women's schooling is associated with a 26% increase in their hourly wages.
- Studies from Nepal and India found literate women expected and received better treatment at clinics and hospitals. Research in Bangladesh found educated women communicate more with their husbands and have greater say in family decisions than uneducated women.
- The World Fertility Survey found that women with over 7 years of schooling married around 4 years later than uneducated women. Data from 77 developing countries found later marriage was associated with enhanced access to resources. Information from 21 developing countries found later marriage was linked to women's greater economic independence.
- The increase in education of women is estimated to be responsible for 40-60% of the fertility decline in some countries. It has been estimated that giving 1,000 girls an extra year of education would avert up to 500 births.
- Data from 33 less-developed countries reveals that every additional year of a mother's schooling is associated with an additional 7-9% drop in child mortality. The children of educated women in Sri Lanka have fewer episodes of diarrhoea than those of uneducated women. Educated women are more likely to attend antenatal clinics, have their births supervised by a trained person, and take their babies to the clinic to be immunised.

*Source: People and the Planet, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1993*



# WOMEN AND EDUCATION

## Illiteracy and Education

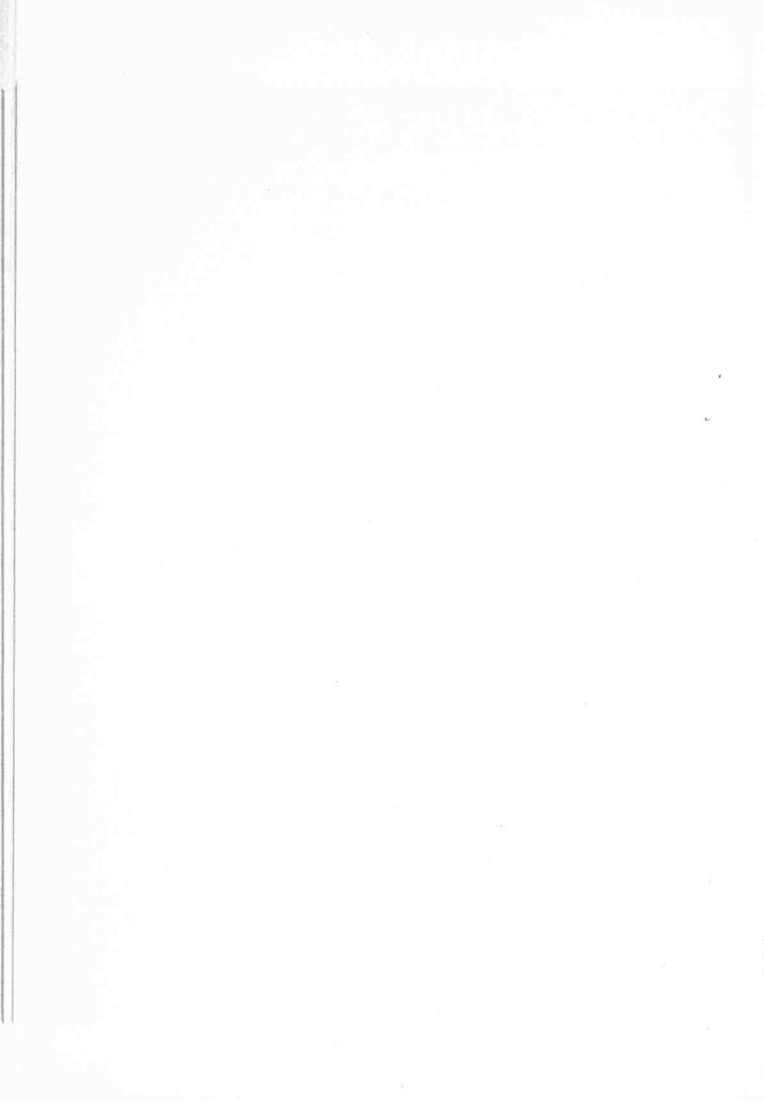
From: "The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics", United Nations

Country or Area	% 15-24 illiterate, 1990		% 25+ illiterate, 1990		Combined first/second level gross enrolment ratio				Third level enrolment per 100,000 population, 1990		Females per 100 males enrolled, 1990		% women teachers at universities	
	w	m	w	m	1980		1990		w	m	Second level	Third level	1990	
Afghanistan	88.9 <sup>a</sup>	54.2 <sup>a</sup>	97.6 <sup>a</sup>	77.3 <sup>a</sup>	10	43	13	26	93	198	49 <sup>b</sup>	44	22	
Azerbaijan	0.1	0.1	5.7	1.5	..	..	..	..	..	..	96 <sup>b</sup>	62 <sup>c</sup>	..	..
Bangladesh	72.8 <sup>d</sup>	55.4 <sup>d</sup>	86.6 <sup>d</sup>	62.5 <sup>d</sup>	26	50	37	47	108	500	50	19	12	
Cambodia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
China	13.0	4.0	54.0	23.0	71	88	81	93	129	245	73	50 <sup>a</sup>	30 <sup>f</sup>	
India	59.7 <sup>d</sup>	33.7 <sup>d</sup>	80.6 <sup>d</sup>	50.2 <sup>d</sup>	41	65	55	79	360	788	52	42	19	
Indonesia	4.9	2.6	33.5	15.8	65	79	78	85	280	1789	81	48 <sup>a</sup>	8	
Korea, Republic of	..	..	..	..	90	95	97	97	2516	5366	92	46	21	
Lao People's Dem. Repub.	..	..	..	..	59	73	51	70	77	158	66	48	25	
Malaysia	16.8 <sup>g</sup>	10.2 <sup>g</sup>	62.2 <sup>h</sup>	30.2 <sup>h</sup>	68	71	76	74	602	738	102	90	24	
Mongolia	..	..	..	..	100	93	98	91	..	..	107 <sup>b</sup>	149	30	
Pakistan	75.1 <sup>d</sup>	54.6 <sup>d</sup>	89.2 <sup>d</sup>	68.3 <sup>d</sup>	16	34	20	38	149	358	41	22	17	
Philippines	3.1	3.7	8.7	7.2	96	94	97	97	3100	2106	99	143	57	
Sri Lanka	9.8 <sup>d</sup>	8.1 <sup>d</sup>	22.0 <sup>d</sup>	9.0 <sup>d</sup>	77	77	89	87	329	471	106 <sup>b</sup>	69 <sup>d</sup>	28	
Thailand	2.1	1.5	25.2	11.8	65	67	59	60	2146	1973	93	111	51	
Vietnam	7.4	6.8	22.5	8.3	68	73	67	71	..	..	99 <sup>b</sup>	31 <sup>h</sup>	33 <sup>f</sup>	
Cook Islands	1.2 <sup>f</sup>	2.5 <sup>f</sup>	5.7 <sup>f</sup>	4.7 <sup>f</sup>	..	..	..	..	..	..	112	100	25 <sup>d</sup>	
Fiji	2.6	2.4	22.6	13.5	89	87	90	90	302	508	100	61	25	
Northern Mariana Islands	0.2	0.3	1.6	0.8	..	..	..	..	..	..	111	118	..	
Palau	0.7	0.5	4.3	2.1	..	..	..	..	..	..	100	65	..	
Papua New Guinea	60.0 <sup>d</sup>	44.0 <sup>d</sup>	92.0 <sup>d</sup>	84.0 <sup>d</sup>	32	43	39	47	71	216	61	32	14	
Samoa	0.8	1.1	2.3	2.8	..	..	..	..	..	..	100 <sup>b</sup>	..	27 <sup>d</sup>	
Solomon Islands	..	..	..	..	43	59	53	65	..	..	60	..	..	
Tonga	0.2 <sup>a</sup>	0.2 <sup>a</sup>	0.7 <sup>a</sup>	0.4 <sup>a</sup>	..	..	..	..	..	..	92	129	18	
Vanuatu	32.3 <sup>a</sup>	24.2 <sup>a</sup>	64.4 <sup>a</sup>	52.9 <sup>a</sup>	..	..	..	..	..	..	75	25 <sup>a</sup>	..	
Singapore	0.9	1.1	21.4	6.0	81	81	87	87	..	..	100	72 <sup>d</sup>	17 <sup>d</sup>	
Nepal	85.1 <sup>d</sup>	54.9 <sup>d</sup>	93.4 <sup>d</sup>	74.0 <sup>d</sup>	23	63	39	80	226	882	37	25 <sup>f</sup>	16 <sup>h</sup>	

### Key:

- <sup>a</sup> Data refer to a year between 1975 and 1979
- <sup>b</sup> Data refer to general secondary education only
- <sup>c</sup> Data refer to universities and equivalent degree-granting institutions only
- <sup>d</sup> Data refer to a year between 1980 and 1984
- <sup>e</sup> Data refer to full-time students only
- <sup>f</sup> Data refer to all third level institutions
- <sup>g</sup> Ages 15-29
- <sup>h</sup> Age 30+
- <sup>i</sup> Data refer to public universities only
- <sup>j</sup> Data refer to the university/universities only
- <sup>k</sup> Including correspondence courses
- <sup>l</sup> Those who completed less than four years of schooling

Sources: Prepared by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat from Women's Indicators and Statistics Database (Wistat), Version 3, CD-ROM (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95/XVII.6) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, Statistical Yearbook 1994 (Paris, 1994). Series on enrolment and teachers also draw on national and regional statistics reports.



**PACIFIC**



# Post-Beijing Implementation in the Cook Islands

*Summarised from a report submitted to the UN Division for the Advancement of Women*

## Introduction

The National Policy on Women, adopted in August 1995, is the government's commitment to ensure women's advancement in the Cook Islands so that women can realise their full potential as contributors to and beneficiaries of the development process in local and national development, as well as in regional and international affairs. The Policy consolidates and ensures women's rights to equal opportunities in all areas of development and decision-making and aims to facilitate the advancement, status and situation of women in the outer islands communities,

as perceived by people of those communities, so that their issues are not subsumed under the issues of the women from the main island of Rarotonga.

## Implementation Strategies for the National Policy on Women

The Women's Division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Cook Islands National Council of Women spearhead and devise strategies to implement the Policy. The Plan of Action to implement the Policy is based on realistic activities

### Basic Indicators

Maternal Mortality	46 (per 100,000 live births)
Female Labour Force Participation	34.0%
Female Literacy	99%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

### International Instruments Signed or Ratified

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	NA
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	NA
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	NA
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	NA
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	NA
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	NA
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	NA
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

#### Key

- Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature.
- Signature not yet followed by ratification.

Note: Status is as of 1 March 1997.

achievable by community groups, to avoid having to depend on the government all the time. The Plan of Action was finalised and adopted at a National Women's Forum in 1996 where a committee formed by the Women's Division, the National Council of Women (NCW) and the Project Aid Division of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, drafted the action plan. Forum participants were assigned to 5 working groups for two and a half days to understand the plan and discuss issues based on their own environment in order to consolidate issues for national prioritisation and action. Implementation and monitoring mechanisms were also worked out at the Forum.

The priority issues identified were economic empowerment; social development; natural resources; mechanisms for the advancement of women and leadership and decision-making. The National Action Plan is therefore a working document for promoting the involvement of women in development work programmes at the national as well as at the local level. The implementation of the Action Plan will be evaluated in 1998.

## Priority Issues of Concern

### *Economic Empowerment*

**Pricing policy:** Women have been active in the production of handicrafts, agricultural and marine products and other income generating activities (e.g., tourism). Over the years, ad-hoc marketing systems have been established between women's groups in the outer islands and markets on Rarotonga. There is a general concern that a fairer and more equal pricing policy should be established and adhered to by marketing outlets. For the implementation of a fair and equal pricing policy for handicrafts, agricultural and marine products and other income generating produce, the action plan calls for a situation analysis of the pricing levels of outer islands products on Rarotonga and a meeting with all handicraft vendors on Rarotonga to develop a guideline for pricing policy which protects the suppliers and ensures

returns for outlets.

**'Au Vaine' principle:** In the 1940s and 1950s women's groups (known then as 'au vaine') were set up throughout the country. All groups were guided by basic principles that governed their operations. These unwritten principles were known as the 'au vaine principles' which outlined:

- protection of property and the environment (regulated by regular inspections of homes and villages and fining of offenders);
- ensuring that basic standards of family health and sanitation are upheld (through regular inspections);
- support for community work and community obligations (e.g., provision of cooked food and offer support services for community working bees).

To integrate these guiding principles into the operations and Constitution of the NCW and each Island/Vaka Women's Association, the Action Plan recommends the review of all Island/Vaka Women's Association's Constitution and calls for the dissemination, discussion and integration of the principles of 'au vaine' into their operations.

**Credit schemes for women:** Often, women require small amounts of working capital to undertake income generating activities. The lending facilities of commercial banks are not readily available, and even when they are, there is no guarantee that the micro-sizes required by women will be approved in a timely manner.

So far, Penrhyn, Mangaia, Mitiaro, Mauke and Manihiki have already received external funding assistance to set up revolving funds schemes. The Cook Islands Credit Union is moving operations to the outer islands. The Action Plan encourages the establishment of revolving fund schemes in at least three Island Women's Associations and tasks the NCW and Women's Affairs to source funding and hire a technical expert to assist the women establish these schemes with a regular monitoring system for one year.

## Social Development

### Health

**Teenage pregnancy:** A Ministry of Health study has raised concern on the increase in teenage pregnancies. The Action Plan calls for dissemination of relevant information on teenage pregnancy and its adverse effects on young girls. In addition NCW, women's groups and youth groups are urged to liaise with the Ministry of Health to use trained midwives and public health nurses to conduct talks and discussion panels with Island/Vaka Women's Associations.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health have formalised sex education in secondary school curriculum and support the awareness raising programmes for teenagers on sexuality development through community/island talks and discussion sessions with health and education experts.

**Prevention of STDs and cancers,** and promotion of oral health: Measures such as public education on the issues particularly on information dissemination and awareness raising are emphasised by the action plan. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education will identify technical experts to support on-going community health education with emphasis on nutrition and moral behaviour.

**Recognition of Maori medicine:** With the introduction of charges for prescribed medicine it is becoming fairly expensive for families to obtain drugs. The action plan calls for the recognition of reliable and medically sound Maori medicine to be considered and promoted by the medical profession. A series of working meetings between NCW, MOH and Maori ta'unga with the involvement of young people, are planned.

**Child and sexual abuse:** Cases of child and sexual abuse are slowly becoming prominent issues in our society, not because they are on the increase but more because victims are vocal in their protests and existing institutions have

become more aware of the traumas surrounding such cases. To substantiate the above statement, data information is required, even though it is a muted subject for most people. The action plan calls for on-going work programmes of the two Crisis Centres on Rarotonga, the setting up of a reporting system on work being done by regional agencies on CEDAW and legal literacy, and disseminating this information through the NCW network to women at all levels in the community. Training on data recording on child abuse is encouraged for people who work with children and the action plan also calls for an increase in public awareness on the issue.

**Health profile of women by island:** In order to monitor whether the objectives of the Policy have been achieved a profile of women's health by island will serve as a fairly accurate monitoring tool. The action plan calls for the establishment of health databases with technical support from the Statistics Office and MOH. The training of women and health workers in each area to maintain this database is considered a priority.

**Delivery of professionalism with public relations, essential medication and facilities for health services:**

According to the action plan there is a need to re-introduce public relations and customer services training to health workers as there are reports of rude treatment of women and young women by health workers. In addition, the Southern and Northern Group health facilities are basic and require urgent maintenance. The action plan calls for lobbying of policy-makers to reinstate the nursing school with relevant customer service curriculum integrated into the nursing curriculum and urges the government to buy essential drugs.

*"Women need to understand the political development process and how the decision-making process affects their lives today and in the future. Often women consider the realms of decision-making (whether it be at the Island Council or Cabinet Minister level) as a man's prerogative."*

### *Education*

Life skills curriculum: Given the policy of private sector expansion, the younger generation in the country needs to be prepared to live under and cope with a market economy. Life skills refer to parenting, sexuality development, managing resources and the environment and business sector development. The action plan calls for lobbying the Ministry of Education to develop life skills curriculum that is appropriate to the environment of Cook Islands children.

Community education programmes for women: Because of putting their responsibilities for the family first, many women miss the opportunity to further their skills and knowledge. The provision of community education programmes in various interest fields (budgeting, home economics, reuse/recycle skills, farming, carving/handicraft, fishing and other income earning activities) will enable women to equip themselves for development changes. The action plan calls for meetings with University of South Pacific (USP) Centre, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and other institutions to work out a strategy to implement at least four community education programmes for women each year.

Political participation: Women need to understand the political development process and how the decision-making process affects their lives today and in the future. Often women consider the realms of decision-making (whether it be at the Island Council or Cabinet Minister level) as a man's prerogative. To ensure fair and sound decisions for the good of the community/nation/island, it is important that both men and women are aware of the processes involved and their roles in participation and decision-making. The action plan calls for gender disaggregated data to advocate for equal opportunities, organisation of leadership training workshops in three outer island venues each year and the organisation of awareness programmes on governance, accountability and the decision-making process.

### *Natural Resources*

The important role women play in environmental preservation is often understated. In general, women are the custodians of valuable natural resources such as water, firewood, medicinal herbs, etc. Guarding and conserving our environment for future generations is an important responsibility. The action plan calls for environmental awareness workshops in line with the national environmental strategies and relevant island/vaka environment issues in all islands/vaka. The environment profile of each island with information on the state of the environment and a register of women from that island or vaka who have environmental/conservation knowledge, is recommended.

### **Mechanisms to Promote the Advancement of Women**

Mechanisms for the advancement of women have been established within the community and in government sectors. However, these are diverse in form and uneven in their effectiveness and in some cases have declined in efficiency. Within the government structures, these mechanisms are frequently hampered by unclear mandate, lack of adequate staff and training, data and resources and insufficient support from decision makers.

The national machinery for the advancement of women is the central policy-coordinating unit of government, with the task to support a government wide mainstreaming of a gender-equity perspective in all policy areas. Therefore, in addressing the issue of mechanisms to promote the advancement of women, government and other sectors should actively and visibly promote mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes so that before decisions are finalised, a gender analysis is made of the likely impact on women and men.

At the community and organisational level, the mechanisms to promote the advancement of women are not fully understood and not well accepted due to



certain traditions and values, that give negative and positive connotations to gender equity concerns. Understanding past and present influences on gender relations is needed to affect social change in general and gender relations in particular in the future.

The action plan recommends that trained personnel provide government agencies, NGOs and others with advisory services in the integration of gender perspectives into policies and projects, so that there is a well consolidated network of diverse institution actors within government and the community, private and voluntary sectors working on gender equity issues.

Ninety percent of women are aware of the country's laws and acts pertaining to women's rights, land rights, matrimonial and other pieces of legislation affecting women. Laws and acts of the country that affect women have been reviewed and appropriate changes made to meet international requirements.

#### *Specific Recommendations*

- Provide staff training in designing and analysing of data for the integration of a gender perspective;
- Conduct a regular time use study to measure, in qualitative terms, the full contribution of men and women to the economy, including their participation in the formal sector;
- Improve concepts and methods of data collection on the measurement of women's participation in the economy;
- Conduct legal literacy training and awareness-raising;
- Identify, review and make the appropriate changes in laws and acts of the country to promote women's rights;
- Support the on-going efforts to translate into Maori essential parts of the Women's Convention for dissemination to all interested community groups.





## Implementation of Commitments and the Beijing Platform for Action in Fiji

*Summarised from a Report by the Department for Women and Culture, Fiji, to the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UN DAW)*

### Introduction

The policy document of the Fiji government entitled "Opportunities for Growth" has a separate section on WID outlining the efforts of government in the following areas:

- involving women as equal partners in the national, political, economic and social development of the country, through positive discrimination, where appropriate;
- that women be recognised and valued as resources which can be utilised and assisted to contribute more effectively in

an economically productive development process;

- upgrading of training and skill levels and overall human resource development for women in an effort to improve their access to employment opportunities;
- strengthening of collection and dissemination of information on a gender basis for policy formulation;
- strengthening of co-ordination of women's activities in the overall national development effort;
- examining legislation, including

#### Fiji: Specific Commitments Made at Beijing

- Allocate additional resources, including expansion of government credit to develop small enterprises and self employment opportunities for women.
- Encourage financial institution to review their lending policies to improve women's access to institutional credit.
- Increase women's participation in committees, counsel and boards by 30% to 50% by 1999
- Assign 50% participation of women in training, appointments and promotions at all levels of government and encourage the same in the private sector.
- Promote elimination of domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment and child abuse.
- Change laws that clearly disadvantage women.

Source: UN Division for the Advancement of Women web site

#### Basic Indicators

Maternal Mortality	NA (per 100,000 live births)
Female Labour Force Participation	23.0%
Female Literacy	74.1%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	5.8%

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

#### International Instruments Signed or Ratified

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	NA
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	NA
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	●
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	●
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	●
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	●
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	NA
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	●

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

#### Key

- Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature.
- Signature not yet followed by ratification.

Note: Status is as of 1 March 1997.

international legal instruments pertaining to women with a view to safeguarding the interests of women.

The Women-in-Development Steering Committee (WIDSC) comprising representatives of Ministries/Departments and major women's non-governmental organisations, has begun discussions on the National Implementation Plan of Action to develop the commitments made by the government. A multi-sectoral approach will be taken for the implementation of the plan. Therefore, the role of other Ministries/Departments and NGOs will be critical. The function of the Department for Women and Culture (as the Government national machinery for the advancement of women) in promoting and monitoring all developments related to Fiji's WID policy and commitments is crucial and it will require more financial resources.

Activities related to the WID policy are ongoing. Specific actions on the Women's Convention include submissions for legal reforms relating to Evidence and Criminal Law, the Employment Act and Workers Compensation Bill.

## Dissemination of Information

Information on the Platform for Action has been disseminated to Ministers, Parliament Secretaries, other government departments, members of the Women-in-Development Steering Committee (WIDSC), field staff of the Department of Culture (DWC), major women's organisations and NGOs, media personnel and the public at large.

## Strategy for the Development of a National Implementation Plan of Action (NIPA)

In September 1996, DWC, following consultations with WIDSC, formulated a national strategy towards the development of an implementation plan for Fiji's commitments. It is envisaged that the National Implementation Plan of

Action (NIPA) will be developed along the following phases:

*Phase I:* Recruitment of consultants to write situational analysis and develop working papers on the commitments;

*Phase II:* Identify working groups to discuss the provisional NIPA with a view that a multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary approach is adopted to ensure full commitment of all relevant agencies;

*Phase III:* Consultations with relevant Ministries towards the further development draft of the implementation plan and the institutionalising of actions;

*Phase IV:* National preparatory meetings to discuss the draft plan;

*Phase V:* Further consultation with Ministries and NGOs;

*Phase VI:* Public launching of NIPA;

To date, DWC has almost completed Phase I of the strategy and has begun to lay the groundwork for Phase II.

## Follow-up Activities on Fiji's Commitments and the Platform for Action

### *Poverty Alleviation*

WOSED: In 1993, DWC established the Women's Social and Economic Development Programme (WOSED), in response to numerous requests by women for support in income generation activities. As a micro-enterprise development programme, WOSED's objectives are to support women's income earning activities, promote savings, improve the participants' standards of living, create self-employment or support those wishing to be self-employed and prepare women for integration into the commercial sector.

A wide variety of projects are funded including retail stores, fishing, farming, vegetable farming, sewing, screen printing, quilting and embroidery, yaqona (kava) selling, poultry, mat

weaving, among others. About 70% of all activities funded is agriculture based. As of April 1997, there were 230 borrowers in the programme who had taken 258 loans. Of the 230 borrowers, 133 are in the Central Division, 70 in the Northern Division, 50 in the Western Division and 5 in the Eastern Division.

**New Zealand Small Loans Scheme - FDB:** Through the bilateral aid programme, since 1989, the New Zealand government had provided a grant of F\$28,025 to the Fiji Development Bank for the Small Loans Scheme which provides loans to assist poor urban and rural women. The scheme, however, remains under-listed as more information needs to go out, particularly to women.

**Small Business Equity Scheme:** Another scheme that is accessed by women is the Small Business Equity Scheme managed by the Ministry of Fijian Affairs. Only the Cakaudrove and Lomaiviti Provincial Councils have opted for funds to be made available to individual applicants. The remaining Provincial Councils utilise the fund in "block investments". Current records indicate that the Cakaudrove Province in particular are providing loans to women. In the urban constituencies, over a quarter of loan recipients are women who run businesses in catering, printing, canteens, screen printing, sewing, yaqona selling, handcraft and market vendors/road side selling. Again more efforts are needed to disseminate information especially to indigenous women.

**Cooperatives:** The Department of Cooperatives provides limited financing to registered cooperatives. Altogether, there are now 486 registered cooperatives. Of these, only 21 or 4.3% are managed and operated by women.

## Violence against Women

### "No Drop" Policy

The Fiji Police Department has adopted a "No Drop" policy on all reported cases of domestic violence. This policy has meant that all reported cases of domestic violence will now be investigated, and

based on the evidence collected, cases will then be taken to Court to be heard by the Magistrate. Depending on the circumstance of the case, it may then be referred to a higher Court.

### Sexual Offences Unit

Sexual Offences Units have now been set up in the Southern, Western and Eastern Divisions of the Police Department. The Unit in the Southern Division also looks after reported cases from the North. Services include specific handling of investigations into sexual offences and child abuse. The Fiji Police Department had also included, as part of its annual training package, sessions on the topic of sexual offences. These units now require additional resources for expansion.

### Sexual Harassment

There are no specific laws against sexual harassment in Fiji, however, Section 154 (4) of the Penal Code covers some types of sexual harassment. The Public Service Commission is also currently reviewing the Public Orders and the issue of sexual harassment will also be discussed.

## Women in Power and Decision-making

- Appointing authorities are urged to increase women's membership in the various Boards, Committees and Councils, etc., by 30-50% in the next three to five years.
- Those Boards and Committees that do not have any female representation should have at least one in the future
- The Minister for Women will be consulted on suitably qualified women for appointment. In 1993, there was a total of 173 women serving in the Boards, Committees, Councils and Commissions. They made up 9.7% of the total membership. By 1996, this figure had risen to 13.3%.
- The work of the Fiji National Council of Women (FNCW) through its Women in Politics (WIP) Project, is to increase the participation of women at local government levels.

## Women in the Civil Service

A survey in 1996 Department of Women and Culture (DWC) reveals that women occupied less than half of the Civil Service positions or are under-represented in most occupational groups. This imbalance exists at all levels but is more acute at the senior and middle management positions. The development of NIPA for this particular issue will identify actions emanating out of this commitment and how these could be incorporated into policy documents/guidelines and regulations that govern the allocation of appointments and promotions as well as training awards in the Civil Service.

## Institutional Mechanism for the Advancement of Women

- A decision was made in August 1996 for the DWC to contribute to a policy analysis role from a WID and gender perspective on public policies, programmes and projects. In August 1997, the Department became a part of the Ministry of Information.

- The government recognises that there are 2 major national NGO coordinating mechanisms for women: these are the Fiji National Council of Women (FNCW) and the Soqosoqo Vakamarama (SSVM).

- DWC will actively consult, coordinate and liaise with central and sectoral agencies for the integration of gender concerns into sectoral policies and programmes.

- In 1995, DWC made a submission to the Solicitor General's Office for the review of the certain areas of the law including the:

- a) Criminal Procedure Code for the hearing of rape cases be amended so that rape is not an 'electable' offence
- b) Evidence Act for amending the clause on the hearing of a rape victim's past sexual experience

c) Penal Code be amended to remove the requirement for corroboration in rape cases

d) Penal Code be amended so that domestic violence is a separate offence entitled "Criminal Offence in the Family" and that arrest and persecution is mandatory

e) Matrimonial Causes Act be amended so that legal recognition is given to the principle of equal contribution to the marriage irrespective of the relative financial income of parties to the marriage.

The government had also announced in August 1997, its intention to work towards ratifying the ILO Convention No. 100 (Equal Remuneration) and No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment / Occupation).

In addition to the above, Fiji acceded with reservations to the UN Convention on the Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women in September 1995. Reservations were placed specifically on Articles 5(a) and 9.

## Conclusion

Further progress in Fiji on planned activities relating to the various commitments in the PFA, the development of a comprehensive National Implementation Plan of Action and the necessary follow-up work following accession to the Women's Convention, will require commitment from all sectors and policy-makers and the provision of additional resources. The availability of sufficient resources in terms of budget and professional capacity will further enhance the role of the national women's machinery.

# Report on the Women's Citizenship Rights Campaign in Fiji

*Submitted by the Women's Coalition for Women's Citizenship Rights, Fiji*

## Introduction

In May 1996, a group of concerned women came together to discuss the issue of women's citizenship rights. Eleven organisations were represented at the first meeting and the women present believed that it was time they raised the issue of women's citizenship rights with reference to Article 25 and Article 26 of the Constitution of Fiji (which states that the foreign spouse of a male citizen gets automatic citizenship while the foreign spouse of a female citizen does not, and must reside in Fiji for a residency visa for some time).

It was agreed that in light of the work undertaken by the Fiji Women's Right Movement (FWRM), the organisation would be an effective Secretariat for the group. The group working for women's citizenship rights merged and became known as the 'Women's Coalition for Women's Citizenship Rights (WCFWCR)'.

Members agreed that WCFWCR should undertake an intensive lobbying campaign in the area of women's citizenship rights. Strategies outlined as part of the campaign included the following:

- Inviting other women's organisations to be a part of the Coalition to lobby for women's citizenship rights.
- A mass media campaign on the issue of women's citizenship rights in particular highlighting the blatant discrimination against women.
- Individual letters to all members of Parliament and Senators highlighting the discriminatory effects of Articles 25 & 26 and how they affect Fiji women and their families.
- Invitations to all Members of

Parliament inviting them to a Public Forum on the first anniversary of the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women by Fiji.

- An Open Letter to the People of Fiji in the daily newspaper inviting them to the Public Forum.

## The Campaign

### *Invitations to Women's Organisations*

The Coalition decided to invite other organisations unable to be present at the first meeting so that they could state their views and concerns regarding the issue. Letters were sent to seventeen women's organisations inviting them to be part of the Coalition. Included in these letters was a draft letter to the members of parliament to enable everyone to understand WCFWCR's position.

The need to lobby for changes was a priority because Fiji had ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, but reservations had been placed on Article (2) which dealt with the issue of women's citizenship rights. This meant that Fiji was not bound by the Women's Convention to remove the obvious discrimination faced by women in this area.

We received favourable responses from most organisations while there were others who felt that we were pre-empting the Constitution Review Commission's Report which was to be released in August 1996. Certain individuals who were part of some organisations felt that

while individually they would be supportive of such a change, their political briefs and aspirations would prevent them from making these views public.

The following organisations supported the campaign:

- Fiji Women's Right Movement (Secretariat)
- Fiji Women's Crisis Centre
- National Council for Women
- Women's Action for Change
- Fijian Association Party — Women's Wing
- Fiji Women Lawyers Association
- Fiji Association of Women Graduates
- Fiji Women in Politics
- Pan Pacific Association of South East Asian Women's Associations (PPSEAWA)
- National Federation Party Women's Movement
- Fiji Girmat Council for Women
- TIS Mathar Sangam
- Young Women's Christian Association
- Stri Sewa Sabha
- Fiji Labour Party — Women's Wing
- The Poor Relief Society

#### *Letters to members of Parliament and Senators*

The Coalition sent individual letters to all members of Parliament and Senators highlighting concerns. It was felt that the issue of citizenship rights was such that it should cross individual and political party lines. There was debate amongst the group on the feasibility of sending individuals letters rather than to the political parties.

Letters were sent to all members of Parliament and Senators as the Coalition believed that this would be an education campaign for Fiji's representatives. Policies in Fiji are totally enshrined in party politics. Members of Parliament were not used to being individually lobbied and found it beneficial to follow the party line on issues of contention instead of airing their personal views. We believed that by writing to each representative we were also informing them of their responsibilities to their constituents. Voters in Fiji are not

familiar with the right to lobby to demand accountability from her/his elected representatives.

#### *The Public Forum*

Members of Parliament and Senators were invited to a Public Forum on the issue of Women's Citizenship Rights. The 28th. of August was considered the ideal date for the Forum as Fiji ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women on this day in 1995. The Public Forum allowed members of the Coalition to inform the public on the issue of Citizenship Rights. It provided an opportunity for Members of Parliament, Senators and concerned citizens and non-citizens to state their views.

The names of parliamentarians who responded to our invitation to the Forum were put out in advertisements which included the names of all those elected/appointed representatives who had informed the Secretariat of their views and concerns regarding Articles 25 & 26 of the Constitution. The cases of other Commonwealth countries where the issue of women's citizenship rights had been addressed were also highlighted.

The Secretariat also sent reminder letters to the Presidents of political parties who had not responded. We eventually received responses from all political parties regarding the issue. Unfortunately the General Voters Party and the Soqosoqo ni Vakavalewa ni Taukei (SVT) Party were unable to submit their written responses as they did not have adequate time to hold an Executive Council meeting regarding their views. Written responses from the Fiji Labour Party, the National Federation Party and the General Electors Association were received and there were verbal affirmative responses from the Fijian Association Party, the General Voters Party and 11 Senators. In retrospect, we believe that securing the support of the majority of the House of Representatives on this issue and approximately a third of the Senators, was an achievement in itself.

The Public Forum was an immensely successful event. The number of people who attended the event far exceeded our expectations. We were empowered to see women who were affected by the unfair citizenship laws speak out on the issue. There were a large number of men who also spoke in favour of the proposed reforms. Negative sentiments were also expressed: there was a fear of marriages of convenience, a fear of greater unemployment and increased crime. Some people expressed fears of loss of land rights as they wrongly believed that the citizenship issue was linked to the *Vole ni Kawa Bula* (register of indigenous Fijians) and land rights. The overwhelming majority believed that the discrimination on the grounds of citizenship was unfair and there was a need for a reform.

#### *The Media Campaign*

This was the easier part of the Campaign. The Secretariat was primarily responsible for the media campaign. We had radio programmes on the issue of women's citizenship rights in the three major languages. All six radio stations aired the programmes. Members of the Coalition also conducted talk back sessions. Members of the Coalition appeared on various segments of television programmes as well.

We also placed advertisements with the radio stations inviting the public to join the WCFWCR at the Public Forum. The media campaign (in particular the advertisements) was extremely successful in generating public interest in the topic.

### **Conclusion**

There is no doubt that the Women's Coalition for Women's Citizenship Rights was a major success. The campaign was well organised and executed without any major problems. Although the initial plans were to include meetings with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, the Coalition felt that these meetings needed to be deferred as the

Constitution Review Commission Report was expected to be tabled in Parliament on 10 September, 1996. The Report recommended changes in the area of citizenship rights to allow foreign men married to Fiji citizens the right to enter and reside in Fiji. The report also contained recommendations stating that children born outside Fiji have the right to Fiji citizenship if their father or mother are citizens of Fiji (this also includes any child adopted by a Fiji citizen).

The Report is extremely progressive in the area of women's citizenship rights. It has taken into consideration submissions by the different members of the Coalition to the Constitution Review Commission. The WCFWCR met after the release of the report and decided to put a hold on the other campaign activities until the Parliament Select Committee recommendations were tabled in parliament.

There is uneasiness about appearing too confident as we are unaware of how the members of the Parliament Select Committee will look at the issue of citizenship rights. It is for this reason that WCFWCR will be curtailing its media statements until the recommendations of the Parliament Select Committee are released.

The Coalition has achieved its goal of getting the issue of women's citizenship rights on the parliamentary agenda. The Constitution Review Commission has included the reforms sought by the Coalition in its report. This a major achievement for the Coalition.

We thank the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) under ODA for their financial assistance and other support towards the campaign for women's citizenship rights.



# Proposed Work Plan for the National Machinery for Women in Nauru

Submitted by Pamela Scriven, Nauru Women's National Council

## Introduction

The proposed work plan for the national machinery for women until the year 2000 must address the advancement of women in Nauru. It includes non-governmental organisations' initiatives, and the civic society. The work plan is a result of comprehensive consultations with government officials, community groups, non-governmental women's organisations, youth groups, educational institutions, media and individuals committed to the improvement and recognition of women's contributions and concerns in overall national development.

## Focus and Implementation of the Work Plan

### Education and Training for Women

- Develop and implement education, training and re-training policies for women, especially young women and women re-entering the labour market, to provide skills to meet the needs of a changing socio-economic context for improving their livelihoods or employment opportunities.
- Provide non-formal educational opportunities for girls and women in the education system.
- Provide information to women and girls on the availability and benefits of

Basic Indicators		International Instruments Signed or Ratified
Maternal Mortality	NA (per 100,000 live births)	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 NA International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 NA International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969 NA Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948 NA Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 ●
Female Labour Force Participation	19%	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979 NA Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984 NA Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951 NA
Female Literacy	69%	
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	NA	
Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997		Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997
		Key ● Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature. ○ Signature not yet followed by ratification.
		Note: Status is as of 1 March 1997.

vocational training programmes in science and technology (appropriate technology) and programmes of continuing education.

- Ensure access to quality education and training at all appropriate levels for adult women with little or no education and for women with disabilities.

#### *Women and Health*

- Involve women in the design of a holistic health plan, taking into account the needs of women at grassroots level.
- Remove all barriers to women's health services, and provide a broad range of health care services.

- Redesign health information services and training for health workers so that they are gender sensitive and reflect the users' perspectives with regard to interpersonal and communication skills, and users' right to privacy and confidentiality.

Encourage the training and employment of female health practitioners in the country.

- Initiate basic training programmes for women and girls on understanding the changes associated with reproductive health needs.

- Ensure that girls and women of all ages with any form of disability receive supportive services.

- Support non-governmental organisations working on women's health and help develop networks aimed at improving coordination and collaboration between all sectors that affect health.

Provide improved access to appropriate treatment and rehabilitation services for women substance abusers and their families.

- Strengthened preventive programmes that promote women's health (educational programmes).

#### *Violence Against Women*

- Make the elimination of domestic violence a national priority (legislation).
- Enact and enforce legislation against the perpetrators of practices and acts of violence against women, and give vigorous support to the efforts of non-governmental and community organisations to eliminate violence.
- Initiate and support research on the

impact of violence, such as rape, on women and children, and make the resulting information and statistics available to the public.

- Encourage the media to examine the impact of gender roles stereotypes including those perpetuated by commercial advertisements, which foster gender based violence and inequalities.

- Institute a programme to raise awareness of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, with a view to obtaining ratification by the Government of Nauru.

#### *Human Rights of Women*

- Organise training workshops on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

- Establish awareness programmes on legal literacy, leading to the formulation of legislation for the elimination of discrimination against women.

- Develop a comprehensive human rights education programme to raise awareness among women of their human rights and raise awareness among the community of human rights of women.

#### *Actions to be taken by the Government*

- Review national laws, including customary laws and legal practices in the areas of family, civil, penal, labour and commercial law in order to ensure the implementation of the principles and procedures of all relevant international human rights instruments by means of national legislation. Revoke any remaining laws that discriminate on the basis of sex and remove gender bias in the administration of justice.

- Provide gender-sensitive human rights education and training to public officials, including, inter alia, police personnel, corrections officers, health and medical personnel, and community workers including people who deal with migration issues and teachers at all levels of the educational system, and make available such education and training also to the judiciary and members of parliament, in order to enable them to better exercise their public responsibilities.

### *Women and the Environment*

- Ensure opportunities for women to participate in environmental decision-making at all levels.
- Facilitate and increase women's access to information and education, including in the areas of science, technology and economics, thus enhancing their knowledge, skills and opportunities for participation in environmental decisions.
- Promote the participation of local communities, particularly women, in identification of public service needs and design of urban infrastructure.
- Formulate policies to address the environmental impact of mining activities.
- Make adequate arrangements for the safe disposal of wastes and recycling of waste at all production levels.
- Organise a workshop on disposable wastes.

### *Women and the Media*

- Promote the equal sharing of family responsibilities through media campaigns that emphasise gender equality and non-stereotyped gender roles of women and men within the family and that disseminate information aimed at eliminating spousal and child abuse and all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence.
- Produce and disseminate media materials on women leaders, inter alia, as leaders who bring to their positions of leadership many different life experiences including but not limited to their experiences in balancing work and family responsibilities, as mothers, as professionals, as managers and as entrepreneurs, to provide role models particularly to young women.
- Develop approaches and train experts to apply gender analysis with regard to media programmes.

### *Women and Culture*

- Encourage the preservation of customary cultural values and traditions including preservation of practices consistent with equality.
- Research, record and document oral traditions and traditional knowledge systems used by traditional leaders and

elders, especially the examination of factors influencing the transition arising from cultural changes and influences in these societies.

- Support and facilitate the families' transition from traditional to changing lifestyles.
- In collaboration with the Internal Affairs Department, provide training programmes to address the needs of senior citizens.

### *Women in Decision-making*

- Provide leadership and self-esteem training to assist women and girls particularly those with special needs and women with disabilities, to strengthen their self-esteem and to encourage them to take decision-making positions.
- Have transparent criteria for decision-making positions and ensure that the selecting bodies have a gender-balanced composition.
- Create a system of mentoring for inexperienced women and, in particular, offer training, including training in leadership and decision-making, public speaking and self-assertion, as well as in political campaigning.
- Provide gender-sensitive training for women and men to promote non-discriminatory working relationships and respect for diversity in work and management styles.
- Develop mechanisms and training to encourage women to participate in the electoral process, political activities and other leadership areas.

### *Women in Agriculture and Fisheries*

- Increase the awareness of women on the importance of agriculture through training workshops.
- Incorporate agriculture and fisheries to schools curriculum.
- Initiate agricultural and fisheries income-generating projects for women at district level.

## Nauru Eyes Windfall from Genetic Research

By Kalinga Seneviratne

While many developing countries have denounced the Western practice of using their people as "guinea pigs", the tiny Pacific nation of Nauru has signed an agreement on human genetic research with an international scientific institute.

The agreement signed last month between the Republic of Nauru and the Melbourne-based International Diabetes Institute (IDI) was hailed as a model for medical research involving citizens of developing countries. Royalties from any discovery as a result of the study and which would later be made available to the market will be shared with the Nauru government, he said. In announcing the agreement, Nauru's President Kinza Clodumar said it "will set new standards for population research, particularly in developing countries."

Nauru is an isolated, coral-capped island of 21 sq. km. located in the Central Pacific Ocean. It is the world's smallest republic, and has a population of 5,000 people. Virtually free of diabetes until 1954, Nauru has the world's second highest prevalence of the disease today. More than 32% of Nauruans above 20 years of age suffer from diabetes, which is nearly eight times that for populations in Europe and Australia.

"A major reason for the high rate of diabetes in Nauru has been the change in lifestyle from the former traditional one," said Professor Zimmet, head of IDI and medical advisor to the Nauru government since 1975. "The changes in Nauru mirror those throughout the Pacific as former traditional living populations become urbanised and modernised with more Western diet — of refined carbohydrate and high saturated fat — less physical activity and increasing obesity," he added.

Nauru has not been able to develop an organised agricultural economy due to the poor quality of its soil and lack of water catchment areas. Large-scale phosphate mining this century by Western powers has also killed any chance of developing agriculture activity in the island. After suing Australia for damages in the World Court, Nauru signed an out-of-court agreement with Canberra in 1993 in exchange for US\$78 million over the next 10 years to fix the environmental damage caused by phosphate mining.

Before mining operations began in Nauru in 1906, the islanders' traditional diet consisted of coconut products, fish and pandanus, with birds, mainly black noodles, providing extra protein. But eating habits gradually changed to a low-fibre Western diet of imported food. It started with German traders opening a small store in the island in the early 1920s, selling canned salmon, sugar, rice, biscuits, beer and tobacco in exchange for copra. These products were affordable to many Nauru citizens, since royalties from mining gave the country the world's highest per capita income by the 1970s.

"The increase in diabetes and other 'Western diseases' in populations such as Nauru's has to be seen in the context of globalisation of world economies," argued Zimmet. He describes the global diabetes epidemic as "the New World syndrome" and criticises health agencies for giving less priority in tackling the problem of diabetes, compared to the money poured in for combating AIDS and the Ebola virus. The global diabetes epidemic is just the tip of massive social problem now facing developing countries, as well as the poorer sectors of developed world, Zimmet warned.

Very high rates of obesity, diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases, coupled with cigarette smoking and alcohol abuse, are just part of the "Coca-colonisation" process, he noted, referring to the Western consumerist culture foisted on native people. The professor believes that changes in diet and more exercise alone will not prevent diabetes, but that improvement in the socio-economic situation and cultural status of the people in the developing world is necessary.

Thus, Zimmet argues that the agreement his institute signed with Nauru recognises such a process. It is in no way designed to use the people of Nauru as "scientific guinea pigs," he said. "The agreement with Nauru seeks to ensure that if any discovery is made from samples from surveys, the people of Nauru will benefit", he told IPS.

Many of the major diseases of Western life are due to genetic factors or mutations of genes, Zimmet explained. "A disease like diabetes may be due to abnormalities at several different metabolic sites in the body which may be determined by different genes. Genome studies seek to find the gene or genes responsible for diseases such as diabetes." These studies could lead to the discovery of testing methods to prediagnose diabetic. By locating genetic abnormalities, it may be possible to develop special drugs which target the metabolic reactions causing diabetes, he said.

Zimmet is confident that IDI's research will yield positive results in Nauru in five to seven years. Success would mean the ability to not only help tens of millions of diabetes patients around the world, but also give Nauru — which is fast exhausting its phosphate deposits — a financial boost.

Source: Inter Press Service, 5 September 1997.

# Report of Post-Beijing Implementation in New Zealand

*Summarised from a report submitted by the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 1997, to the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific*

## Introduction

The Ministry of Women's Affairs, the national machinery for the advancement of women in New Zealand, has analysed the Platform for Action and identified six cross-cutting themes to be addressed by the New Zealand government. These are:

- mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development of all policies and programmes;
- information on women's unremunerated work and its application to policy development;
- the gender pay gap;
- the need for more and better data

collection about all aspects of women's lives;

- the recommendations which apply specifically to Maori women and girls as indigenous people;
- enhancing women's role in decision-making including through a government commitment to "gender balance" on all government-appointed committees, boards and other relevant official bodies.

Implementation in each of the identified sectors is being carried out and monitoring strategies include a review and monitoring component.

### Basic Indicators

Maternal Mortality	NA (per 100,000 live births)
Female Labour Force Participation	NA
Female Literacy	99.0%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	29.2%

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

### International Instruments Signed or Ratified

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	●
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	●
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	●
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	●
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	●
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	●
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	●
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	●

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

#### Key

- Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature.
- Signature not yet followed by ratification.

Note: Status is as of 1 March 1997.

## **National Plans of Action in specific sectors**

### *Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective*

A framework to carry out gender analysis has been distributed widely to government departments and other organisations. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has also organised seminars for policy analysts in a number of government departments. A pilot programme on mainstreaming of gender has been established with the Social Policy Agency.

### *Women's Unremunerated Work*

The Ministry of Women's Affairs' staff have worked closely with Statistics New Zealand to secure funding for a survey on unpaid work/time-use. Information on the launch of the survey was announced in 1997.

### *Gender Pay Gap*

The Ministry of Women's Affairs has worked on a framework for analysing the factors underlying the gender pay gap. The New Zealand Institute for Economic Research was commissioned to study the gender pay gap to the year 2001 and analyse current legislation and options for reform. The Ministry is working with the Education and Training Support Agency to increase the numbers of women who participate in industry training.

### *Data Collection about Women's Lives*

To improve data collection about women's lives, the Ministry has been associated with:

- the Household Labour Force Survey supplementary section on income and the longitudinal survey of income dynamics with Statistics New Zealand
- the Department of Labour Childcare Survey

### *Maori Women and Girls*

The Ministry plans to develop a Maori women's gender analysis framework along with further strategies for action.

### *Women and Decision-making*

The Ministry is strengthening the participation of Maori women and

Pacific Islands women in decision-making roles. It is also exploring ways of more actively monitoring the composition of statutory boards and committees so that progress towards gender balance can be more accurately monitored.

## **Actions Taken to Achieve Strategic Objectives**

The government has decided to take a cross-sectoral thematic approach because there were already a range of government initiatives in place which specifically addressed the 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action. It was felt that through this approach the factors underlying the critical areas of concern could be addressed more comprehensively, for example, the employment task force package, changes to domestic violence policies and legislation, censorship legislation, strengthening of the Maori Women's Development Fund and human rights legislation.

Other policy initiatives that are under consideration and which are likely to have a positive impact on women include the review of matrimonial property laws, the crime prevention package, sexual and reproductive health policy, the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, the Optional Protocol on the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs works closely with NGOs on all key issues in the Platform for Action.

# Report of Post-Beijing Implementation in New Zealand

*Summarised from a report by Beverley Turner, for a meeting of the Asia Pacific Watch, Seoul, July 1997*

## NGO Actions

The New Zealand NGO Coordinating Committee, a group of 12-15 women from many different NGOs across the country, has held workshops to raise awareness on the key issues of concern from Beijing. All outcomes of the workshops were recorded as action statements from which general conclusions and specific actions to be taken by individuals, local organisations and NGOs, local and central government were finalised.

In September 1996, the book *Beyond Beijing* was launched at the Centennial Conference of the National Council of Women and copies were distributed widely. Although efforts were made to include the input of more Maori women, it was not achieved as not many Maori women joined the various NGO activities. It was noted that media focus on NGO activities was also inadequate.

A number of NGOs have taken significant initiatives, for example:

- All standing committees of National Council of Women have rewritten their plans for action in terms of the Platform for Action focus and are challenged to monitor themselves more stringently.
- Most NGOs are lobbying their MPs and local authorities on issues raised in the Platform for Action, e.g., poverty, health, environment and education.
- Some NGOs have taken specific sections of the Platform for Action as the focus and guide for most of their nationwide activities and are using it as a springboard for individual projects on housing and poverty, and poverty and health.

Many NGOs are working in their chosen areas without necessarily being aware that they are in fact addressing critical issues from the Platform for Action, e.g., the establishment of more women's refuges, the work of the Maori Women's Welfare League to get Marae-based health facilities for Maori families, support for refugees and migrants and the many courses run for women by local Women's Centres and the YWCA.

There is still much to be done by NGOs to inform New Zealanders about the contents, importance and relevance of the Platform for Action and to motivate more women to identify actions they can 'own' and take as individuals or as members of an NGO.

## Government Action

New Zealand has a small Ministry of Women's Affairs — it is 10 years old and has 37 staff all based in Wellington. The Ministry's function is to provide policy advice, gender specific advice on social and economic issues affecting women and to work to achieve positive outcomes for women especially Maori women as *tangata whenua* (indigenous people). It addresses areas where women are disadvantaged in relation to men and where Maori women are disadvantaged in relation to non-Maori women. It has two policy units one of which specialises on issues for Maori women.

The New Zealand government did not make specific commitments in Beijing — the Minister's speech to the Conference Plenary Session focused on



the global issues of nuclear testing and comparative invisibility of women at the United Nations level. After analysing the Platform for Action, the Ministry of Women's Affairs has identified six cross cutting themes as the basis for the New Zealand National Plan for Action.

The key government achievements are:

- The approval and funding for a very comprehensive time-use survey which will commence in 1998.
- The approval and funding for a Women's Consultative Council, broader than NCW and leading to the appointment of a Commissioner for Women who will be able to address any issue she chooses and who can put questions to and report to Parliament directly.

Other government initiatives that would benefit women are four Maori think-tanks funded specifically to focus on Maori health, education, economic development and employment and training. There is also higher proportion of women in parliament with a better overall ethnic representation: 21 Maori, 2 Pacific Island and 1 Asian. An informal cross-party women's caucus/committee of women MPs to work together on common issues has also been established.

There is still much to be done by the local and central government and so we need a simple, clear and consistent method of monitoring for NGOs to check on their progress. We need to network and keep track of what is achieved in terms of implementing the Platform for Action and conversely what may still require ongoing research, consultation and lobbying for success.



# Pacific Platform for Action: Turning Words into Action

*Submitted by Debbie Singh, Pacific Women's Resource Bureau, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, New Caledonia*

It has been over two years since the UN Fourth World Conference on Women was convened. And the emphasis is now on monitoring actions to implement commitments made at that global gathering of over 30,000 in 1995. The key word following the conference was 'Action', particularly at the national level to implement commitments and honour promises made before the international community. But how far has the Pacific come since Beijing? And what is being done to ensure that countries are meeting commitments to turn words into actions and promises into reality at national level?

The Pacific Women's Resource Bureau (PWRB), at the South Pacific Commission (SPC) now called the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, has, through a technical consultative meeting in December 1997, devised an implementation strategy for monitoring commitments made by Pacific Island governments following their endorsement of the Pacific Platform for Action (PPA) at the Sixth Triennial Conference of Women and Ministerial Meeting in New Caledonia in 1994.

The 22 Island governments and administrations of the Pacific Island region served by the SPC have formally recognised the importance of women's full and equal participation in national and regional development activities. The PPA lists 13 critical areas of concern to Pacific Island women and has the mandate of regional governments to ensure the advancement of women. Therefore national focal points for women need to refocus on the PPA as it has the endorsement of governments and administrations in the region.

The PPA is the authoritative document on objectives and strategies for the advancement of women in the Pacific until the year 2000. The document contains the voice of Pacific women, their identity, issues, their vision of the future and their role in shaping it. It is a baseline document, designed to ensure the full equality of Pacific women and their participation in development. From a monitoring viewpoint, indicators can be drawn from the PPA to assess the impact of programmes relating to the critical areas of concern.

The PPA aims to accelerate the full and equal participation of women and men in all areas including economic and political decision-making, protection of human rights and addresses critical areas of concern to ensure Pacific women and men can work together for equality and sustainable development. The PPA is now three years old. An extensive evaluation of the PPA in December 1996, regrouped the document's 13 critical areas of concern into five strategy areas to enable clearer identification, monitoring and implementation of programmes to achieve these critical goals and account for emerging needs.


These strategic areas of focus include: physical quality of life; empowerment in economic, social, legal and political areas, enhancement and protection of women's and indigenous people's rights, contribution of women to the realisation of just and peaceful societies in the Pacific and institutional arrangements and mechanisms. This regrouping of areas was endorsed by the Seventh Triennial Conference of Pacific Women in Noumea in June 1997. The conference also gave the PWRB the

mandate to re-evaluate the PPA and devise a mechanism to ensure effective monitoring of commitments made at Beijing, including those outlined in the 1994 Noumea Declaration.

The draft implementation strategy devised in December 1997 is the mechanism with which to ensure Pacific commitments to advance the status of women are realised. It is designed to assist governments to continue to turn commitments into actions and promises into reality towards the year 2000 and beyond. It is in the format of a log frame which will serve as a regional tool to monitor actions on commitments on a six-monthly basis. The draft strategy will be presented to the PWRB's 22 government women's focal points for evaluation and comment in the first half of 1998.

The PWRB will take a lead role in the development of national advocacy strategies through sub-regional caucuses. Since the Beijing conference, there has been a lack of demonstrable evidence that much has been achieved in implementation of commitments made at that conference. It is generally agreed that while the PPA was unprecedented in its significance on the road to Beijing, the return from China has been quiet and uneventful. Through the implementation strategy, the PWRB, as the regional lead coordinating agency for the advancement of Pacific women, is aiming to assist countries with actions targeted on national areas of focus. These actions will be determined, agreed to and owned by countries.

The mechanism will become the basis for coordinating, managing and monitoring progress on implementation of the PPA and will further define and streamline the SPC's technical assistance programme at national level.



## MEDIA

### Where are Women in Media Organisations?

#### FIJI

Many women are in radio. But few hold management positions. Management is extremely patriarchal and women who occupy senior positions have to work within this male hierarchy. Women journalist have been known to exert censorship over young women journalists who are interested in women's issues such as violence against women.

#### CHINA

Only a third of the 87,000 middle-level positions in media organisations are occupied by women. More than a third are in broadcasting and TV; less than a third are in print. Only 8.5% are on executive and editorial boards. Despite the law on gender equality and equal opportunity, women tend to have a narrow range of interests and focus their attention on culture and the arts.

#### PHILIPPINES

Women occupy 22% of editorial posts outside of the lifestyle sections. Women are now taking over beats previously seen as male domains. But their understanding of gender issues are constrained by traditional definitions of what is newsworthy. These traditional standards contribute to the marginalisation of women's themes in mainstream media.

#### THAILAND

Male-dominated, only 17% of the 4,332 media professionals are women. Women encounter sexual division of labour: they are assigned to cover social news and gossip while males cover political and economic news. Women who hold chief executive posts are usually the owners of the organisation.

#### JAPAN

Women comprise 15% of media workers in the media industry and mainly as office workers. They are rarely found in the technical field. Almost half of the women are part-time workers.

#### INDONESIA

Women can take top positions only if they have a big share in the ownership of the media organisation.

#### SOUTH KOREA

A survey of 21 dailies, a news agency and two broadcasting networks found that the percentage of women journalists has decreased from 8.2 percent in 1990 to 5.5 percent in 1995. The difference is due to implicit discriminatory measures against women in various levels of decision-making. Qualified women journalists are hired by lower paying media organisations.

Source: ISIS International, Manila

### The Status of Women and Media: Focus on Violence Against Women

*Preliminary report produced by ISIS International - Manila*

For Asians, the need for information is never as urgent. By the turn of the century, 57% of the world's people will be Asians, and 1.7 billion of that percentage will be women. And yet, the images, ideas and identities that are being communicated by the mass media in Asia continue to discriminate against women. Women are either the subservient, dependent, nurturing wives and mothers or sex objects, mistresses and prostitutes. Over the last decade, the only change in media's images of women is the projection that women are now "liberated" young professionals, but professionals in the service field. It is also of great concern to us that the representation in media of violence against women, particularly sexual violence, has increased tremendously in the past years. An 8 country study on TV violence in Asia conducted by the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Center, has classified 59% of all programmes as violent, with particular high levels of violence in India, Thailand and the Philippines. Women's bodies continue to be used by media to make sales and gain profit. This has led some to say that the increase in the incidence of trafficking in women and children is an indication that media's messages have been picked up loud and clear.

An overview of the Asian media situation will help in our analysis and strategising. As everywhere else, the mass media in Asia are either controlled by strong states and/or owned by the elite. Many of the privately owned media are owned by businesses that have close connections with government officials, if not actually owned by these officials. In Thailand, almost all of the 494 radio and nine TV networks are state-owned but almost all of print media are privately owned. In Indonesia, 3 out of 5 private TV stations are owned by President Suharto's two children and a brother-in-law. Suharto's close associates own another one.

Recently though, globalisation and the advances in communication technology have brought changes to the pattern of ownership in media and the control over information dissemination. Many government-owned, military-controlled or publicly-funded media establishments are now in the process of corporatisation and commercialisation while others are being taken over by multinationals. In Cambodia, two TV stations are now partly owned by government and Thai businesses. In the Philippines, stiff competition has led to the entry of foreign multinational corporations into media. At the same time, advances in communication technology have forced a number of Asian governments to loosen their grip on the dissemination of information. For example, China, although very cautious, is reported to be opening up to satellite channels, constructing satellite TV stations and developing newspaper trusts.

As a result of these developments, Asia is now in the middle of the global market. Private ownership of media has facilitated the control of media transnational interests through their huge advertising budgets. This form of indirect control hooks the Asian mass media in promoting information designed to build a consumerist culture. The mass media have been integrated into a global scheme that creates cultural alienation. Because owners dictate editorial policies that promote their own interests, the will of the Asian press to provide objective accounts of processes and events from which the public can draw adequate sources of information is curtailed. Media initiatives that often serve as women's alternative channels of communication are either taken over or marginalised by large companies or communication consortia, women's production or editorial control within the new system is severely eroded.

Although statistics show that more women are now working in media, but the figures are deceiving. Despite the numbers, women have not gained parity in terms of participation and decision-making in the news section. And where discrimination is extreme, some women journalists have actually had to give up work.

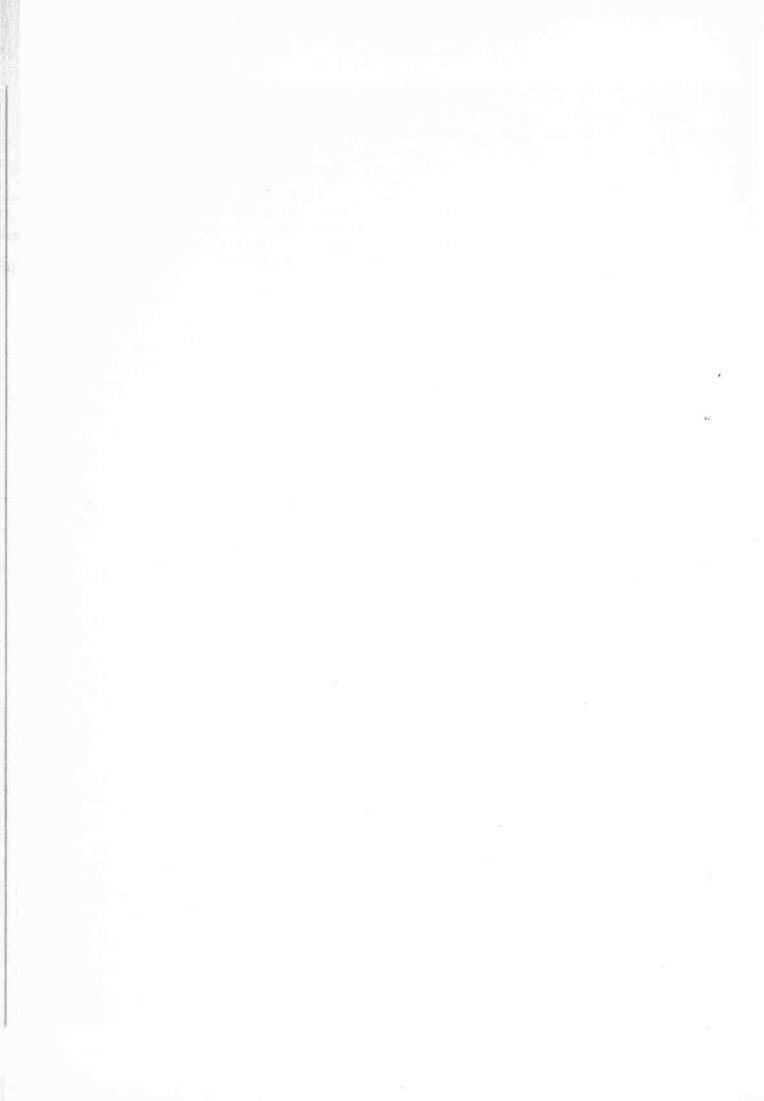
In Fiji, media management is extremely male-dominated. Women in senior positions have to work within this male hierarchy and have been known to exert censorship over young journalists interested in issues such as violence against women. In South Korea, there is a decrease in the number of women in media because of discriminatory employment practices. Women writers are hired only in offices that pay less than mainstream media.

Because of the continuous predominance of the male perspective in media, media policies and codes of conduct tend to focus only on taste, morality and decency, values that, depending on the society, can be very discriminating against women. Media values tend to highlight professionalism and stress accuracy, the right of reply and fair and objective reporting, without considering that fair and objective reporting also means the fair and objective representation and portrayal of women. While all the codes are concerned with indecent exposure of human bodies, there is no policy on the stereotyped portrayal of women, including domestic violence and abuse. For example, except for China which has laws on pornography and Malaysia which has a provision on women's roles to be highlighted in advertising, the rest of the region has laws that refer only to morality, taste, decency, crime, sex and violence.

In Cambodia, there are no media codes that refer to the coverage of women or violence against women. The same is true for Indonesia and Fiji. In Malaysia, the codes are concerned with indecent exposure of human bodies but there is no policy on stereotyped portrayal of women, including domestic violence and abuse. In the Philippines, there is a guideline on gender-sensitive reporting but compliance is inconsistent. In Korea, despite the legal and self-regulatory promise, distorted images of women continue in the media. In Japan, even though laws refer to public morals and decency, implementation is adequate. In Thailand, the recently formed press council is focusing on accuracy, balanced reporting and the right to reply but pays no attention to sexism and women's portrayal. The male-dominated profession regards pornography as a non-issue. Moreover, many media policies are inconsistent and it is quite easy to go around them. Therefore, the problem with media codes of conduct is also one of enforcement.

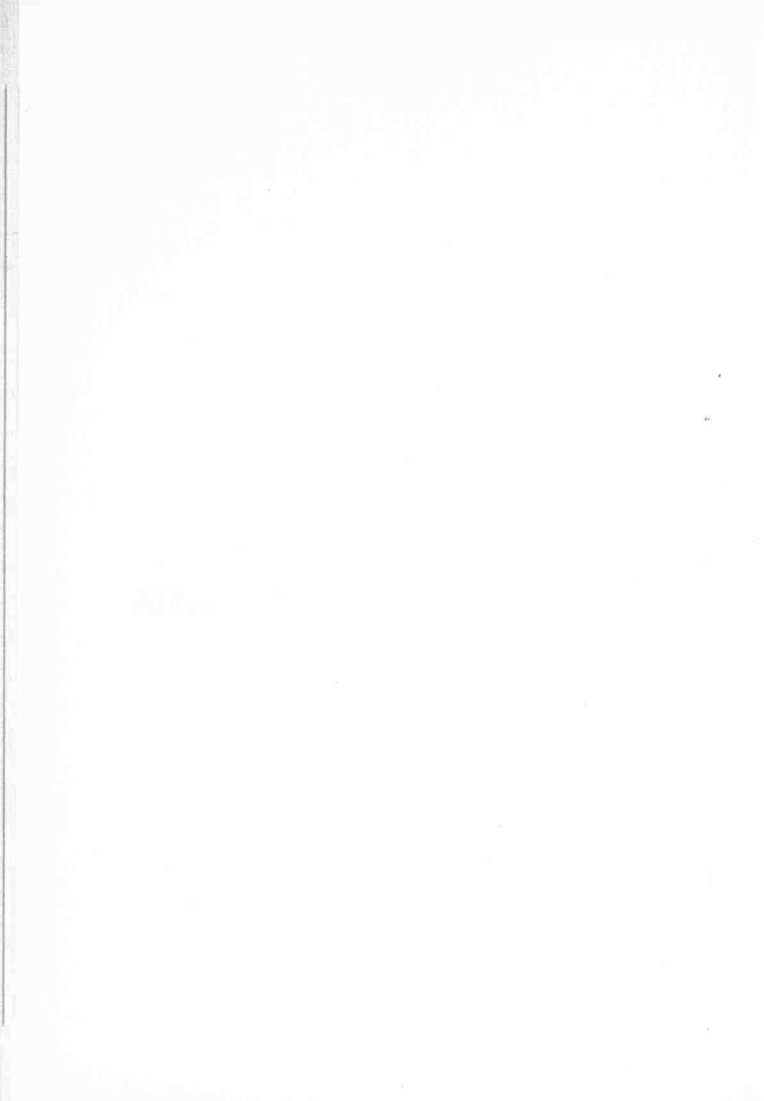
It is our view that if we want to work towards the elimination of violence against women in all areas of life, we must work with media to redefine their concepts and identities of women and redefine the meaning of freedom of expression to include the right of women to be represented fairly in their myriad roles in society. We realise that because meanings and identities differ from culture to culture, media's interpretations of women's images are very subjective. This is why we are advocating a code of conduct on media's representation and portrayal of women which is consistent with the freedom of expression, and which will set a standard that is beneficial to all women in the Asia-Pacific region.

Moreover, we are also advocating for the development of an analytical tool that will compare the human development index and the gender development index and other measurements that are being used by international organisations such as the United Nations to see where women are at now in society with media's images of women. It is our belief that in many cases, we will see a disparity. This is why we cannot believe that women's status has truly improved and our societies have truly progressed if media's concepts and images of women continue to be discriminatory.



## **CENTRAL ASIA**

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# Report of Post-Beijing Implementation in Azerbaijan

Submitted by Elmira Suleimanova, Azerbaijan Women and Development Centre

## Background

During the Soviet period, Azerbaijan women played an important role in the economic and social-political development of the country. In accordance with a certain quota, women made up 40% of elected management bodies including the Parliament. Illiteracy among women had been completely eradicated. After the collapse of the Soviet regime, the disintegration of the old economic system was accompanied by the stratification of the population with the enrichment of a minority and impoverishment of a majority of the population. The economic and social-political difficulties of transition to a market economy in Azerbaijan are aggravated by nine years

of Armenian aggression.

Unemployment rates for women have rapidly increased and over 70% of free labour is also provided by women. Wages have decreased in all sectors of industry and agriculture: in many cases people earn under US\$20 or even US\$10 per month which is ten times lower than the cost of a consumer bag with minimum groceries for a household. The share of women engaged in full time housework increased by 2-3 times the previous rate under the Soviet occupation. Over 90% of the households were found to be below the poverty line. A new category of vulnerable people has emerged — those who can barely survive in the transition — they include women, children, the elderly, families of

### Basic Indicators

Maternal Mortality	NA (per 100,000 live births)
Female Labour Force Participation	NA
Female Literacy	96.3%
Female Political Participation (seats held in parliament)	NA

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

### International Instruments Signed or Ratified

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	●
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	●
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 1969	●
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	●
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	●
Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	●
Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984	●
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	●

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1997

#### Key

- Ratification, accession, approval, notification or succession, acceptance or definitive signature.
- Signature not yet followed by ratification.

Note: Status is as of 1 March 1997.

war martyrs now headed by women, refugees and internally displaced persons.

Due to aggravation of the economic and social situation, a rather rapid decrease in the birth rate from 24.2% to 19.3% is observed. At the same time, there is a preference for having middle-sized families. Ten years ago the number of children being a third baby in the family made up 41%, today it has reduced to 28%. One of the reasons is the increased rate of early divorces. The annual number of marriages is nearly 60,000 and there are 7,000 divorces every year. Approximately 60% of women (1.5 million) over the age of 16 are married. The number of women getting married under the age of 20 is increasing. The number of women in the fertile age-group make up about 2 million. At the same time, only 34% of them are not married.

Together with high birth rates, infant and maternal mortality rates are also high. Statistics reveal that over 80% of pregnant women and those in child birth suffer from anaemia. Out of the 3,324,000 women who make up 51% of the population, more than 1,600,000 have children. Children under 14 years of age account for 2.5 million persons and make up 33% of the country's population. Over 1,200,000 of these children are of pre-school age.

### Post-Beijing Efforts

Immediately after returning from the Beijing Conference and the NGO Forum, we organised many meetings in high schools and different organisations and with rural and refugee women. The Azerbaijan Women and Development Centre (AWDC) organised two meetings with the participation of women, youth and NGOs. Azerbaijan participants at the Beijing Conference spoke about events at Beijing and discussed women and development issues. At the same time, the post-Beijing activities in Azerbaijan were discussed and different proposals for the National Plan of Action were put forward. Unfortunately, as the government has not adopted the National

Plan of Action, AWDC has been serving as the national clearing house for information and NGO focal point for implementation activities.

The Platform for Action and the Women's Convention were translated into our native Azerbaijan language. Zonal conferences in Baku and rural districts were organised where these strategic documents were explained and discussed. AWDC practically became the clearing house for disseminating information on the Platform for Action and lobbying local women's and youth NGOs on implementation.

### Organising for Implementation

#### *Information Dissemination and Lobbying Activities*

Women's groups have organised around each main concern of the Platform for Action. National priorities have been identified, while research and practical events are ongoing. The advocacy process is in place with contacts being forged with different governmental bodies.

The proposals for a Constitution and new laws on health, culture including the memory of war martyrs have been proposed. Legislative changes to make the law more gender sensitive have been worked out and forwarded to the constitutional commission and Parliament. Women have taken part in discussions of their proposals in Parliamentary Commissions and some of the proposals have been adopted. NGO representatives were invited as independent experts on the formation of new laws. Women activists are therefore involved in decision-making. Women's NGOs were also invited to the Social Protection Commission of Parliament to discuss their particular problems. Azerbaijan women have identified poverty and unemployment as their most pressing concerns.

#### *Priority Issues and Actions*

Poverty: the situation of women's poverty during situations of armed conflict was studied and proposals on poverty alleviation have been sent to the

World Bank. A report entitled "Hunger is a Sister of War" was prepared and sent to the Food and Agricultural Organisation.

Lists of the poorest people (the needy, the elderly, women-headed families and widows) were prepared and presented to the World Food Programme for food assistance. Food and non-food relief dissemination is organised for refugees who have been living for prolonged time in tents. Training programmes for rural women have been provided and income generation schemes created. A woman owner of a farm was awarded an international prize for women's initiatives in rural life. Income generation projects/programmes are also managed by refugee women who are supported in their endeavours by business women from the private sector. Some new women-headed farms will be established in different rural districts in the future.

Education and Training: women's and children's education and professional skills training for women are issues of concern to Azerbaijan women. These issues were discussed by women and the representatives of the Ministry of Education. The discussions covered the situation of education in secondary schools, high schools, and women's and refugee collectives.

AWDC, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth, youth NGOs and children's organisations and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), organised an international meeting to address education concerns. The recommendations from the meeting were welcomed by both foreign and local participants.

Women have participated in the implementation of a UNICEF programme on organising kindergartens in the rural districts and training of the teachers. Training for refugee women is also provided by the programme. There are also ongoing education programmes to continue the education process of refugees and internally displaced persons right up to their repatriation.

*Health:* women's health is important particularly in situations of armed

conflict, ecological disasters and escalating poverty. Programmes on reproductive health including family planning programmes are carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, UN bodies (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF) and international NGOs. AWDC organised the first community based family planning service in the rural district of Sheki and provided training for rural women.

Information on pregnancy for women and adolescent girls, contraception, breastfeeding, baby-care and other issues are disseminated to refugee and non-refugee women in the urban and rural regions. To reach these goals many seminars and meeting with the women's communities are organised, baseline surveys are prepared by AWDC volunteers and recommendations are sent to the Ministry of Health and UNFPA.

Groups of volunteer doctors visit the refugee sites and provide free community based medical services for needy people, particularly women, the elderly and children who are unable to cover transportation and medical service expenses. Free medicines are distributed to them as well.

The main aims of the reproductive health services are to:

- provide information and services for planning a family;
- disseminate family planning methods including the rhythm method through providing information;
- provide effective contraceptive methods for those who need it but employ none;
- minimise and terminate abortion practices as a family planning method due to lack of contraceptive methods and materials.

*Environment:* the environment and the sustainable development issue is particularly problematic given the widely developed petro-chemical industries in Azerbaijan. AWDC devotes special attention to environmental issues connected with the reproductive health of women and the general health of children.

*Armed Conflict:* one of the main issues for our women is women in war and situations of armed conflict. Women work with the war victims' families, hostages, refugees, internally displaced persons, widows, orphans and disabled persons. Azeri women appealed to the 40th. Session of UN Commission on the Status of Women calling for the implementation of the 39th. Session's recommendation to the international community on the rapid and unconditional release of all civilian hostages in areas of armed conflict.

As a result of the nine years of Armenian aggression we have lost more than 20% of our territory and the civil population of these regions have fled from fire and death. We have more than a million refugees and internally displaced persons in our country. Most of them are in refugee camps and exposed to different human rights violations.

We promote research, data collection, compilation of statistics, research analysis and work out conclusions on the main problems affecting refugees in camps. Recommendations which are based on the results of the research findings obtained from expeditions to refugee camps in rural regions, have been sent to the Cabinet, the Parliament, Ministers of Health, Education, other government agencies including international representatives of UN organisations.

AWDC has prepared a survival programme for 6,000 refugees and IDPs who live in ecologically hard situations in the 1,200 tents at the Saatli-1 Camp. This programme began in 1995 with the participation of some women, youths and civic NGOs with support from business women in the private sector, the International Federation of Red Cross, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and others. Thousands of people received some relief — food, clothing and medicines — that is necessary for their survival. This activity was highly appreciated.

*Peace:* peace is of vital importance to Azerbaijan women. Programmes on peace are ongoing at AWDC since 1994. We disseminate the actual information

on the results of Armenian aggression in Azerbaijan to the international community. We have appealed to the international community to stop all armed conflicts, inhuman tortures and violations of human rights and to hasten the enforcement of international peace conventions, legislative norms and UN decrees in times of war and armed conflicts.

Peace is the key for survival and sustainable development in Azerbaijan. NGOs in Azerbaijan involved in initiatives include AWDC, Simurg Cultural Association, the Union of Youth Organisations, Children's Organisations, Martyr's Children and Mothers' Association, Organisation of Disabled Persons and Hawa, the Centre for Jewish women. They are all members of the Alliance for Peace and Development in Azerbaijan. The Alliance, a member of the international peace bureau, supports the idea of Nobel Peace laureates to declare the first ten years of the new millennium as the decade of non-violence.

*Human Rights:* AWDC has organised regular conferences and workshops in cities and rural districts on women's human rights. The promotion of women's human rights is being conducted through networking both regionally and internationally and advocating through information and documentation.

## Conclusion

The Beijing Conference encouraged the growth of new women's organisations. Today we have 20 women's groups in Azerbaijan working on key issues of concern — particularly peace, release of hostages, gender equality and women's empowerment. Networking initiatives have placed Azeri women's concerns on the international women's movement agenda. Azeri women are working incessantly to keep the promises made at Beijing and to help our women find the most effective paths to equality, development and peace on the eve of the new millennium.

## **WOMEN'S MOBILISATION**

### **Anti-alcohol Campaign in Chattisgarh**

In the Indian State of Madhya Pradesh, women in the districts of Chattisgarh took on the Chief Minister when he announced that "If in any village 50% of women made a demand, liquor shops would be closed".

When signatures were submitted by women demanding closure of liquor shops — the government was taken unawares. The Chief Minister much to his confusion found it difficult to even recall his statement.

At this juncture, the women's group, Chattisgarh Mahila Jagriti Sangatan (CMJS) launched its dream of a "Sharab Vihin Chattisgarh" (Chattisgarh free from liquor) and spearheaded the Nashabandhi (Prohibition) Satayagraha which was launched on 23rd April 1996. Hundreds of women courted arrest in front of the liquor shops in Mahasamund, Pithora, Basna and Saraipalli on 23rd April 1996, which was followed up by women courting arrests in different parts of Chattisgarh.

The Nashabandhi Satayagraha by women coincided with the Chief Minister's election campaign in that area. In anticipation of trouble, the police swung into action and after some discussion agreed to hold talks with CMJS on their demands. Eventually, 135 women who were arrested in Mahasamund were unconditionally released. Another 64 women and 15 children who were arrested on 19th April were also unconditionally released on 23rd April.

Negotiations and discussions among District Administration, the Excise Department and Chattisgarh Mahila Jagriti Sangatan resulted in action against liquor shops being run in gross violation of excise laws. The Excise Department has been directed by the Chief Minister to verify the signature campaign by CMJS before conceding to the demands of the women. CMJS has decided to resist door-to-door verification but has offered to organise camps where verification can take place to avoid vindication of women by the concerned authorities.

CMJS have been demanding the closure of liquor shops since 1993. Despite holding dharnas/protest sit-ins and submitting petitions no results were forthcoming. To organise themselves better, women formed Chapa Dals (groups of 5-7 women trained in leadership skills and who are informed on the Prohibition Act and related laws), no response from the government was forthcoming. The women therefore decided to take on the Chief Minister at his words.

*Source: NAWO Report 1997 and Women Envision, ISIS International, April-May 1996, No. 32-33*

### **Women Work Towards Constitutional Change in Thailand**

In Thailand, popular appeals to draft a charter to eradicate corruption in politics and make government accountable and representative, led to the formation of the Constitutional Drafting Assembly (CDA) chaired by the former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun.

Women's organisations came together to contest two-thirds of the 99 seats in the Constitutional Drafting Assembly (CDA) in Thailand. Aiming for a minimum ratio of one woman for every two men, 26 women's organisations from the academe, feminist formations, social welfare groups, youth activists, and lawyers fielded candidates in 20 provinces. Almost 20,000 people applied to join the CDA (12,591 were men and 6,744 were women).

However, only five women were elected — two former MPs, one business woman and a law professor. For the women's alliance, educating of the people on the Constitution and the principles it embodies was the more important campaign objective. Section 24 of the Thai Constitution provides for equal rights between women and men, including equal protection under the law, fair and free competition for jobs, and freedom of worship. In practice, however, the specific laws and regulations contradict the national charter.

Employers in the private and government sector still advertise for jobs with preferences based on sexual orientation. Women are compelled to use their husband's family name upon marriage. In business, contracting parties have to be Thai nationals, making Thai women married to foreign nationals unable to enter contracts. Some vocational schools, particularly those training candidates for the army and police, refuse to admit women students. The same ban applies to certain Buddhist schools.

The women's network is campaigning for an anti-discrimination law with provisions for complaints, investigation, punishment and compensation. A case in point was the selection process for the CDA that required women to reveal personal details such as marital status, husband's names and whether their husbands approved their application.

As of May 1997, the 339 article draft constitution contained key components enhancing rights and public participation. Some of these are:

- the rights of local communities to revive and preserve cultural arts and indigenous festivals;
- the right to a 12-year compulsory education and free medical care;
- mechanism to prevent government closure of newspapers and broadcasting stations
- establishment of an independent monitoring body to oversee print media;
- the right to access information regarding government projects directly affecting people;
- the right of people to file lawsuits against errant government agencies.

*Source: Voices of Thai Women, April 1997 and Thai Development Newsletter, January-June 1997*

## LEADERSHIP

### Grassroots Women Leadership Training

The first ever programme on leadership training for members of the Burmese Women's Union and other ethnic women's organisations along the Thai-Burma border took place in December 1997. Women from different organisations and different backgrounds discussed women rights issues and shared their experiences and ideas for advancing women's status in Burma. Particular focus was placed on women's participation in the movement for democracy in Burma.

Fifteen representatives from the Burmese Women Union (BWU), Karenni National Women Organization and Wa Women's Organisation participated in the week-long training. The training covered women rights as human rights, human rights laws, the United Nations and international human rights organisations and instruments, media and human rights, the history of the international women rights movement, lobbying at the UN, human rights monitoring and techniques for interviews and documentation of human rights violations.

The training was organised by the Burmese Women's Union which was founded in 1995 by women students at the Thai-Burma border. The Burmese Women's Union promotes the active role of Burmese women in politics and works towards awareness of women's human rights. The group organises various short-term educational and vocational training programmes for grassroots women. It also focuses on the social welfare needs of its members and refugee women. The Burmese Women's Union networks with women's group from around the world.

*Source: Burmese Women's Union, 1998*

## POLITICS

### Women's Participation in Political Decision-Making: A Review

*By Hameeda Hossain*

Elections to the Union Council, the second tier of local government in Bangladesh, held in December 1997 have provided several markers for women's political participation. According to newspaper reports, fatwas issued by religious leaders deterred women from the polls in scattered areas. The absence of women voters ranging from 2800 to 5000 did make a perceptible impact in each of these unions. On the other hand observers across the country indicated an unusually high visibility of women as voters and campaigners; and under new legislation women were able to contest directly for 3 reserved seats in each union, whereas previously they had been nominated by the

already elected union members. A total of 44,134 women contested for 12,828 seats in 4276 unions. In addition, in a few unions, women succeeded in getting elected as chairpersons. What do these contradictory trends imply for women's involvement in political decision making?

The enforcement of *fatwas* represents a last ditch effort of conservatives or fundamentalist forces to retain their influence. In some cases, *fatwas* repeated an old tradition, in other areas they were imposed in a fundamental stronghold. In Mirersarai (Chittagong) and Feni, the *Forkania Madrassahs* went out of their way to prevent women, and in Mirersarai, women were not allowed to enter the *Madrassah* which was selected as a polling centre. But women did protest. In Daganbhuiyan Union, Feni thana, 11 women defied the *fatwa* and went to the polls; in Usmanpur Union, Mirersarai thana, an open air polling centre was improvised as an alternative to the Forkania Madrassah, so that women could cast their votes. In Teknaf, in defiance of instructions issued by *imams* at *mahfils*, women were active in election campaigns. In Brahmanbria, while 5,000 women were not allowed to enter 9 polling centres, 21 women signed an official complaint to the District Commissioner demanding their right to vote. What was missing was a pro-active intervention by the election Commission or other local government agencies to ensure that women exercise their rights. The absence of support from local NGOs or women's groups in some of these areas also added to women's passivity.

Observers have noticed a remarkable increase in women voters in parliamentary elections since 1991. But very few entered the fray as candidates. In local elections, however, issues of more immediate concerns are raised. In the recent elections, because women were contesting for popular votes, they focused on issues of violence, family planning and access to resources. Even in constituencies where women candidates were acting as proxies for the male family hierarchy, they felt obliged to talk about women's situations. The pressure came not only from the female electorate but also from the contestants themselves. Out of 700 women members elected, 38% were NGO members and therefore had been exposed to women's programmes.\* Support from an NGO organisation for its member candidate has enabled women to win a few general seats. However, a survey of 244 elected chairpersons showed that only 1% are women, and some had been pushed as family choices.\*\*

Will their entry through popular vote enable these women representatives to increase women's access to resources and exercise their rights? Will this lead to a more active participation of the women in the community and to a restructuring of the traditional system of gender injustice? Even though the local government remains very much under the authority of the central government, the union council is likely to acquire some decision making powers over local development activities. Local council members and chairpersons play an influential role in mediation of disputes relating to marital and land problems. Until recently women representatives have remained passive observers to gross violations of the laws and deprivation of women's rights prescribed by the village leaders and the local administration. Their intervention is important to tip the scales in favour of women who form an under class and to prevent further victimisation and punishment of women in *shalish* proceedings.

A pro-active intervention can be effective if women representatives are empowered with a knowledge of legal rights and legal procedures, with support from their constituency and solidarity of progressive women's group. This calls for a sensitive, dynamic and ongoing process of consultation and networking with different actors in the women's movement, human rights activists and even progressive political representatives to ensure that women representatives speak on behalf of the women's constituency. The struggle for equal participation will be meaningless unless women representatives are able to accept the challenge of setting standards of gender and social justice.

\* PPRC: 'Union Parishad Elections 1997: Chairman Candidate Profile', mimeo

\*\* N. Kabir: Democracy: Local Government and Fair Election, Daily Star, 14 January 1998





**POST-BEIJING  
IMPLEMENTATION AND  
MONITORING**

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# Post-Beijing: Scan of Implementation and Monitoring Main Activities in the Region<sup>1</sup>

## SOUTH ASIA

### Bangladesh

- interministerial task force for the implementation of the PFA set up;
- establishment of a Core Group for Beijing follow-up comprising individual women who were involved in the Beijing process;
- setting up of sectoral needs assessment teams to assess government machineries including ministries and departments involved in implementation activities;
- identification of 12 sectoral line ministries responsible for the implementation of priority issues of concern from the national plan of action;
- review by the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs to assess the WID capability of the government;
- an inter-sectoral, inter-ministerial and broad-based approach for drafting and implementing the national plan of action;
- review of policy and revision of policies/measures to ensure gender equity and equality;
- formation of a body at each sectoral ministry with GO-NGO representation
- to monitor policy formulation/revision and implementation of the national plan of action.

Source: Narpokkho report to APDC, 1998.

### Sri Lanka

- no government mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the national plan of action;
- NGOs have so far monitored implementation of the national plan of action in relation to certain issues;
- preparation of a shadow report to CEDAW by the Sri Lanka Women's NGO Forum. The shadow report has incorporated some aspects of monitoring;
- an NGO handbook on Platform for Action published by the Sri Lanka Women's NGO Forum.

Source: Sri Lankan Women's NGO Forum's report to APDC, 1998.

### India

- government's 9th national plan has a gender component;
- there are plans to develop gender development indices and the next census will attempt to disaggregate data by gender;
- women's groups have formed a Post-Beijing alliance to raise awareness on issues of marginalised women and to lobby for demands;
- The national machinery has assessed the responsibilities of different ministries in implementing the PFA and directed them accordingly.

Source: National Alliance of Women's Organisation report to the Asia Pacific Watch Meeting, Seoul, 1997.

### Nepal

- a women's ministry set up after the Beijing Conference and sub-committees on each of the 12 key areas of concern have been formed;
- the 9th national plan has incorporated recommendations from the PFA;
- coalition of women's groups set up for post-Beijing efforts, particularly to monitor implementation of the government's six commitments made at the Beijing Conference.

Source: INHURED report to the Asia Pacific Watch Meeting, Seoul, 1997.

### Pakistan

- follow-up mechanism set up in the Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education;
- setting up of Core Groups at the national and provincial levels to coordinate follow-up efforts including implementation and monitoring of the national plan of action;
- setting up of focal points in 13 line ministries.

Source: Beijing Follow-up Unit report to APDC and Shirkat Gah report to WEDO, 1998.

1 This outline of monitoring activities in each country and subregion is based on reports received from governments and NGOs for the APDC Post-Beijing Implementation Monitor and also on other national reports and publications available on post-Beijing activities. If certain countries are not referred to in this overview, this is due to a lack of information on their activities and does not necessarily imply that these countries have no post-Beijing activities.

## SOUTHEAST ASIA

### Philippines

- NGO review of major laws on women;
- NGO mobilisation for providing technical support to the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight, Committee on Women and the House of Representatives in the conduct of legislative consultations, public hearings and committee meetings on the implementation of existing laws concerning gender relations;
- dissemination of information by NGOs;
- lobbying and advocacy by NGOs;
- monitoring the outlay of the gender budget of ministries and departments (decreed by government to be 5% of all ministries/departments' annual budgets), by the national machinery for the advancement of women and NGOs.

Source: *Philippines NGO Beijing Score Board report to APDC, 1998.*

### Thailand

- NGO identification of priority issues;
- NGO mobilisation of grassroots women and activists around priority issues;
- NGO use of the PFA as a lobbying document to press for gains in the drafting of the new Constitution;
- lobbying and advocacy by NGOs;
- information dissemination by NGOs.

Source: *Thai Women Watch report to the Asia Pacific Watch Meeting, Seoul, 1997.*

### Malaysia

- identification of priority issues by NGOs;
- NGO membership in Interministerial Committee to oversee implementation;
- lobbying and advocacy by NGOs;
- awareness raising on issues of concern by NGOs.

Source: *National Council of Women's Organisations report to the Asia Pacific Watch Meeting, Seoul, 1997.*

### Indonesia

- awareness raising on issues of concern through training and mobilisation;
- NGOs collaborate with the national machinery for women's advancement for monitoring implementation of the national plan of action.

Source: *KOWANI (Indonesian Women's Congress) report to the Asia Pacific Watch Meeting, Seoul, 1997.*

### Vietnam

- National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCAFW) set up by the government to oversee implementation and monitoring;
- identification of issues at national level carried out by NCAFW and the Vietnam Women's Union (VWU);
- NCAFW undertakes monitoring visits and gathers data from central agencies and provinces;
- reporting system from ministries to NCAFW and the National Assembly established;
- periodic written reports submitted by the Vietnam Women's Union (VWU);
- six-monthly field visits to all provinces undertaken by VWU leaders and frequent field visits by staff of VWU;
- Review and evaluation workshops conducted by VWU.

Source: *National Committee for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam and the Vietnam Women's Union reports to APDC, 1998.*

### Cambodia

- Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) has identified relevant indicators on women and gender issues for line ministries involved in implementing the PFA;
- information system in place for reporting back to the Ministry of Women's Affairs;
- priority issues identified by NGOs and project level/programme work undertaken;
- mobilisation around issues, e.g., elections, violence against women;
- future of implementation and monitoring now uncertain because of recent political developments.

Source: *Ministry of Women's Affairs report and various NGO reports to APDC, 1997.*

### Laos

- strengthening of qualitative information gathering by the Lao Women's Union;
- information dissemination;
- identification of issues and project implementation.

Source: *Lao Women's Union report to APDC, 1997.*

## EAST ASIA

## Mongolia

- GO-NGO collaboration in the formulation of the national programme for the advancement of women which identifies 10 areas of concern;
- the National Council of Women established to coordinate intersectoral policy development on women and development issues and implement the national programme for the advancement of women;
- a gender information network coordinated by the Population and Social Protection Department of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare which is the national machinery for women's advancement. The information network operates out of central and local statistical offices and has collected nearly 40 statistical indicators which have been analysed on the basis of gender;
- a women's research and information centre however, points out that the government produced gender disaggregated data are only available in a few areas particularly education and reproductive health;
- a women's group has identified the need for a mechanism to critically evaluate and discuss implementation of the national programme for the advancement of women.

Source: *Reports from the Ministry of Health, Women's Information and Resource Centre and the Mongolian Women's Federation to APDC, 1997.*

## China

- a special Working Group on Women and Children has been established by the Committee for Internal and Judicial Affairs of the National People's Congress;
- the Working Committee on Women and Children of the State Council coordinates follow-up activities to the Beijing Conference particularly the national plan for the advancement of women which incorporates recommendations from the Platform for Action;
- All China Women's Federation, the women's mass-based organisation, oversees NGO implementation and monitoring.

Source: *China's official report to UN Division for the Advancement of Women and the All China Women's Federation report to APDC, 1998.*

## Korea

- ten medium and long-term policy priorities for women identified by the government;
- the Ministry of Political Affairs (II), the national focal point for the advancement of women, is coordinating and integrating efforts for implementation of the PFA and the policy priorities by individual ministries;
- the office of the Prime Minister is responsible for reviewing and monitoring progress made on implementation;
- the Korean National Council of Women (KNCW), the umbrella organisation for women's NGOs, lobbies on women's issues;
- there appears to be no report of NGO monitoring of government progress on implementation.

Source: *Korea's official report to UN Division for the Advancement of Women and the Korean National Council of Women report to APDC, 1998.*

## Japan

- a National Action Plan for Promotion of a Gender-Equal Society by the year 2000 approved by the government;
- the national machinery for women's advancement is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the national action plan;
- NGO monitoring of the implementation of the national action plan is carried out by 51 NGOs organised under the International Women's Year Liaison Group and the coalition of women's networks, groups and individuals called the Japan Accountability Caucus - Beijing;
- NGOs are also involved in implementing the national action plan through membership in the Council for Gender Equality and the Conference Liaison for the promotion of gender equality.

Source: *International Women's Year Liaison Group report to the Asia Pacific Watch Meeting, Seoul, 1997 and Japan Accountability Caucus — Beijing report to WEDO, 1996.*

## CENTRAL ASIA

## Azerbaijan

- although proposals for a National Plan of Action have been discussed, the government has not yet adopted a national plan;
- the Azerbaijan Women and Development Centre, a women's group, serves as the national clearing house on information about the Beijing Conference and follow-up activities.

Source: *Azerbaijan Women and Development Centre report to APDC, 1998.*

## THE PACIFIC SUBREGION

### Pacific Islands

#### *The Pacific Women's Resource Bureau*

The Pacific Platform for Action, which outlines programmes and plans for specific actions for gender equality and equity by Pacific Island countries, was endorsed at the Sixth Triennial Conference of Women and Ministerial Meeting in New Caledonia in 1994. The Pacific Women's Resource Bureau (PWRB) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (formerly the South Pacific Commission, SPC), the regional lead coordinating agency for the advancement of Pacific women, held a technical consultative meeting in December 1997 to devise an implementation strategy for monitoring implementation of commitments made by Pacific Island governments in the Pacific Platform for Action. The Bureau will present the draft strategy to its 22 government women's focal points for evaluation and comments in the first half of 1998. The Bureau is also involved in developing national advocacy strategies through sub-regional caucuses.

Source: *Pacific Women's Resource Bureau, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, New Caledonia.*

#### Fiji

- the Department for Women and Culture, the national machinery for the advancement of women, is coordinating efforts for the effective implementation and monitoring of the National Implementation Plan of Action;
- the Women-In-Development Steering Committee comprising representatives of ministries/departments and major women's NGOs has developed a multi-sectoral approach to the implementation of the plan of action;
- the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre, a regional NGO, reports that there is no established structure for NGO involvement in government mechanisms to implement the PFA.
- an interim regional NGO monitoring mechanism, coordinated jointly by the Pacific YWCA, Fiji National Council of Women and UNIFEM, has been established for an initial period of twelve months by which time NGO focal points at the national level would have worked out plans for a regional NGO mechanism to implement and monitor NGO implementation in the Pacific.

Source: *Fiji's official report to UN Division for the Advancement of Women, the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre report to WEDO, 1998.*

#### Cook Islands

- the National Policy on Women outlines specific strategies and actions to be taken by the government for advancing the status of women;
- the strategies for women's advancement address some of the priority concerns of Cook Island women including a recommendation for courses in schools to prepare children for their lives in a market economy; the Women's Division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Cook Islands National Council of Women are responsible for coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the national policy on women.

Source: *Cook Islands' report to UN Division for the Advancement of Women.*

#### Nauru

- the Women's Affairs Bureau in the Chief Secretary's Department is the national machinery for advancing women's status;
- the work-programme of the national machinery for the advancement of women is a result of comprehensive consultations with government departments, women's organisations, community groups, youth groups, media and individuals involved in working on women and development issues;
- an advisory committee has been set up to ensure an integrated approach to implement the work programme; the Nauru Women's National Council is actively involved in promoting and supporting activities for women's development.

Source: *Nauru Women's National Council report to APDC, 1998.*

#### Vanuatu

- the government has committed itself to implementing an Economic Reform Programme;
- women's groups have called for gender equity issues to be included in the Economic Reform Programme;
- women's groups have lobbied successfully for the enactment of a policy and legislation on domestic violence.

Source: *Vanuatu Women's Centre report to APDC, 1998.*

## OTHER PACIFIC COUNTRIES

### New Zealand

- the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the national machinery for women's advancement, coordinates the implementation and monitoring of the national Plan for Action;
- the government launched a comprehensive time-use survey which records all activities done by women; NGOs, particularly the National Council of Women, has been involved in implementation activities.

Source: *New Zealand NGO report to the Asia Pacific Watch Meeting, Seoul, 1997.*

# Monitoring Post-Beijing Implementation in the Asia-Pacific Region: Some observations on methods

## Introduction

The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific (ESCAP) has the task of monitoring the implementation of the global Platform for Action from Beijing and the regional Plan of Action agreed to by governments in the Asia Pacific region at the Jakarta Ministerial Meeting in 1994. At the national level, in addition to government-established monitoring mechanisms, women's groups and NGOs are also implicitly tasked with monitoring governments' implementation. This overview of current monitoring activities undertaken by women's groups and NGOs at the national level in the Asia-Pacific region outlines some of the main methods of monitoring of national plans of action and indicates the general direction that women's and NGO monitoring has taken. The overview also helps to point to the further developments in monitoring methods that is perhaps needed, if women are to seriously call governments to account on implementation of commitments in the global Platform for Action (PFA) and in the regional and national plans of action.

This overview is based on analysis of implementation activities as reported by ministries, women's groups, monitoring groups/coalitions, mass-based women's organisations and research institutions. It reveals the need for a broader and more complex concept of monitoring which will not only outline government policy objectives and the establishment or strengthening of the national machineries for women's advancement but also set down a framework for

monitoring which will include analysis of changes and improvements in women's status and conditions, as a result of post-Beijing implementation.

Although the identification of qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure positive and negative changes in women's status and situations is a necessary step in monitoring implementation, the country reports indicate that there is a relative lack of development of such indicators in the region both in terms of government and non-government monitoring activities. Generally, most non-government post-Beijing activities in the region continue to focus on lobbying and advocacy for implementation and involve a reiteration of key issues of concern, rather than devising a strategy for systematic monitoring of implementation. The need for socio-economic and gender disaggregated indicators for assessing the impact and extent of post-Beijing implementation strategies, is therefore obvious.

## Monitoring Implementation in the Asia Pacific Region: some observations

The following cluster of monitoring activities can be identified from the information received on monitoring implementation of the Platform for Action (PFA) and national plans of action from national women's organisations, regional groups and international networks. Although the activities are not presented in any particular order, the first six activities indicated are those appearing most

frequently in reports by women's monitoring groups:

- Advocacy for gender and development issues.
- Lobbying for women's advancement.
- Mobilisation around priority issues of concern.
- Information sharing/dissemination on gender and development issues between NGOs and GOs.
- Prioritising of issues for action by NGOs and GOs.
- NGO and GO projects/ongoing programmes aimed at bringing about change in women's status and conditions.
- Development of indicators for assessing changes in women's status and conditions (Cambodia, the Ministry of Women's Affairs).
- Field visits and a reporting back system to monitor implementation (Vietnam, the Vietnam Women's Union).
- Monitoring of government's budget for gender outlay (Philippines, Philippines NGO Beijing Score Board).
- NGO-GO cooperation to set up monitoring mechanisms (Bangladesh).
- Review of legislation and policy measures for women's advancement (Philippines, Philippines NGO Beijing Score Board).
- Review of government capability/capacity to institutionalise gender concerns (Bangladesh).
- Submission of alternate NGO report to CEDAW (Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka Women's NGO Forum).

From a review of the reports sent by women's groups on post-Beijing efforts, it appears that 'monitoring' is commonly seen by women's groups as noting or reporting on any obvious government actions or response to implementation of the Beijing PFA or national plans, or consists of continued lobbying by women for action on priority issues of concern. This first phase of Post Beijing monitoring has tended to note (i) structural changes, for example, upgrading of a division for women's affairs to a department of women's affairs

(as in Malaysia) or, (ii) procedural changes, for example, NGO involvement in various interministerial or interdepartmental committees for drafting a national action plan (as in Bangladesh). Some groups have also noted, as part of post-Beijing follow-up, (iii) new policies by governments — for example, the proposed budget outlay for gender and development issues in each government department in the Philippines.

Monitoring is mostly focused on documenting government action rather than on monitoring overall advancement for women in terms of socio-economic status, political participation, health and women's access to resources, in certain sectors for example. Another monitoring approach could examine women's status, gender disadvantage, identify policy changes needed and measure improvements over a period of time, as a way of assessing government performance. In some cases, it may be too early to assess the impact of post-Beijing strategies and actions taken. However, mechanisms for assessing the impacts of implementation strategies are still needed and should be put in place. The development and use of an analytical framework for assessing government performance is also important in monitoring. Given the relative lack of such focused and sustained monitoring by women's groups and NGOs in the region, there is an urgent need to build monitoring capacity in the region to include the development and use of indicators for assessing progress or a lack of progress for women as a result of post-Beijing implementation.

An example of a more extended method of monitoring government action is the work done by the international NGO group, Social Watch, with its secretariat in Uruguay. Social Watch monitors government actions on commitments made at the World Summit on Social Development and the Beijing Conference. Social Watch assesses governments' performance through developing the Fulfilled Commitment



Index (FCI). The FCI has two components: (1) measurement of distance from goals which is calculated using two sets of indicators and (2) the political will of governments to implement, as indicated by government plans, programmes and initiatives in a number of areas. (i) The first set of indicators reflects the distance from specific goals set by governments in their commitments, to address issues such as basic education; life expectancy; infant mortality; maternal mortality; food security; child malnutrition; access to health services; reproductive health; incidences of diseases; child health; literacy; access to drinking water, sewage services and housing. The second set of indicators measures the achievement of larger goals set by governments in the above areas. The second component (ii) of the FCI, measures the political will of governments through indicators to measure: (a) government plans, programmes and initiatives in the areas of people's participation and social equity; poverty and structural adjustment, employment; women and gender inequality; education; and health; (b) government social spending; (c) development aid; (d) ratification of key international agreements and conventions; and (e) civil society involvement. Social Watch brought out its first comprehensive report in 1997 which covered not only progress made by governments in meeting specific goals set out in the Programme for Action from the Social Summit in Copenhagen and the Platform for Action from Beijing, but also indicated how far governments were lagging behind in achieving time-bound targets for the year 2000 and beyond. Monitoring of the Beijing Platform for Action has none or few of these elements, for example, even time-bound targets. Lobbying and advocacy which continue to be the most common post-Beijing response by women could be strengthened with the adoption of improved strategies and mechanisms for monitoring, including the development of indicators to monitor progress.



The Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) has been monitoring governments' actions after Beijing by reporting on governments' performance on specific recommendations from the PFA such as the finalisation of a national plan of action for implementing the PFA and the enactment of gender specific legislation, as indicators of government commitment. The most recent WEDO report outlines women's conditions under structural adjustment programmes which are underway in many countries and analyses women's experiences of the structural adjustment measures. WEDO's analysis reveals that there is increasing feminisation of poverty as a result of structural changes to the economy.

In most post-Beijing monitoring reports from the Asia-Pacific region, specific focus on certain areas for monitoring, the use of indicators for monitoring or the development of monitoring methods to measure changes or lack of changes in women's lives, are relatively absent. Monitoring has, for the most part, been quite literally focused on reporting government actions rather than on women's involvement in monitoring the extent of implementation, the achievement of equity objectives, or how much implementation strategies are contributing to an improvement in women's status and conditions.

In addition, given that even monitoring of the commitments of one world conference is a considerable task, most post-Beijing monitoring efforts also do not attempt to make connections between the various gender specific recommendations made at the other UN World Conferences since 1992: the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992; the UN Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993; the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994; the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 and the UN Conference on Habitat in Istanbul in 1996. There are some international networks which are monitoring commitments related to gender equity in all these conferences and making linkages between commitments and the issues of concern to the women's movements', for example, WEDO (connecting Beijing with the five other UN World Conferences since the Rio Conference); the Centre for Women's Global Leadership (connecting Beijing with the Vienna Conference) and the international women's health networks (connecting Beijing to the Cairo Conference). These international monitoring efforts could provide some guidelines for more focused regional monitoring. Some of the highlights of monitoring approaches used by governments and women's groups in the Asia-Pacific region are given below.

#### *1. Pre-implementation planning for monitoring*

Few countries in the region have actually planned for monitoring prior to implementing the Platform for Action. Cambodia made preparations for monitoring implementation by developing indicators to measure changes in women's status and conditions and offered guidelines to line ministries to collate and analyse gender disaggregated data based on these indicators. While the development of indicators by the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Cambodia as a first step for measuring progress and monitoring of implementation is commendable,

however, regrettably, the current political developments in Cambodia make the follow through of monitoring using the indicators that have been developed uncertain.

Bangladesh instituted a GO-NGO process for assessing the WID capacity of the government before the finalisation of the national plan of action. Sectoral needs assessment surveys of line ministries made with GO-NGO cooperation, provided valuable inputs in the development of the national action plan for post-Beijing implementation. Bangladesh developed a GO-NGO process of consultation in its implementation strategies across all ministries by initiating a GO-NGO needs assessment survey.

On the other hand, in the Philippines, the NGO monitoring group, the Philippines NGO Beijing Score Board (PBSB), planned its post-Beijing monitoring activities by defining its focus. At a WEDO organised post-Beijing meeting in New York, PBSB outlined the focus of its monitoring activities as: the drafting of bills to fill the gaps in and requirements for legislative initiatives for implementing the PFA; providing technical assistance to the executive branch of the government; producing monitoring reports of government implementation; and lobbying, advocacy and networking activities for women's advancement. The PBSB is currently reviewing legislation in collaboration with the Senate Oversight Committee on Women and it is monitoring the operationalising of the GAD budget of sectoral line ministries and departments with the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, which is the national machinery for women's advancement in the Philippines.

The important pre-planning measures presented by these cases include:

- (1) development of indicators for monitoring before initiating implementation;
- (2) strengthening GO-NGO links and collaboration in implementation strategies through conducting a needs

assessment survey to decide on implementation; and  
(3) having a focus and strategy for monitoring.

## 2. *Government Monitoring Mechanisms*

Some governments in the Asia Pacific region have set up mechanisms for post-Beijing implementation and monitoring. In certain cases, links between GOs and NGOs are clearly defined in the monitoring mechanism. For example, in Pakistan, the Beijing Follow-up Unit has set up core groups of government officials, NGO representatives and experts at provincial and national levels to oversee implementation and monitoring of the national plan of action. In Bangladesh, there is a body set up at each sectoral ministry with GO-NGO representation to monitor policy formulation/revision and implementation of the national plan of action.

In Malaysia, although the government has set up an Interministerial Committee to oversee implementation and monitoring and there is NGO representation on the Committee, monitoring mechanisms are not clearly outlined. On the other hand, in Vietnam, monitoring mechanisms, though well planned out, do not include GO-NGO links specifically, partly due to the absence of recognised NGO development in Vietnam. The monitoring mechanisms in Vietnam include a report back system from ministries to the national machinery for women's advancement — the National Committee for Advancement of Women — and then to the National Assembly. Field-visits and a reporting back system are also used by the mass-based Vietnam Women's Union, as part of its mechanism for monitoring post-Beijing implementation.

In Mongolia, the National Council of Women, a GO-NGO collaborative committee, has been established with the mandate to oversee coordination of implementation and monitoring. However, Mongolian women's NGOs are of the view that the current

mechanism for monitoring needs to be clearly outlined, particularly the Council's autonomy and the problem some NGOs have in joining the Council, considering its perceived stronger links with the government. The Council operates from the Department of Population and Social Protection of the Ministry of Health.

In the Pacific, the New Zealand government has advanced the monitoring of women's status by initiating a nationwide time use survey of women's activities, to monitor changes in women's status and conditions as a result of economic and social changes in the past two decades and to assess the contribution of women's unpaid work to New Zealand's economy.

## 3. *Non-Governmental Monitoring Approaches*

NGO mechanisms for monitoring implementation vary across the region. In Southeast Asia, women's groups in the Philippines have been reviewing major laws on women in collaboration with the government and bringing out yearly monitoring reports on government implementation as part of post-Beijing monitoring under the Philippines NGO Beijing Score Board. Thai women's groups have mobilised under the umbrella of Thai Women Watch, a post-Beijing monitoring group, to disseminate information on the PFA to the people and to lobby for the inclusion of women's perspectives in the new Thai Constitution. Its role has been information dissemination and mobilisation for women's participation in national events. A monitoring of government implementation actions undertaken, is not so clearly outlined.

In South Asia, NGO mechanisms for monitoring are less well defined. For example, although the Sri Lanka Women's NGO Forum reports that the monitoring of implementation of certain issues has been carried out, it also acknowledges the limitations of such a type of monitoring where focus on an issue is sustained only for a short time. In India, women's NGOs have organised

themselves into a national alliance of NGOs and networks for monitoring the implementation of Beijing recommendations and have made efforts to influence policy by working with the National Commission on Women as well as by submitting their recommendations for the 9th Five Year Plan. However, it is not known whether the national coordinating group has released any formal monitoring report of the Indian government's implementation efforts. Bangladesh seems to be the only country in South Asia where women's groups and NGOs have mobilised in a systematic manner to work closely with the government on planning implementation strategies and monitoring of the national plan of action.

In East Asia, the Japan Accountability Caucus - Beijing, is an NGO coalition for post-Beijing implementation and monitoring. It lobbies with the Office of Gender Equality on the main issue of instituting a ministry of women's affairs. The group was also involved in the government-initiated time use survey of women's activities to calculate the value of women's unpaid work in the Japanese economy and society.

Women's groups in some of the Pacific Island countries have set up a regional NGO post-Beijing implementation and monitoring project with initial technical assistance from the Pacific Young Women's Christian Association, the Fiji National Council of Women and UNIFEM, until such time as national NGO focal points from each country are able to work out a mechanism for coordinating the Pacific's regional NGO monitoring. The Women's Bureau of the Secretariat for the Pacific Community, a regional intergovernmental organisation, initiated a small Pacific technical meeting in December 1997 on how to monitor the Pacific Platform for Action. The Women's Bureau will be responsible for coordination and support for monitoring Pacific governments' commitments to implementation of the Pacific Platform for Action.

#### *Limitations of Monitoring*

Certain governments and women's groups have acknowledged the difficulties or limitations of their monitoring. The Sri Lanka Women's NGO Forum admits that post-Beijing NGO monitoring has been sporadic and conducted in relation to certain issues only, for example women's images in the media. In Vietnam, although a reporting system for monitoring has been established, NCAFW, the national machinery for the advancement of women, points out that not all of the implementation has been consistent at different levels, with the provincial level still being marginalised. NCAFW also reports that inter-branch communication and collaborative mechanisms are not as well laid out as the vertical report-back mechanisms and structure. Another observation is that while the system of reporting allows for information gathering, this information is not necessarily analysed and therefore may not necessarily be used to monitor or assess government performance. The Vietnam Women's Union also reports that a lack of funds for monitoring activities is an obstacle to assessing implementation.

#### *Concluding Observations*

From the information on monitoring activities in the region presented here, it can be said that, overall, there is uniformity in the way women's groups understand monitoring and report on it. Usually, monitoring is seen as listing post-Beijing events, mostly related to dissemination of information on the FWCW or noting observable actions by governments: for example, enactment of new legislation or amendments to existing legislation; upgrading of or creating new women's departments or a ministry and new budget allocations for post-Beijing implementation. Assessing the extent of substantial or even incremental improvements in women's status and conditions, for example, women's changing health status, and access to resources or economic opportunities for women under shifting economic conditions, are not being made part of monitoring. Monitoring methods,

including the development of indicators and the institutionalising of reporting-back systems in ministries/departments, have been adopted in only a few countries.

In reviewing monitoring efforts in the region, there also appears to be a gap between monitoring efforts at the national and regional levels and the concurrent international level where monitoring of implementation is fairly well outlined. Although the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) carries out a yearly post-Beijing review of implementation of the PFA, covering certain key areas of concern which have been identified until the year 2000, women's groups in the region generally do not seem to have designed a monitoring strategy or coordinated their monitoring efforts to closely follow the CSW programme for governments' reporting back on the implementation of the Beijing PFA related to the issues of concern to be monitored by CSW that year. Similarly, the women's and NGO lobbying and advocacy in CSW Sessions in New York is also now considerably reduced, with the reduction or unavailability of funding for women to attend these UN monitoring sessions. Many organisations and women are not able to attend the UN CSW Sessions in New York, so monitoring reports following the issues in the CSW Sessions, may be given a low priority by women's organisations. Therefore, and understandably, there is now less attention given by the region to monitoring of governments at the international level through the CSW process. In addition, there are no mechanisms for the contents of the national reports made to the UN CSW Sessions to be made available to women from the countries concerned, enabling women to review their governments' reports on commitments made.

Information on the CSW process is most clearly publicised through women's information networks. The International Women's Tribune Centre in New York reports on CSW Sessions to NGOs world wide through its Globalnet service. At the regional level, the APDC-GAD Post-



Beijing Newsflash/Faxnews sends out a monthly fact-sheet on post-Beijing implementation to GOs and NGOs, based on information received. Women Envision, a newsletter of Isis International, Manila, also covers post-Beijing information, along with its other reporting on gender and development issues. The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), which monitors government implementation in the region, has not yet included mechanisms for NGO involvement in its monitoring. The mechanisms for regional NGO monitoring are still being defined.

Women's and non-government analysis of implementation and commentary on government commitments are still relatively absent at all levels — national, regional and international. APDC, with this regional Post-Beijing implementation Monitor, provides a forum at the regional level, for reports from both GO and NGO sources which will, it is hoped, provide a means for some assessment of implementation achievements in the region to be made. APDC's Regional Implementation Monitor initiative, however, is new and dependent on voluntary responses from the region. The reports received have shown the interest in sharing information. Hopefully, in later phases of the Asia-Pacific region's monitoring experience, more analysis and guidelines for monitoring will come from the region.

The CSW, and ESCAP for the Asia Pacific region, can expect formal GO reports on Post-Beijing implementation. There are no mechanisms, however, now after Beijing, for non-government responses, including for women's and NGO monitoring reports to be pooled with GO reports for a critical assessment of implementation strategies. Resources and mechanisms need to be built in for a wider reporting on implementation of the Beijing PFA. A critical assessment mechanism is more likely to come from outside government, so the absence of an avenue for formally presenting non-government monitoring reports, means there is a general loss of non-government commentary on government's post-Beijing commitments for the advancement of women. Within government, such monitoring of progress is also needed.

While national NGO watch/monitoring groups seem to have made substantial progress in some countries such as in the Philippines, with the Philippines Beijing NGO Score Board (PBSB) and in Thailand with the Thai Women Watch (TW2), regional and sub-regional Post-Beijing monitoring efforts seem to have died out, and do not in anyway reflect the pace, focus, and coordination of efforts by women and non-government organisations and networks at the regional level on key issues of concern that were so much a part of the pre-Beijing preparatory phase in the Asia-Pacific region. A regional post-Beijing monitoring group - the Asia Pacific Watch, whose precursor was the successful Asia Pacific NGO Working Group, has only been able to finalise plans for its formation, in 1997, after considerable effort at re-linking with the pre-Beijing network members. A sub-regional monitoring group, SEA Watch (Southeast Asia Watch), has also been set up in 1997 and is finalising a work plan. The Pacific NGO monitoring mechanism currently coordinated by the Pacific YWCA, Fiji National Council of Women and UNIFEM, has also been established in 1997. On the whole, however, it appears that sub-regional or regional organising was stronger and received

more support from women's organisations and networks, and from governments and funders, when these efforts were part of the preparations for the UN FWCW. National and regional monitoring efforts by women in the Asia-Pacific region have been difficult to sustain following the Beijing Conference for various reasons: lack of funding; a reversal of women's energies back into national or local level activities, including providing services for women by women's organisations; a lack of adequate support from funding agencies for women to monitor key issues of concern and government implementation strategies.

Government and non-government links in each country are often a factor in the level and degree of influence NGO monitoring can have on government action in that country. In some countries, NGO-GO links and collaboration in implementation of the PFA and national plans have been substantial before and after the Beijing Conference. In other countries, the NGO presence and women's political voice in commenting on the status of women and gender equity issues, were only made possible through the UN processes in preparation for the Beijing Conference and the space it provided at national, regional and international fora to voice their concerns. After the Beijing Conference, some governments have reverted to being non-consultative or not extending consultation to women or NGOs, when initiating their post-Beijing implementation activities. In such cases, NGOs that were heavily involved in Beijing preparations and in raising issues of concern, have found it difficult to be involved in implementation or monitoring with their governments or have not been drawn in by governments or even government-approved NGO representatives, to strengthen monitoring mechanisms enabling women to critically review governments' commitments made at Beijing.

In some cases, NGOs and women's groups have focused on continuing lobbying and advocacy work on issues of

concern generally, rather than monitoring government implementation and women's status and conditions, as a post-Beijing strategy. The development of post-Beijing organising by women to hold governments accountable for their commitments made at the Beijing Conference, has been neglected or continues to be under-played. Monitoring women's status and conditions as a result of post-Beijing implementation has become a secondary concern. For example, in India, although women's groups have formed a nationwide alliance to monitor implementation of the national plan of action and the Beijing PFA, lobbying and advocacy work on key issues continues to take precedence over monitoring and systematic analytical reporting on the implementation of the PFA and the national plan.

A positive post-Beijing development is that women's groups have become increasingly involved in key legislative or political processes: women's groups in Nepal, for example, were involved in the drafting of the women's inheritance bill, and in India, women's groups made an issue of the gender commitments in the manifestos of political parties, in the campaigns for the general elections in 1996, as a means of calling parties accountable even before becoming governments and as a means of critically evaluating political parties' and candidates' commitments to women. The interest in monitoring women's political participation and women's involvement in formal politics is stronger since the Beijing Conference. Monitoring of advances in women's political participation and power, however, has not yet focused on women's influence on policy decisions regarding resource allocation, etc., once in decision-making bodies.

In the final analysis, it can be said that although monitoring of the Beijing PFA implementation by women's groups in the region has made some progress, gaps in regional monitoring remain and changes in women's status and conditions as a result of post-Beijing

implementation have yet to be monitored comprehensively. In addition, women's continued lobbying and advocacy work on issues of concern generally, appear to outpace women's efforts for concrete monitoring of progress made in implementing recommendations on issues of concern in the global Platform for Action, which, after all is a general consensus document in which governments have made commitments. Different monitoring strategies, including the development of indicators for monitoring, appear relatively undeveloped and neglected in post-Beijing activities. These strategies should be seen as a critical means for advancing women's monitoring methods and strengthening advocacy for implementation of the PFA and national plans of action in the Asia-Pacific region.

## TIME-USE SURVEYS

### Gender disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation

*Under the issue of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, the Platform for Action outlines various strategies for action which are addressed to governments, intergovernment organisations, research institutions and NGOs. Particular emphasis is placed on generating gender disaggregated data and improving data collection on women's unremunerated work in order to facilitate gender accurate information collation and analysis to support planning and evaluation of policy.*

*So far, two governments in the region have initiated actions in the area of gender disaggregated data and information collection. In Japan, the government's Economic Planning Agency commissioned a study to calculate women's unpaid work and in New Zealand, the Ministry of Women's Affairs commissioned Statistics New Zealand to conduct the survey on the paid and unpaid work of women.*

#### Counting unpaid work in Japan

In response to the 1995 Platform for Action's call on governments to formulate policies on unpaid work, the Japanese government, through the Economic Planning Agency, commissioned a study on counting women's unpaid work.

The study was conducted by five male economists, and five female social scientists, journalists and NGO representatives and was headed by Upper House member Shimizu Sumiko. A private consultant, the Sumitomo Life Insurance Research Institute was contracted to estimate unpaid work. The report highlighted the following:

- Men worked an average 30 minutes per day doing unpaid work, compared with the women's who put in four hours of unpaid work per day.
- Unpaid work made up between 18 to 22% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in Japan. By comparison, in Sweden it is 45%, and in Bangladesh, 25%.
- Japanese women performed 85% of all unpaid work despite the increase in the number of working women.

The NGO representative to the committee, Yoko Kitazawa, expressed her criticisms of the government committee and the study itself. She observed that although the committee met three times a year and debated on such issues as the methodology, definition, scope and value given to unpaid work, all women committee members spent considerable time debating gender issues with the male members of the committee.

According to Kitazawa, the report lacked a gender perspective because the issue of low wages was practically ignored in the report as it perceived women's low wages to be based on the principles of the economy, and therefore appropriate. Also, the calculations were based on a study of leisure time and were not a measurement of unpaid work, making the data used inappropriate. The survey also restricted the activities to a narrow range such as helping in nursing homes. The result showed that twice as many women are involved in such activities as men.

It was emphasised that the report was simply a monetary valuation of general unpaid work and failed to clarify the contributions made by women's unpaid work to society. Examples of unpaid work in the Beijing PFA were women's contribution to the ecology, consumer activism and PTA activities.

Kitazawa opined that the biggest problem was that society, including women had not been educated on the issue. However, she noted that the report gave a picture of the situation inside an economic superpower, where men work long hours to contribute to the growth of corporations and GDP, and where women work as low-wage labourers and carry most of the burden of unpaid work.

Source: AMPO, Japan Asia Quarterly Review 27, No.4



### **Making the Difference: The 1997 NZ Budget**

The Minister of Women's Affairs, Chris Fletcher, announced in June 1997 the funding of a national time-use survey to enable the measurement of the value to society of both paid and unpaid activities. She noted, "New Zealand's economy and society have undergone tremendous change during the last two decades but there has been little monitoring of how this change has altered the relationship between the state, and the private, voluntary and household sectors. The time-use survey will help to recognise the unpaid work that has previously been taken for granted, yet without which society could not function actively."

She added, in particular, there was no reliable information on the contribution of the voluntary and household sectors to the well-being of society. Unpaid work is productive activity which can include childcare, care for older people and others, and household and community voluntary work. Women's unpaid work is critical to New Zealand's economy and social cohesion. It is important that the responsibility placed on women for doing these tasks is recognised when policies are developed.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs and Statistics New Zealand have developed the proposal for the time-use survey which will be carried out by Statistics New Zealand over the next two years. Funding for the survey has been approved at \$0.893 million, with a further \$1.107 million agreed in principle.

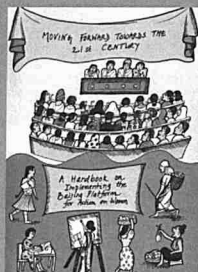
*Source: Ministry of Women's Affairs, New Zealand*

## Additional Information on Post-Beijing Implementation and Monitoring

### SRI LANKA

The Sri Lanka Women's NGO Forum published a handbook on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in June 1997. The handbook outlines key actions to be taken in the priority areas of concern. The illustrations use local images to highlight women's particular situations. The handbook also has an extensive section on innovative advocacy strategies which use alternative media, for example, street theatre and posters.

Source: Sri Lanka Women's NGO Forum, June 1997



### WORKING TOGETHER FOR WOMEN:



A summary of the  
Beijing Platform for Action  
for Vanuatu

### VANUATU

A handbook which summarises the contents of the Beijing Platform for Action has been brought out in Vanuatu in September 1996 by the Pacific Operations Centre of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific in collaboration with NGO representatives and government departments. The handbook outlines the priority issues in key areas of concern for Vanuatu women and lists down key recommendations for action. It is written in simple English and well illustrated. The easy-to-read format makes it accessible to women at the grassroots level.

Source: The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) / Pacific Operations Centre (POC), September 1996

## **WOMEN'S WATCH IN MALAYSIA**

The National Council of Women's Organisations plans to launch Women's Watch, an independent group to monitor on-going programmes for women on Women's Day, 25th. August 1998. Programmes including poverty eradication, women's empowerment and their participation in all spheres of society will be monitored. Women's Watch also intends to set up a telephone counselling service.

*Source: New Straits Times, 18th. April 1998*

## **THE VANUATU GOVERNMENT**

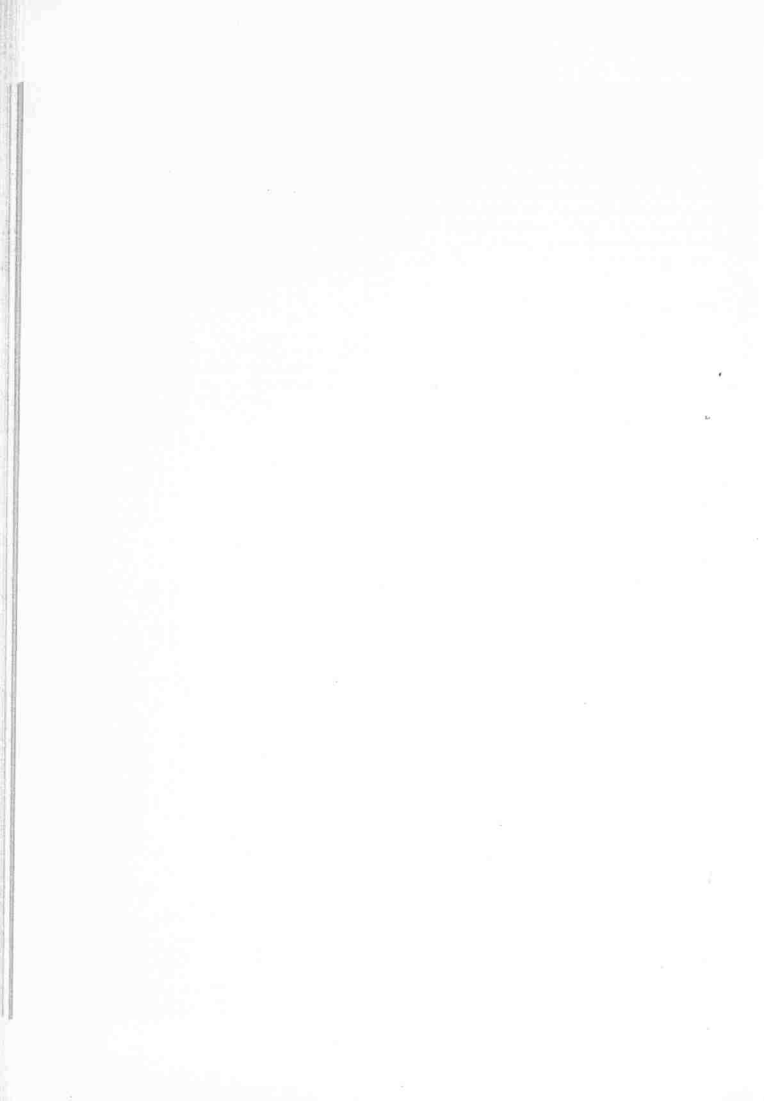
The Vanuatu Government has committed itself to an Economic Reform Programme. Women's groups have forwarded recommendations on gender and equity to the Reform Programme. Women's groups have also successfully included the need for a Policy and Legislation on Domestic Violence. The Policy and Legislation on Domestic Violence are expected to be finalised by October 1998.

*Source: Vanuatu Women's Centre*

## **PROPOSED NGO MONITORING MECHANISM IN THE PACIFIC**

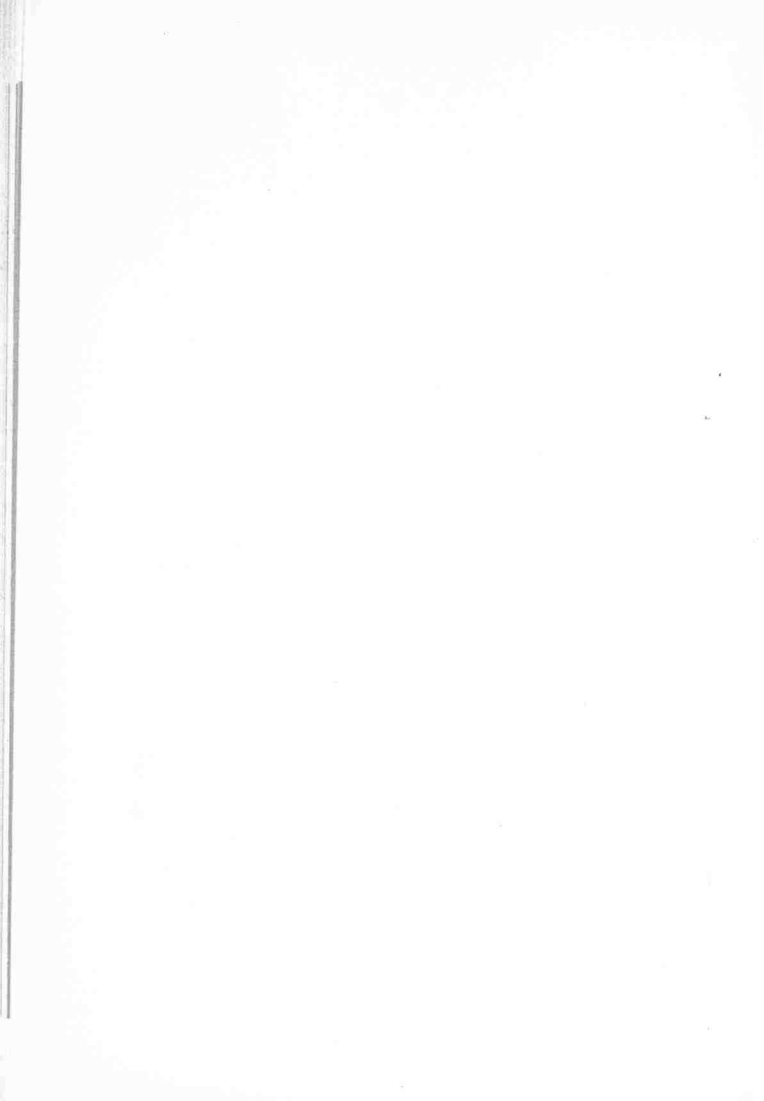
NGOs from the Pacific Island states have proposed a regional NGO monitoring mechanism to follow the implementation of the Platform for Action. The Pacific Regional Young Women's Christian Association and the Fiji National Council of Women will be facilitating and coordinating the monitoring mechanism with UNIFEM until such a time as the National NGO focal points in the Pacific are able to establish a regional NGO mechanism called the Pacific NGO Women's Council.

*Source: Pacific YWCA*



**BEIJING  
IMPLEMENTATION**

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# Who does What and Where: A Checklist and Reminder of Roles and Responsibilities for Post-Beijing Implementation and Monitoring

*From the Beijing Declaration and the Global Platform for Action  
Chapter 5 - Institutional Arrangements and Chapter 6 - Financial Arrangements*

Para 292, under Chapter 5 'Institutional Arrangements' states  
*"...to ensure effective implementation of the GPA and to enhance the work for the advancement of women at the national, sub-regional/regional and international levels, governments, the UN system and all other relevant organisations should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective, inter alia, in the monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes", (emphasis added) and sets down the importance of monitoring and evaluation in the implementation process.*

## National Level

- Governments have primary responsibility for implementation.
- National mechanisms and institutions, i.e., national machineries for the advancement of women, are to participate in public policy formulation and encourage the implementation of the PFA. Programmes are to be implemented by institutions and the private sector. The development of new programmes by 2000 to address unmet needs/concerns are particularly encouraged.
- Governments to establish/improve effectiveness of national machineries for the advancement of women.
- By end 1995, governments to begin developing strategies for implementation with institutions/NGOs; by end 1996 to develop strategies or plans of action to implement the PFA.
- National plans of action should be comprehensive, have time-bound targets and benchmarks for monitoring and include proposals for allocating or reallocating resources for implementation. Where necessary, the support of the international community could be enlisted, including for allocation of resources.
- NGOs are encouraged to contribute to the drafting and implementation of national plans.
- Regional and international organisations, development institutions including INSTRAW, UNIFEM and bilateral donors to provide financial and advisory assistance to national machineries to increase their ability to gather information and develop networks.

## Sub-regional/Regional Level

- Regional UN commissions to promote and assist national machineries in monitoring and implementing PFA.
- UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to review institutional capacity of WID units in regional UN commissions which are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the regional plans of action. Consideration should be given to strengthening the capacity of WID units.

- Regional UN commissions to mainstream women's issues and gender perspectives, consider establishing mechanisms and processes to ensure implementation and monitoring of the implementation of both the PFA and the regional plan of action.
- Regional UN commissions to collaborate with regional intergovernmental organisations, NGOs, research institutions and the private sector.
- Regional offices of UN agencies to publicise plan of action to implement the PFA including identifying time frames and resources.
- NGOs in the region should be supported in efforts to develop networks to coordinate advocacy and dissemination of information about the PFA and the regional POA.

### International Level

- UN as a body to review gender mainstreaming: General Assembly to review implementation of PFA in 1996, 1998 and 2000.
- ECOSOC to oversee system-wide coordination of the implementation of the PFA. Review implementation and consider the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) reports and review the mandate of the CSW, taking into account the need for effective coordination with other related commissions and follow-up work to the Beijing Conference. ECOSOC to also consider dedicating at least one high level segment before the year 2000 to the advancement of women and implementation of the PFA with the active involvement and participation of specialised agencies including the World Bank and IMF.
- UN Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) should coordinate activities through existing procedures at the interagency level for ensuring system-wide coordination to implement and help follow-up the objectives of the PFA. CSW to have a central role in monitoring within the UN system, implementation of the PFA and advise ECOSOC. It should have a clear mandate with sufficient human and financial resources, through reallocation of resources within the regular budget of the UN.
- CSW to assist ECOSOC in coordinating reporting on implementation with organisations within the UN system.
- CSW's work programme 1996-2000, should review critical areas of concern and consider how to integrate the follow-up to the Beijing Conference in its agenda. Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) should consider the PFA when considering reports submitted by the States' parties.
- States' parties, when reporting to CEDAW under Article 18, to include information on measures taken to implement PFA.
- CEDAW to increase coordination with other human rights treaty bodies, taking into account the recommendations in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. UN Secretary General to assume responsibility for coordination of policy within the UN for the implementation of the PFA and for mainstreaming system-wide gender perspective in all activities of the UN. Establish high level post in the office of the Secretary General for an adviser on gender issues.
- UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) to provide substantive servicing to the CSW and other intergovernmental bodies as well as CEDAW. It is the designated focal point for implementation of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies. UN Secretary General required to provide the DAW with human resources and financial resources from within the UN budget.
- DAW to examine obstacles to women's advancement through application of gender impact analysis in policy studies for CSW. Play a coordinating role in preparing the revision of the system-wide, medium term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2000 and serve as the secretariat for interagency coordination for the advancement of women. It should maintain a flow of information with national commissions, national institutions for the advancement of women and NGOs with regard to implementation.





- Office of Human Resource Management of the UN to continue to accord priority to recruitment and promotion of women (subject to geographical distribution).
- UN Department of Public Information (DPI) to integrate gender perspective in general information activities.
- International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) to promote research and training on women. Review work programme for implementing aspects of PFA that fall within its mandate. Identify research and research methodologies, strengthen national capacities to carry out gender research including on the girl child, and develop networks of research institutions that can be mobilised.
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) mandated to increase options and opportunities for women's economic and social development in developing countries by providing technical and financial assistance to incorporate women's dimension into development at all levels. Focus on women's political and economic empowerment. Foster a multilateral policy dialogue on women's empowerment.
- Specialised agencies to set out specific actions including goals and targets and redirect resources to meet priorities identified in the PFA.
- Specialised agencies for Least Developed Countries should cooperate more.

### **International Institutions**

- International financial institutions to review and revise policies/procedures/staffing to ensure that investments/programmes benefit women.
- Bretton Woods institutions/UN/specialised agencies to establish regular and substantive dialogue including dialogue at the field level, for more efficient and effective coordination of their assistance.
- UN General Assembly to invite the World Trade Organisation to see how it might contribute to the implementation of the PFA.
- Collaboration with international NGOs to establish mechanisms to promote implementation of PFA.

## Post-Beijing Monitoring and Implementation Efforts by the United Nations

### *What has Actually Happened?*

#### **UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**

The CSW work programme for the period 1997-2000 focuses on the following issues from the Beijing Platform for Action:

- 1997 - Education and training of women; Women and the economy; Women in power and decision-making; Women and the environment.
- 1998 - Violence against women; Women and armed conflict; Human rights of women; the Girl child.
- 1999 - Women and health; Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; Initiation of the comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the PFA.
- 2000 - Comprehensive five-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the PFA; other emerging issues.

The CSW has held three sessions after the Beijing Conference, the 40th, 41st and 42nd sessions which were convened in New York in 1996, 1997 and 1998 respectively. In 1996, the CSW session reviewed the mandate, methods of work and multi-year work programme of the CSW. Areas of concern that were reviewed for the attainment of strategic objectives and action in 1996 were Women and poverty; Women and the media; Child and dependant care including sharing of work and family responsibilities. The 1997 session reviewed the attainment of strategic objectives and action in the areas of Education and training of women; Women and the economy; Women and the environment and Women in power and decision-making. In 1998, DAW reviewed progress made on the implementation of recommendations in the areas of Violence against women; Women and armed conflict; Human rights of women; and the Girl child.

DAW has organised Expert Group meetings on all of the issues that were addressed at the 40th., 41st. and 42nd. sessions of the CSW. In addition to reviewing progress made by governments in implementing recommendations made under the specific areas of concern, the 40th., 41st. and 42nd. sessions of the CSW also reviewed work done by the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the progress made by a Working Group in formulating an optional protocol for the Women's Convention. The various resolutions, agreed conclusions and decisions adopted from the CSW sessions have been forwarded to UN ECOSOC.

#### **The UN Internet Gateway on the Advancement and Empowerment of Women**

The UN Internet Gateway was launched on International Women's Day, 8 March 1997. Called **WomenWatch**, it is a joint initiative of three entities in the UN system specifically devoted to women's issues: the **Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)**, the **United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)** and the

**International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).** It offers UN information and data on women world-wide and is an evolving forum on global women's issues in the follow up to the Beijing Conference. The site provides up to date information on the UN's work on behalf of the women of the world, the global agenda for improving the status of women and constitutes an electronic space for exchange of information and ideas on women's issues.

## Other UN Efforts at the International Level

**The UN Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC)** which is composed of the UN Secretary General and the executive heads of specialised agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, established the **Interagency Committee on Women and Gender Equality** at its first regular session in 1996. This committee is responsible for addressing, on a comprehensive system-wide basis, all aspects of the implementation of the PFA and gender-related recommendations from other recent international conferences. The committee is chaired by the Secretary General's Special Advisor on Gender Issues, presently held by Ms Angela King the Director of the UN Division for the Advancement of Women. The Interagency Committee on Sustainable Development is chaired by the UN Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development.

In addition, the ACC has also formed three task forces in thematic areas. These are, 'Basic Social Services for all' chaired by UNFPA; 'Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods' chaired by ILO and 'Enabling Environment for Economic and Social Development' chaired by the World Bank. The task forces report on their work to ECOSOC.

## UN Efforts at Regional Level

At the regional level, the UN commissions, in their periodic inter-agency meetings with regional representatives of UN organisations, address the regional aspects of the follow up to the various UN conferences, including Beijing.

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

According to the Jakarta Regional Plan of Action (POA) which was agreed to at the Ministerial Meeting on WID held in Jakarta in June 1994, ESCAP has overall responsibility for coordinating regional measures in support of the implementation of the Regional POA. The following coordinating tasks were recommended for ESCAP's action:

- Assisting countries in the formulation and implementation of national plans and policies for the advancement of women.
- Providing training to enhance skills of staff from government agencies as well as Non-governmental organisations in areas covered by the POA.
- Organising research in relation to the advancement of women.
- Facilitating intra-regional exchanges of experience and expertise.
- Disseminating regional information.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the POA.

ESCAP was also directed to organise intergovernmental sub-regional meetings and periodic consultations among the national focal points. It was recommended that ESCAP convene meetings of senior officials occasionally to consider special issues related to the implementation of the POA.

On monitoring and evaluation of implementation in the region, ESCAP was directed to prepare the 'Statistical Compendium on Women in Asia and the Pacific'. ESCAP has to provide technical assistance to member countries in developing output indicators on the advancement of women based on national priorities in order to monitor the implementation of national plans of action. The ESCAP Secretariat has to report at each

of the Commission (ESCAP) sessions on the status of implementation. This includes preparation of a statistical report detailing the specific measurable targets for the advancement of women adopted by participating governments.

### **Action from ESCAP**

The ESCAP WID Section organised the first meeting of the Interagency Subcommittee on the Advancement of Women in October 1995 in Bangkok, with representatives from 12 UN bodies and agencies. Reports on ongoing and planned activities in line with the Jakarta and Beijing recommendations were submitted.

The ESCAP WID Section has organised/coordinated/collaborated on the following training, workshops and seminars:

- |                |   |   |
|----------------|---|---|
| January 1996   | - | Indochina Regional Seminar on Promoting Women's Participation in Economic Development (jointly organised by WID Section, ESCAP and Vietnam Women's Union) |
| April-May 1996 | - | National Workshops on Improving Access of Women to Formal Credit and Financial Institutions in Lao PDR, Myanmar and Nepal                                 |
| April 1996     | - | Regional Seminar on the Role of the Informal Service Sector in Poverty Alleviation  |
| April 1996     | - | Regional Consultation for the Global Conference on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children   |
| November 1996  | - | Regional Seminar on Improving Access of Women to Formal Credit and Financial Institutions   |
| July 1996      | - | National Workshops on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation  |
| August 1996    | - | Regional Expert Group Meeting on Promoting Women's Rights   |
| September 1996 | - | Regional Meeting on Strengthening National Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women  |
| November 1996  | - | National Workshops on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation  |
| January 1997   | - | Sub-regional Workshop cum Field Study on Post-literacy Programme Development for Women in South Asia  |
| January 1997   | - | National Training Workshop on the Use of the Training Modules on Women, Water Supply and Sanitation   |

The first Asia Pacific Post-Beijing Monitoring Report was brought out by the ESCAP WID Section in May 1997. In addition, the WINAP newsletter is published bi-annually with inputs from UN agencies, government organisations, NGOs and other development agencies and is distributed in the region.

### **UN Efforts at the National Level**

At the national level, UN Resident Coordinators, who are responsible for integrating and coordinating UN activities in each UN country programme have established UN team theme groups that can benefit from the work of the task forces while responding to national priorities. The composition of these thematic groups reflect the country's particular situation, priorities and needs. These groups also involve national and local authorities and NGOs.

## Observations on Monitoring: ESCAP's first Post-Beijing Report (May 1997)

The first UN report on monitoring the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) in the Asia Pacific region was released by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in May 1997 and covered the period 1996-1997. Information from thirty two countries in the region was used to compile the report. Reports to ESCAP reveal that there are specific areas of focus that have been identified by governments for follow-up work and these sometimes differ from the key areas of focus in the PFA. A brief review of the identified areas of focus shows that:

- Some governments in the Asia Pacific region have identified the *family* as a critical area of concern, for example, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines and Thailand in Asia and Vanuatu in the Pacific.
- Others focus on *culture* as a special area of focus, for example, *religion and culture* in Thailand, *religion, sport and culture* in Malaysia, *family and culture* in Vanuatu and *developing a socio-cultural climate more conducive to women's advancement* in Indonesia.
- Mongolia and Uzbekistan have identified *rural women* as a priority issue; connected areas of focus for other countries include women and fisheries and women and agriculture and food production.
- Another point of departure is the identification of women and the law as a critical area of concern rather than including *women and law* issues under the concept of human rights.
- Australia, New Zealand and Vanuatu recognise *indigenous women's rights* as a priority concern.
- Fiji's main concerns include *micro-enterprise development and credit policies and violence against women*.

Although most governments have specified key areas of focus in their follow-up action to the Beijing Conference, not all governments have enacted special legislation or other policy measures, preferring instead to have project/programme-based interventions. Some examples of countries where legislative/policy measures have been taken include:

- Thailand, with a *national policy and plan of action* for the prevention and eradication of commercial sexual exploitation.
- Korea, which enacted the *Women's Development Act specifying guidelines for policy, institutional and financial support for women's advancement*.
- India, which drafted a *national policy for the empowerment of women*.
- Philippines, where the *Plan for Gender Responsive Development* serves as the main mechanism for post-Beijing implementation.

The report also indicates that many countries have focused on strengthening institutions mechanisms for post-Beijing implementation. However it should be noted that these national reports were prepared for an ESCAP-initiated regional conference on strengthening national machineries, so the reports may have directed more attention towards strengthening the institutional mechanisms for implementation and monitoring.

ESCAP has developed a method of ranking to assess priority areas of concern and the activities undertaken in each country. Each reported activity is given one point with



higher points per issue taken as indicative of the priority given to it. Based on this method of ranking, the ESCAP report points out that the least number of activities have been reported on the issue of women and armed conflict with only five countries, Cambodia, Marshall Islands, Philippines, Japan and New Zealand out of the thirty two countries in the region reporting activities undertaken in that area. Another low priority issue seems to be women and the environment with only Cambodia, Kiribati, Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, China, Vietnam, Brunei, Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan and Japan among the thirty two countries reporting activities. The girl child issue is also marginalised: only eleven countries, Laos, Cook Islands, China, Mongolia, Vietnam, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan reported programmes on the issue.

The ESCAP report reveals that under the strategic objective of women and poverty, many governments are increasing the access of poor women to credit and savings schemes. In the area of women and the economy, most governments are actively involved in the provision of public infrastructure to ensure market access to women entrepreneurs through strengthening their role in micro-enterprises and cooperatives. Governments in the region are also concentrating their efforts in providing vocational training to women to increase their chances for re-employment, improving women's access to education and training and improving girls' access to basic education. The main area of focus by governments under the issue of women and health is the increase of women's access throughout the life-cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality healthcare, information and related services. Adoption and review of laws to prevent and eliminate violence against women is another area of concern.

For the issue of women in power and decision-making, most governments are engaged in activities to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership roles. In the area of women's human rights, governments are involved in the review and revision of their legal framework. Certain countries in the region have enacted specific laws to protect women's human rights. Relatively few governments are involved in activities to promote the issues of women and the environment and the girl child.

*This section of the APDC Asia-Pacific Post-Beijing Implementation Monitor is included to provide an overview and a reminder, of the ongoing problems facing women in the region.*

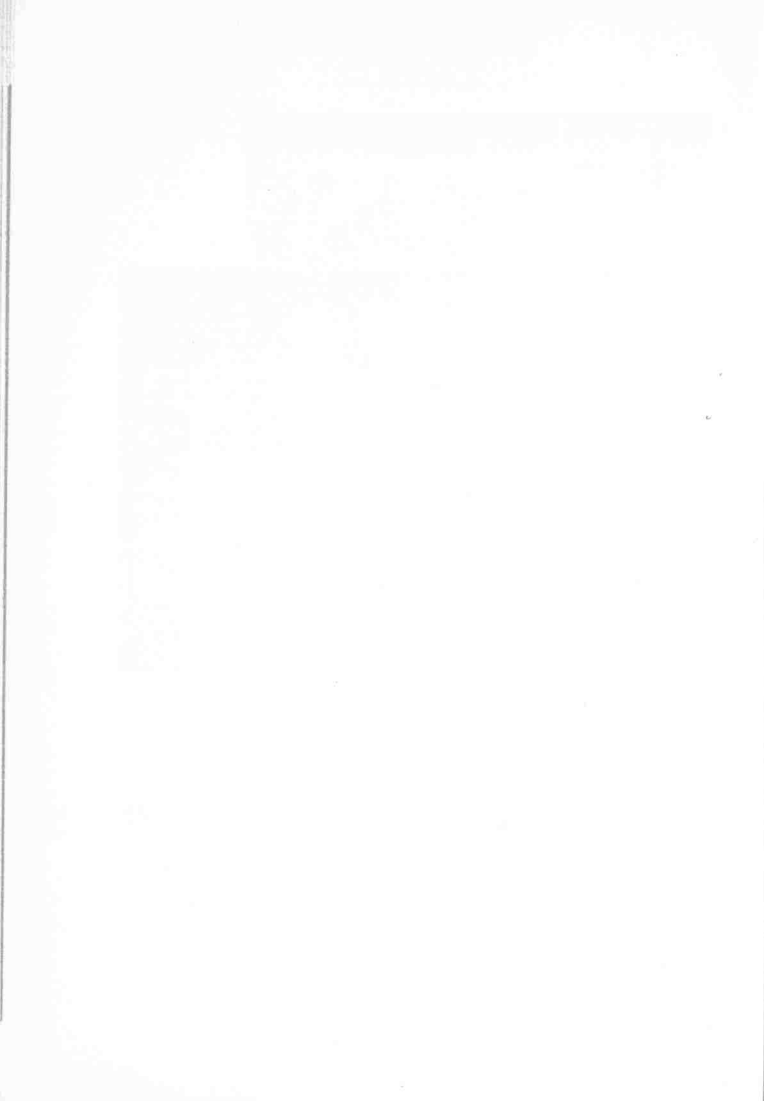
*The section is by no means a comprehensive overview but provides a sense of women's analysis and concerns regarding the economic, social and political conditions affecting women in the region.*

The articles selected cover:

- Globalisation in Asia and the Pacific region
- The Southeast Asian 'Miracle' in Crisis
- Economies in Transition
- Women and International Migration
- Women's Health
- Forward looking actions: Participation and Civil Society

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## THEME PAPERS





# Globalisation and Asian Women

Yayori Matsui\*

## Introduction

Globalisation of the market economy has spread all over the world in the last decade of the 20th. Century after the collapse of the socialist planned economy in Eastern Europe. Globalisation integrates the world economy through liberalisation of trade and investment and deregulation and the privatisation of business to allow the world's transnational corporations (TNCs) to operate freely across national boundaries. In addition, under globalisation, the three pillars of the international economy: IMF, World Bank and WTO, are able to consolidate their powers. Electronic information technology including computers and the Internet also play an important role in promoting globalisation.

Globalisation is the era of mega-competition. The competition among giant TNCs accelerates the race for TNCs to acquire more profit by further exploitation of labour including lowering wages, cutting welfare benefits, laying off employees, depriving workers their labour rights, using cheap labour such as casual and even child labour, and by the further destruction of the environment. It is a competition in which participants are not equal and winners and losers are predetermined because TNCs and international financial institutions in the North have so much power that weaker nations in the South find it hard to compete.

Under globalisation, developing countries have to open up their economy to the more advanced industrialised

countries. Liberalisation and deregulation under a globalised world economy minimises the role of nation states in regulating and controlling TNCs for the interests of their own people. Governments of developing countries in the South, are forced to serve TNCs from the North by providing various benefits to them. They are also dictated by IMF and other powerful international agencies which impose structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) on them at the sacrifice of the people.

## Impact of Globalisation on Women Workers

Poor women suffer the strongest impact of globalisation because competition among big corporations causes unemployment and casualisation of female labour. Women workers who are already employed face worsening conditions including extremely low wages, long working hours and labour accidents. They are treated like sub-humans without a guarantee of even the minimum labour rights stipulated by ILO conventions.

At an International Tribunal on Workers' Human Rights held at the People's Summit on APEC in Vancouver in November 1997, a young researcher from Hong Kong testified about the Zhili toy factory fire which killed 87 workers and injured 47 in 1993. It is a Hong Kong-Chinese joint venture located in Shenzhen, southern China producing stuffed toys for the Italian brand name Chicco.

\* Yayori Matsui, a former journalist with Asahi Shimbun, Japan, established the Asia-Japan Women's Resource Centre in Japan. She is also the Chair of the Citizens Network for Japanese Filipino Children.

According to her testimony, there was no alarm, no sprinklers or fire exits in the factory and only unqualified electricians were employed. Three hundred workers, mostly young women, could not escape because the management had barred the windows and locked the doors to prevent workers from stealing or leaving early from work. Even those who survived with severe burns did not receive proper medical treatment and appropriate compensation from the company.

According to the state statistics of China, the death toll from industrial accidents, amounted to 20,000 in 1994 and the majority of these tragic cases occurred in the coastal regions where foreign investments are concentrated under the socialist market economy. After China opened up to the global market economy

*"In this market economy based on competition, everything is commodified including human beings, with women's sexuality being traded as the most profitable commodity."*

and joined the global competition, its most useful weapon is cheap labour. Factory owners are trying to minimise costs by neglecting workers' safety. In the industrial zones marked for foreign investors, workers are deprived of the right to organise. Cheap Chinese made products are flooding the global market and are manufactured by foreign joint ventures at the cost of the lives of numerous women workers. This is the reality of the situation of women workers who are responsible for China's strong international competitive edge in the global market.

M-B Sales, a US based supplier of toys to McDonald's has two factories in China. Their working conditions are so poor that at the factory in Zhuhai, 23 workers were hospitalised due to benzene poisoning and three died in January, 1992. At another two McDonald's toy producing factories in China, several workers were affected by chemical poisoning, but were not compensated.

However, it is not only in China that blood stained toys are produced by young women. In May, 1993, only six months before the Zhili Fire, a fire in the

Kader Toy Factory in Thailand claimed the lives of 189 workers. Women workers including child workers are exploited at the Eden Factory, a European joint venture in Thailand which manufactures Mickey Mouse toys for Disneyland.

In Vietnam, Keyhinge Toys, a 100% foreign owned plant (Hong Kong) produces give-away toys for McDonald's, the fast-food multinational. It employs over 1,000 workers, of whom 90% are young women. They have been struggling for their rights to a minimum wage, legal working hours, overtime pay, health and safety measures and the right to organise themselves.

The plight of women workers in toy factories is only the tip of the iceberg. It is caused by a competitive market economy without regulation for the protection of workers. Given the extreme forms of inhuman treatment and exploitation of workers who produce world brand toys for the global market, independent labour unions, human rights, women's and religious groups in Hong Kong have launched the Toy Campaign with the slogan "Stop Toying with Human Lives". People in the industrialised countries in the North have joined the campaign as well.

## **The Feminisation of International Labour Migration**

Globalised capital which moves freely across national borders to optimise profits, requires cheap, controllable and expendable "global workforce". Therefore migrant labour has become an essential part of the global free market system. It is said that the number of overseas migrant labourers has reached almost 1 billion, the largest number in history.

The percentage of women migrant workers is growing remarkably. In the case of the Philippines, the largest migrant labour exporting country, where some 65% of overseas migrant labourers

are women. In Hong Kong, around 100,000 Filipino women are employed as domestic workers; in Singapore, there are over 65,000 Filipino women domestic workers. These women often have to face non or under-payment, and physical or sexual violence by employers or their families.

The case of Sara Balabagan, a 16-year old Moro (Muslim minority) woman from Mindanao illustrates the plight of female migrant workers. She was sentenced to death for the murder of her employer in a Middle East country in 1995. It was reported that she was threatened with a knife and raped by her aged employer; she wrested the knife away from him and stabbed him many times. Her case drew international attention; voices of protest and support came from many countries. Filipino women demonstrated at home and in other countries. Sara Balabagan's death sentence was finally reduced and she was released to return home. She is, however, only one victim of abuse of Asian women migrant workers.

The number of Indonesian domestic workers in Hong Kong has been increasing as well. Consequently, more and more Indonesian women come to the Asian Migrant Workers Centre in Hong Kong for assistance. The booklet "No Other Place to Go" published by the Centre recounts the results of interviews with Indonesian and other foreign domestic workers. In addition to the problems shared with male workers such as unpaid wages, overwork, no days off and passport confiscation, women workers face certain gender-based violations including sexual violence at the hands of male employers and family members and other human rights violations. The globalisation of migration is accompanied by feminisation of migration especially in Asia.

Japan is a recipient country of migrant workers. However, most Filipino women migrate to Japan as entertainers because the Japanese government adheres to its policy of refusing to accept any unskilled

foreign labour. Filipino women began to enter Japan for work in the early 1980s and since then their numbers have increased dramatically. According to immigration statistics, the number of Filipino women who have entered Japan on entertainers' visas in the last 12 years (1985-1996) number over 400,000. Although they are supposed to work as entertainers such as singers or dancers, many are forced to work as hostesses in bars or as prostitutes in the expanding sex industry. They face all kinds of violence and exploitation.

Since the early 1990s, a new issue which has been highlighted is the sudden increase of Japanese-Filipino children. Many of these children are abandoned by their Japanese fathers and live in the Philippines with their mothers in poverty and hardship. The Citizens' Network for Japanese-Filipino Children was formed in 1994. It opened its Manila Office in January 1998 for the purpose of supporting the children and their mothers and solve

legal and other problems. The case of Japanese-Filipino children is an issue of concern for the second generation of female migrant workers and an unavoidable result of the feminisation of migration.

### Trafficking of Women

In August 1997, I visited Thailand as a member of a women's study tour organised by the Asia-Japan Women's Resource Centre, and in September, Burma, as a resource person of a human rights training course. The main objective of the study tour was to observe the conditions that lead to the growing trafficking of Thai women into Japan and other countries. It was shocking to see

*"Women need to change the global consumer culture such as 'McDonaldisation' and recover diversity of lifestyle and values. Consumer goods traded by TNCs are causing pain to millions of women and children who produce them, like toys. It is so important to create a feminised culture based on caring, nurturing mutual help and change the prevailing masculine culture of competition, efficiency, power and greed which make up the culture of globalisation."*

the sheer poverty in the villages, especially hill tribe areas, and was in stark contrast to the accumulation of wealth and prosperity in Bangkok.

The economic growth of Thailand at the macro level has been remarkable with more than 10% annual GNP growth since the late 1980's until the sudden currency crisis which started in July, 1997<sup>1</sup>. However, in the rural areas in the north-east and the north, there is a totally different world where people suffer from economic deprivation and environmental destruction and all kinds of human rights violations.

It should be mentioned that Thailand has developed its economy under globalisation, having quite liberal trade and investment policies without regulation and inviting huge foreign capital to produce goods for export to the global market. As a result it has been seen as a model economy promoting the world's growth centre of Southeast Asia. However, the Thai government has hardly implemented any social policy towards rural and hill tribe people particularly for a more equal distribution of the wealth accumulated by such a liberal economic development policy. As a result of the type of economic development in Thailand, the gap between the rich and the poor has widened as has the gap between the urban and the rural. The income gap between the capital and Isaan (the north-eastern region) has been reported as ten to one, and between Bangkok and the north, eight to one.

Poor farmers and hill tribe people therefore have to sell their young daughters to the sex industry; more and more young girls are being recruited because of the fear of HIV/AIDS. However, it is reported that 70% of these young girls become HIV positive within one year of being in brothels. The total number of people infected with HIV has reached more than 1 million in Thailand; girls die from AIDS every day in many villages and there are many AIDS orphans.

In recent years, trans-border trafficking has accelerated, and more and more Thai women are sent abroad by trafficking organisations. Japan is the country receiving the largest number of trafficked women from neighbouring Asian countries and they are treated as sex slaves. In fact, the sex industry is the most deregulated industry without any rule or much less a code of conduct. Women's bodies are used as commodities just as British slave merchants used the African people in the 18th. Century. In this market economy based on competition, everything is commodified including human beings, with women's sexuality being traded as the most profitable commodity. The trafficked Thai women are bought and sold at a price of 4 million yen in Japan."

Other young girls from neighbouring countries are also trafficked into Thailand. According to a Thai NGO working on children's rights, 40,000 to 50,000 Burmese girls have been sent to Thailand and more brutally abused than Thai girls because they are at the bottom of the prostitution industry. Eighty to ninety percent of them are HIV positive. Their low status and lack of information on self-protection in brothels, places them in a vulnerable position. Burmese girls who develop AIDS become useless to brothel owners and are sent back to Thai-Burmese and Thai-Chinese border towns in garbage trucks and just dumped there to die. Even if they manage to reach their own families, they are often left outside their houses to be fed like dogs until they die, because of ignorance and fear of AIDS.

Girls from southern China, Cambodia and Laos have also become victims of the growing trafficking and sex trade in Asia. Once these countries opened up their economy to the outside world, poor women and girls were targeted as the easiest means to make a profit in the growing global sex market. For the young girls who are used as sex objects, who get infected with HIV and die young, globalisation of the economy has

1. Article written before the financial crises hit Southeast Asian economies in late 1997.

proved to be a form of violence against them.

### **Globalisation, Food Security and the Environment**

Farmers, fisherfolk and indigenous people, especially women producers of food and other primary products, suffer from globalisation of their countries.

According to a World Bank report, 2 million people were forcibly evicted from their lands because of huge development projects funded by World Bank from 1986 to 1993. Eighty percent of those displaced were in Asia. These mega projects which take land from people include dams, seaports, airports, highways, bridges, industrial estates, golf courses and other types of resorts, prawn farming and all kinds of plantation. All these gigantic development projects have been promoted by TNCs in collaboration with local governments. The Asian region, the growth centre of the world, has been the main target of such mega development projects.

As a result, the issue of displacement is getting more and more serious, people have to fight against land grabbing. It is often women who are in the forefront of such struggles to protect their land, because they are the main producers of food and other daily necessities and have to defend their livelihoods.

In Batangas, 100 km from Manila, the Philippines, more than 1500 houses were demolished in 1994 for the Batangas Port Development Project funded by Japan and other international financial agencies. The aim of expanding the local Batangas port into an international port is to facilitate TNCs that have established factories in the nearby industrial estates.

The people were led in their protests by a female mayor and were able to resist for a few years. But finally an armed police force came to destroy the community. She questioned, the rationale for such a

development project and rightfully identified the project as developmental invasion. Determined not to give up, she organised several hundred families who refused to resettle in the faraway area provided by the government due to the inconvenience caused by the move (most of the people worked in the port area). They were able to buy a piece of land near the port where they are now building a new town.

Isaan, the north-eastern region of Thailand was converted from agricultural land which produced food for self-consumption to a cash crop producing area under the government's policy of promoting export of agricultural products to the world market. As a result, vast areas of tropical forests have been destroyed to develop huge plantations of corn, tapioca, cotton and other commercial products. Now, due to the decline in the international price for primary products, farmers are indebted and forced to sell their daughters to brothels.

The Thai government has also started a greening policy by planting eucalyptus trees. The trees grow fast and are used as pulp chip to make paper. It is an export product meant for developed countries which consume more and more paper. Therefore, vast tracts of farm land have been taken from farmers to open up eucalyptus plantations. Farmers organised a struggle to protect their land — in many villages, it is women who are in the forefront of that struggle and confront the military and the police. One woman leader of a village near Royet in the southern Isaan stated, "We will never stop fighting until we get back our land. We want to grow trees by ourselves for our own use, for example fruit trees. We need basic food to live on. Why do we have to cultivate export products which we cannot eat, for rich countries?"

*"Globalisation threatens food security and destroys the environment and causes people extreme pain and agony."*

In southern Thailand, the vast coastal zones are now used for prawn and shrimp cultivation for export. Fisherwomen are

resisting such development projects because their catch has decreased due to the cutting down of mangrove trees and the pollution of the sea by chemicals discharged from prawn farms. A woman in a fishing village near Trang, in the southern border area was trying to recover the coastal environment and said, "Don't eat too much shrimp, please. Why do we have to lose our traditional peaceful life in such a way?"

Prawn cultivation has spread all over the coastal zones in Asia. It is not only fisherfolk but also farmers who are affected because their farmlands are destroyed and then prepared for use as prawn and fish ponds. In Bangladesh, tragic incidents have taken place in the last several years in the coastal areas in the south. According to a testimony at the Asian Women's Tribunal held in Bangkok in 1994, a group of women farmers led a protest march to the developer of prawn farms, shouting "Don't take our land!". Then an armed team of men was sent by the developer to fire at the demonstrating women. One woman was killed and several were injured. The tragedy was caused because the Bangladesh government promotes prawn cultivation together with the World Bank and IMF as a part of the Structural Adjustment Programme to earn foreign currency to repay the huge debt. In one of the poorest countries where the malnutrition rate of children is so high due to the lack of food, people are not allowed to produce their own food, instead they are forced to cultivate food for export. Women and children are losing their lives to starvation and violence in the name of development.

Globalisation threatens food security and destroys the environment and causes people extreme pain and agony.

### **Asian Women Resist Globalisation and Search for an Alternative Economic System**

No matter how powerful the force of globalisation is women should not surrender and accept it in their lives. It is

the hidden intention of global forces such as TNCs and international agencies which make people feel that globalisation is inevitable and there is no alternative and nothing comes out of resisting it. They try to make people feel powerless. Ironically, the unprecedented scale of human suffering and misery caused by harsh mega competition, liberalisation of trade and investment, in the era of globalisation has motivated millions of victimised people to resist and fight back for survival and human dignity.

It is women who are taking the lead in this global struggle, because the feminisation of poverty, violence against women, dehumanising treatment of women and all other forms of pains imposed on women drive them to fight back.

The negative impacts of globalisation such as deregulation policy are also felt by women in developed countries: in Japan, women workers are put into an even more disadvantaged position as protective measures are withdrawn and casual labour is increasingly used under the deregulation policy. In the competitive business world, women's reproductive function is considered a burden, and, as a result, gender discrimination in the workplace is perpetuated. Therefore, Japanese women have formed a coalition against such deregulation policy.

In many countries in Asia, women's movements are getting stronger and stronger; their power was clearly shown at the Beijing Conference. Many women have broken the silence and begun to take action. It is vitally important to strengthen global women's movements based on local action and with the perspective for the 21st. Century in order to confront and break through global forces.

The growing women's movements in Asia have to take up many challenges. One of the most important tasks is how to achieve true participatory democracy in order to force nation states to become



more accountable to women and protect the interests of the people vis a vis global forces. Women should be empowered to democratise the state, society, workplace and family.

Secondly, women need to change the global consumer culture such as "McDonaldisation" and recover diversity of lifestyle and values. Consumer goods traded by TNCs are causing pain to millions of women and children who produce them, like toys. It is so important to create a feminised culture based on caring, nurturing mutual help and change the prevailing masculine culture of competition, efficiency, power and greed which make up the culture of globalisation. Thirdly, women's groups in Asia should work closer together in searching for a new vision for the future, because it is apparent that the world in the 21st. Century should not be like the one we live in now. We need to create an alternative society based on gender justice, ecological sustainability and local-global democracy. Asian women

should have the confidence to change their own daily lives and the world by supporting each other. Only a global women's force can overcome the global market force.

# The Missed Fundamental of an Economic Miracle that went Haywire

Josefa S. Francisco\*

## The Fast-growth Solution to Asia's Poverty

Everywhere in Southeast Asia and the rest of the South, official rhetoric has been claiming in the last ten years that rapid-growth propelled by private investments, is today's panacea to poverty. It is declared that market forces unleashed by capital would generate countless economic opportunities for large segments of the population. This would, in turn, translate to increased household income for the poor. With

*"At this time of crisis, there is a real need for Southeast Asian states to demonstrate more convincingly their commitment to people-centred growth."*

some cash, the economically active poor could acquire the necessary resources and services for their survival and development. In this grand design, government, for its part, would only need to ensure that it has in place the right mix of macro-economic policy infrastructure and programmes that support privatisation, free trade and economic productivity.

In an effort to expand the reach of economic growth to the poorest of the poor living in its frontiers and backwaters, Southeast Asian states have been launching joint economic projects which have been drawing divergent resources and people into unified sub-regional economic plans. The general idea of the 'geometric growth areas', as these projects are called in Southeast

Asia, is for states to co-operate in facilitating the entry of businesses into parts of the region that for long were bypassed by government-led urban-centred programmes. The governments' facilitative role includes reaching agreements on complementary trade policies, popularising information on the economic integration scheme and laying down the necessary transport and telecommunication infrastructure. It has been pointed out that beyond these steps, governments have generally taken a back-seat and it is business as usual for the private sector.

The primacy given by the world's officials to efficiency in macro-economic management as a gauge of good governance is easily gleaned from the latest World Bank report (1997). Correctly sensing this, Southeast Asian governments have for sometime made it a part of their official routine to be sensitive to information about, and reactions to, their country's and region's economic performance, that emanate from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank, the Club of Rome, as well as the business community and financial centres in Tokyo, New York, London and Paris. Good leadership is now increasingly associated with the ability of Asian officials to protect their states' economic interests in the negotiating tables at the WTO, APEC and AFTA, as well as to acquire bilateral and multilateral loans and investments for

\* Josefa S. Francisco is with the Department of International Studies, Miriam College, Philippines. She is the Southeast Asia Coordinator for Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN).



their country's economic growth targets and objectives. The central role that economics now plays in over-all state management is evident in the place it has found at the centre of power and decision-making with government agencies and experts involved in economic planning and forecasting, in particular, fiscal and monetary policy analysis.

### **A Fast-growth Solution that went Wire**

The relative success of states in bringing down levels of poverty in several of the region's countries almost sealed the foresight and efficacy of the fast-growth solution to poverty, despite anxieties and protests from social movements, including women's groups. It was pointed out that the speed and the manner in which domestic economic restructuring and regional integration were taking place spawned new risks. This, until the devastating currency meltdown that blew over whatever claims to success were being vigorously peddled by the proponents of growth. Starting with the devaluation of the baht in Thailand, Southeast Asian currencies fell in value vis a vis the US dollar, one after another in a domino-like effect. With unstable currencies, private investors' confidence in the regional market plunged to an all-time low. Long-time and newer tiger economies were left without any option but to acquire overseas loans for propping up their currencies against further devaluation. And even as governments were needing to produce monies overnight in defence of their currencies, their experts were yet to understand what went wrong.

Regardless of whether the year's financial crisis is transitory or long-term, it has above all dramatically demonstrated the vulnerability of the Southeast Asian Economic Miracle. Governments that are eager to defend their economic programmes on which their political credibility now strongly hinges, point their fingers at opportunistic foreign investors whose speculative attacks led to the currency

down-fall. While it is undeniable that speculation did have a marked impact on the economic turn-around, it is also strongly asserted by NGOs in the region that had the fundamentals of sound and equity-based macro-economics been in place, "the economy would have weathered the(se) speculative attacks" (Briones, September 1997; see also Bello, September 1997). Several women's groups, notably the network Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), that gathered in Beijing in 1995, had also previously sounded the alarm on, among others, "transformations in global trade and finance that led to increased flows of global capital many fold and rendered global and national monetary systems volatile" (Markers on the Way: The DAWN Debates on Development, 1995).

The impending financial crisis was predicted in some parts of the region way before the crisis began, as in the case of the Philippines, or in the days running up to the devaluation, in the case of Thailand. But states kept any sign of economic vulnerability from the public's view. Southeast Asian governments were more focused on sprucing up the public image of their fast-growth economic agenda, in the face of mounting criticisms by national and regional level NGOs and people's organisations. High officials whose families had links with private financial firms that raked in profit from short-term portfolio investments however, were silent. When the government intervened, it was simply to plug an already gaping hole in the economic balloon. Even for financially rich Malaysia, the problem had become too big to hide from its citizens who had by then felt the squeeze of high prices.

*"Clearly the financial crisis was but one, albeit the most humiliating for Asian governments, in a string of foreign capital-related ambushes that had piggy-backed on the Asian model of rapid growth."*

### **The Missed Fundamental: Government's Accountability**

The regional currency crisis in Southeast Asia has spurred widespread re-thinking about the unguarded confidence placed

by states on global capital and foreign private investments as unregulated engines of rapid growth. The crisis has exposed the instability of short-term portfolio inflows. It has also become apparent that private investments, both foreign and domestic, can crowd into a particularly profitable undertaking and begin to "overheat" a sector, as in the case of the construction sector in Thailand. Preceding the current crisis, foreign direct investments taking advantage of cheap Asian labour, mainly women's labour, invested heavily in electronics export, a sector that has low

*"The relative success of states in bringing down levels of poverty in several of the region's countries almost sealed the foresight and efficacy of the fast-growth solution to poverty, despite anxieties and protests from social movements, including women's groups."*

value added due to the importation of parts (Briones, 1997). Investments also went into the toy, shoe and garment industries that quickly relocated to other places like China and Vietnam where cheaper and younger women's labour was abundant, leaving behind a mass of unemployed Asian women workers who were either too old to learn other skills or priced out of the market. Furthermore, transnational corporations involved in polluting Asian rivers or denuding forests, have simply packed up and moved elsewhere. Clearly the financial crisis was but one, albeit the most humiliating for Asian governments, in a string of foreign capital-related ambushes that had piggy-backed on the Asian model of rapid growth.

Now there is serious high level talk on the need for an international body to regulate global capital. Well and good, but sadly, it misses an important point that has repeatedly surfaced from every incident of economic mishap, big and small, occurring in the region. That is: the need for states to re-establish their political accountability to citizens, and to express such accountability in no uncertain terms. Southeast Asian states need to be more consultative and transparent vis a vis their citizens, in relation to economic development

policies and programmes. Government officials must avoid playing the futures' game of language and mass conditioning when certain economic indicators begin to reveal weaknesses and causes for concern. Above all, they ought to listen well to what citizens everywhere are demanding: a re-focusing of the governments' development lens toward placing people's well-being and rights, at the centre of economic growth.

At this time of crisis, there is a real need for Southeast Asian states to demonstrate more convincingly that their commitment to people-centred growth are translating to actual and sustainable results benefiting the poor, such as, decreasing gaps in wealth and income, distribution; expanded domestic employment and job security; dynamic domestic and household savings; socially protected less endowed citizens who are able to access market opportunities; and secure food production and traditional livelihoods in the midst of a restructure of the economic base. Without these economic and social fundamentals in place, the poor are left with nothing to defend themselves against the vagaries and twists of a high risk path to development. Tell me, how many more crises can the poor in Southeast Asia weather, in the name of the highly mystified Asian Miracle?

# Macro-Economic Measures and Post-Beijing Implementation: Economies In Transition

(Extracted from a presentation at the APDC Sub-regional Consultation for Indochina and Mongolia on Post Beijing Implementation and Monitoring, Bangkok, May 1997)

Josefa S. Francisco\*

We are living in the era of globalisation. This is a process of bringing states and nations into a monocultural conglomeration under the domination of international finance, trade and markets. Our national economies and people's lives are 'globalised' into an international economic and trading system marked by fierce competition and inequities, and this has brought profound, often, harsh and abrupt, changes in the way individuals survive, communities cope, and national states lead. Globalisation was recognised by the women in Beijing as a powerful force shaping and directing the lives and options of women and men in all parts of the world, and about which all of us must be concerned.

The Asia-Pacific region is often talked about as a success story in as far as demonstrating that globalisation can work to alleviate poverty and improve people's —especially women's— conditions. Globalisation or the pursuit of economic growth and comparative advantage in the international trading system is now the mantra of development, particularly in the South. Macro-economics has become the prime mover in development policy formulation. More than ever our governments are convinced that increased production, expanded

monetisation, and the shift toward industrialisation are macro-economic policies that work effectively and efficiently in organising societies and moving families out of massive poverty.

Socialist states or centrally planned economies in our region, which in the past have stressed political and social rather than economic pursuits, have now moved away from politically and socially orientated models of development toward more economically oriented development paradigms. In macro-economic terms the shift has been characterised by privatisation, de-regulation and trade liberalisation.

Thus, women in Indochina and Mongolia are now living and working within new policy regimes that are leading their countries through the period of radical economic and political transitions.

While studies and commentaries on economic development widely recognise that former socialist states, notably China and Vietnam, are cautious in implementing structural changes and are more sensitive and responsive to the

*"The opening up of national economies to global market forces has produced a mass of migrant or circulant workers, mostly women, who find themselves in unprotected high-risk occupations."*

\* Josefa S. Francisco is with the Department of International Studies, Miriam College, Philippines. She is the Southeast Asia Coordinator for Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN).



welfare needs of their populations, negative consequences on vulnerable sectors of their societies, and on women in particular, have been noted.

Some of the negative consequences of transition for women are:

- The shift from collective responsibility where individuals earned work points, to household responsibility has strengthened the patriarchal family system and undermined women's economic position; while before women could access productive resources on the basis of their individual membership in and contribution to the commune, now households or families have emerged as micro-units/targets of current economic development interventions. This has the impact of making women's labour and needs invisible within the rubric of family labour and family needs.
- As was the case in other Asian and broader Southern economies, shifts from agricultural production toward manufacturing and services promotion, are opening new employment opportunities to many women. In China, for instance, home-based work has become widespread and factories that prefer women's labour are being set up.

This expansion of women's labour force participation has been lauded by neo liberal economists as a positive impact of globalisation, but women and workers worldwide are alarmed at the other impacts on women because of several reasons:

- a) homeworking is undermining workers' rights through flexible work arrangements and the policy of work contracts;
- b) factory systems which are currently labour intensive and which rely on women's labour are expected to shift to increased mechanisation; and, if they make the shift it will lead to dislocation of women's work and incomes;
- c) the more intensive integration of women's time and labour in the monetised economy has tremendously increased women's workload and stress because reproductive work within patriarchal families have remained in their hands;
- d) cut-back in public spending on services, such as, health and education, or the retreat of the state from welfare provision, has deprived women of previously accessible resources for sustaining families.

## Other Impacts of Globalisation

The opening up of national economies to global market forces has produced a mass of migrant or circulant workers, mostly women, who find themselves in unprotected high-risk occupations. Under increased pressure to earn for family welfare, women are drawn to migrant work that takes them away from communities, families and other social support networks. Perhaps for some of the women, migrant work is seen as an opportunity to move away from strong patriarchal hold and traditional expectations, and to gain a stronger personal control of their lives. But often women find themselves having to

confront patriarchal discrimination and subordination in other forms or places that may be more insidious and victimise women. Prostitution and trafficking syndicates and networks which have taken advantage of liberalisation moves, is one such case.

Women everywhere have raised their collective concern over the primacy given to economies and market competitiveness in development policy. They are in the forefront in calling on governments and leaders to give attention to the social and moral development for the society. Why? Because much of women's lifelong work has been outside of the dominant market, and outside of recognised and remunerated production for exchange, and of the monetised economy. Thus, women's work encompasses a whole range of activities in the reproductive sphere and in cooperative community survival and sustenance. While current neo-liberal economics force women to compete in this 'market', their valuable contribution to the economy through their reproductive and other social activities, remain unrecognised and undervalued. Housewives and young children work in the family home and farm but their work is not remunerated and remains invisible in the economy.

Instead, women's reproductive work is extolled as a sacred or noble function in society. This has made it possible for the state to pass on to women some 'hidden costs' which are not tracked by economists. In the face of government cut-backs in social services, women face increased pressure to carry on their reproductive tasks by themselves as well as seek education and health resources within the 'market'.

## Where is the Problem and What can be Done?

- The assumptions and theoretical constructs of economics and macro-economic development remain narrow and exclude women's realities and concerns. Far from

being gender-neutral, the market is vertically and horizontally marked with gender bias. The rational choice theories of classical economics do not appear to be valid among many women who will still seek to secure non-material resources over material acquisitions and properties. Such myopic views and tools of analysis of economics will need to be challenged more vigilantly by women. Women need to engage in the ongoing debate on development approaches and paradigms at all levels—constantly bringing to the fore the need for economic justice, human welfare, and gender equity.

- Because these theoretical and conceptual tools are themselves constricted, it follows that data utilised for economic policy planning and programming fail to reflect women's real conditions and economic contributions. Women's groups have responded to this through various means, such as utilising gender disaggregated data and including qualitative analysis into statistical reports. Attempts are being made to work out a system of including the cost of women's reproductive work as an economic indicator/development indicator. In addition, studies using more complex analysis of the intersection of gender and economics in the determination of women's lives, ought to be conducted.
- Finally, we need to build the capacities of women's groups to conduct macro-economic analysis and advocacies. Economics, after all, has been a traditional male domain. Women need to be supported in order to engender a 'new economics'.

# The Pacific and Globalisation<sup>1</sup>

Claire Slatter\*

The process of globalisation has had and will have its impact on and implications for the Pacific region. Globalisation brings into focus the entire package of economic policies which have been adopted by countries in the region. The economic policies adopted have supported the manufacturing industries in the Pacific which employ women at low wages, and have contributed to environmental degradation, increased poverty, and some of the health problems that have been discussed already.

'Globalisation' is the term that is used today to refer to the forces behind, and the processes by which, all nations, societies and economies of the world are becoming increasingly and systematically integrated (economically, technologically, educationally, ideologically and culturally) into a global economic system, served by a global labour pool and supported by a global 'market culture'. In the global economy or market, all countries are seen as equal competitors for all that the market has to offer. National advancement or national wealth theoretically comes from finding one's place in the market, and successfully producing for it in a cost-efficient way. In reality, of course, the competitors and therefore the beneficiaries of any success, are not really nations but private players — entrepreneurs, companies and corporations although these often are supported by their respective nation states.

While the process of globalisation is not new, the recent technological advances in information and communication systems have produced a level of global interconnectedness which would have been unimaginable even a decade ago. More significantly, since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European socialist regimes, globalisation in the sense of near total global conformity has been fuelled by the conviction that there is only one economic system, only one path of economic development, capitalism. Never before has capitalism, together with its accompanying beliefs and values, its proselytisers and adherents, enjoyed such unchallenged hegemony or dominance as today. And it is free market capitalism, or capitalism without any fetters of controls, which is being promoted by globalisation.

## Globalisation and the Pacific Island States

### International Financial Institutions

What has this meant for the Pacific, and why does it concern women? Let us look at what is happening in this region. In recent years, agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (which are both powerful international financial institutions) together with other development agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme and leading donor agencies, have been effectively

1. Presentation on Globalisation made to women at the Pacific Theological College, Suva, Fiji, 1996. Edited version of article in *The Pacific Journal of Theology*, No.15, 1996.

\* Claire Slatter is with the School of Social and Economic Development, the University of South Pacific, Suva, Fiji, and is the General Coordinator of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN).

directing the economies of Pacific Islands states. Pacific countries have come under strong criticism because, compared with the more dynamic island economies of the Caribbean and Indian Ocean, Pacific economies have been performing poorly. And this has been so despite the Pacific island states receiving some of the highest levels per capita of aid or development assistance and in spite of some countries being well-endowed with natural resources, particularly, marine resources. In recent years, Pacific governments have been directed, therefore, to put in place a number of economic policies aimed at achieving higher economic growth.

These economic policies include economic and labour market deregulation (i.e., opening Pacific economies by removing tariffs and duties on imports, and removing wage regulations so that the cost of labour is determined by the market); expanding export production (through tax free export industries, cultivation of new export crops such as squash and seaweed and intensified extraction of natural resources such as minerals, timber and fisheries products); public sector 'reform' (namely by privatising or corporatising public enterprises and cutting back on social sector spending—that is spending on health, education, housing, welfare — through the introduction of 'user pays' policy, i.e., people have to pay for the services previously fully or partly covered by government; and tax reform (broadening the tax base in favour of higher income earners).

Our governments are told that they must stimulate private investment, that markets, not states, are the route to economic growth, and that the only way that Pacific Island countries can compete in the global market-place is by raising the productivity of our work force and 'improving value for money'. Pacific countries are told that our wages are excessively high - and that unskilled workers in the Pacific are earning three to seven times more than their counterparts in Asia. Pacific



governments are being pushed to copy the growth strategies of the East Asian Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs), become 'market friendly' states, and establish a 'development partnership' with the private sector.

Globalisation has thus meant intrusion and strong influence by international financial institutions on domestic economic policy-making. The rapid growth formula that Pacific states are adopting in response to external pressure entails a major departure from regional development thinking in the last two decades, where development was equated (at least in the official rhetoric) with state-control of major sectors of the economy and state-provision of resources and services to its people. It must be said that the old development model helped our region achieve what the World Bank itself terms 'relatively high living standards'. Yet, in the World Bank's judgement, this achievement was heavily subsidised by aid (or remittances), and not achieved through improved productivity. The international institution's view is that the Pacific higher-than-Asian wage rates are thus undeserved and unrelated to skills or productivity. In a so-called 'level playing field' (that is, without the prop of aid, and without protected markets which the Pacific has long enjoyed for its exports), the Pacific states would not be able to compete. But compete we must,

the Pacific is being told, for in the 1990s, 'no one owes us a living'.

So, after two decades of pursuing state-led, inward-oriented, national development strategies (based on goals such as self-reliance, rural development and redistribution), Pacific island nations are adopting a market-led approach to economic development. This means an approach to development based on the idea that encouragement and support should be given to enterprising individuals or groups prepared to invest in economic ventures if the investment climate is right and the inducements are attractive. In this approach to development, the government or state becomes less an organiser and allocator of resources and more a creator of an 'enabling environment' for private sector initiatives. Hence the term, 'market-friendly' state.

### Effects of Market-led Development in the Pacific

The first effect is that our economies are now being geared to the advantage, not the mass of ordinary people, but those with savings or capital to invest. In other

words, the economic growth policies are opening up new avenues for private wealth accumulation by enterprising individuals (who are often economically and/or politically well-placed to take advantage of these policies) and at the same time, eroding the living standards of ordinary people, urban and rural, who form the majority of our populations. Consequently, poverty is visibly increasing in many island countries and showing itself especially in female-headed households which are steadily on the

rise. While overseas emigration remains an option for some people in a number of island countries, the prospects for a better life abroad for immigrants under the deteriorating economic conditions

produced by globalisation in these host countries, is also less certain. Yet migrant labour job opportunities in domestic service, child care and home nursing in some first world cities do appear to be flourishing on a small scale for Pacific women. Pacific labour migration and the flow of remittances from migrant workers (which effectively subsidise incomes in home countries) continue to mask the declining living standards in Pacific Island societies.

There is evidence that poverty is now a serious issue in urban areas of the Pacific (Pacific Human Development Report 1994:19). An estimated one third of the population of Fiji live 'in some degree of poverty' and the condition of those living in relative poverty has been deteriorating since 1989 with the impact of economic growth policies. The introduction of Value Added Taxes on goods and services in Fiji and Western Samoa and the withdrawal of state-subsidised housing in Fiji, have inflicted particular hardship on the poor. The rise in education costs as a result of reduced budgetary allocations to education has also caused a major decline in the numbers of children attending school. Two years ago an estimated 10,000 school-age children in Fiji were not attending school for economic reasons, even though there are no school fees for primary education in Fiji. There is no knowing what percentage of those deprived of the right to education are female, but it is more than likely that the choices forced by poverty entail gender bias, especially given social expectations that men will be the breadwinners, and women, their economic dependants.

Income disparities in the Pacific are also on the rise with the contraction in the real earnings of workers. In 1990, the real wage in Fiji was assessed at being 62% of what it was 15 years ago in 1975 (Pacific Human Development Report 1994:20). The gap between the wages and labour conditions of urban wage earners and rural wage earners is also widening. A growing proportion of rural wage earners are women who are mostly unorganised, not covered by minimum

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wage regulations, work longer hours and receive lower pay. In Fiji's long established sugar industry, a majority of small-holder Indian farmers, who make a poor living by growing cane on leased 'native' land and selling to a state-owned milling operation, face both insecurity of tenure (a third of all agricultural land leases come up for renewal shortly), and declining prices on the world market for sugar, in the wake of the supposedly 'equalising' effects of trade liberalisation.

The emergence of new export-oriented (and tax free) manufacturing industries in Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Western Samoa, based on the exploitation of female labour, has created a new category or under-class of unorganised, low-wage female workers. In the Fiji case, the number of low-waged women workers is 10,900, including about 700 Asian migrant workers (Booth 1994:26). Women work in export manufacturing labour under unregulated and oppressive conditions and receive poor (sub-union) wages. Women's resistance is manifested in periodic strikes at factories, but employers continue to hold the upper hand in situations in which the numbers of unemployed (men and women) are far greater than employment opportunities, especially for women, and a 'market friendly' state favours employers over workers, which is the case in Fiji.

Statistics show the increased feminisation of poverty. For example, in Fiji, a 1991 study found 56% of all female-headed households living in poverty and female-headed households comprising 20% of all households living in poverty (Booth, 1994:57). About 1,000 female-headed households received family assistance from the Department of Social Welfare which provided family assistance (between \$15 and \$18 a month) to 7,972 families in 1993, and 80% of families housed by the Housing Assistance and Relief Trust (HART) which houses the extremely poor, are female-headed, mostly deserted wives and unemployed women. The demand for assistance from HART,

especially by women, has increased sharply in recent years (Booth 1994:57). A majority of the 10,900 workers in the garment industry who earn the minimum weekly wage of F\$38.25 a week, are women (mostly with dependents), who have few alternative employment options. The rise in teenage prostitution, female suicide and infanticide are additional indicators of the feminisation of poverty, while the increasing incidence of female-directed violence suggests that women bear the brunt of the social pressures of the economic crisis.

## Exploitation of Resources

The drive for export revenue is intensifying both the search for new discoveries of minerals and the extraction of existing known resources, especially forestry resources. The social impact of mining in the Pacific is seen most tragically in the mining war on Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, whose major victims have been, as in most wars, women and children. It is a sad irony that mining on this mineral-rich island was vehemently opposed from the outset by the women landowners of Bougainville.

The impact of globalisation in encouraging short term gains (with the consequences of long term losses) is seen in the pressures on or inducements to customary landowners who own most of the land in Pacific Island states, to enter into contractual agreements directly with multinational corporations for the lease of lands for 'development' projects or logging concessions. With the backing of the state, which intercedes in negotiations and receives part of the resulting royalties, this has encouraged the rapacious exploitation of timber resources in Papua New Guinea (Minkow & Murphy-Dunning, 1992:7-8). Such logging in the larger Melanesian countries, far in excess of permitted levels, was recently reported

*"While the process of globalisation is not new, the recent technological advances in information and communication systems have produced a level of global interconnectedness which would have been unimaginable even a decade ago."*

as causing "thousands of hectares of pristine forest to be destroyed weekly" (Fiji Times, 14 July, 1994:9). In the Solomon Islands, a dramatic increase in the rate of timber exports in the last year led the World Bank to warn that such a rate of exploitation, if continued, would 'see existing stocks depleted within eight years' (Fiji Times, 14 July, 1994:4).

### Forestry Resources

Profit-driven resource extraction by private, and often foreign, interests is clearly a direct consequence of the export-oriented, free market economic policies advocated by the World Bank which favour the private sector. The particular impact of forest destruction and resultant stream pollution on women, whose subsistence livelihoods and primary responsibility for meeting their families' basic needs depend on collecting edible vines, roots and fruits from the forests, fish from the streams and unpolluted water from springs at the edge of the forests, has pushed women to the forefront of movements opposing the logging industry in these countries. The destruction of the resource base which supports their subsistence livelihoods threatens women's and people's security by depriving them of the very means of subsistence.

### Fisheries

For similar reasons, Pacific Island states are intensively exploiting their deep sea fisheries resources. Some 1,300 foreign fisheries vessels from distant water fishing companies in Asia and North America, are combing the seas for commercial species of Pacific tuna (skipjack, yellowfin and albacore); the Pacific currently supplies 60% of the tuna processed in the world's canneries. The Pacific Islands countries received only 4% of the commercial value of the catch, paid as licence fees or fishing rent. There is some opinion that the Pacific's tuna fishery may soon collapse, as it has done in four of the world's seventeen major fishing regions, which have now seriously depleted their fish stocks (Slatter, 1994).

### New Market Crops and Food Production

The drive to expand export earnings is also encouraging the production of new niche market export crops, the intensified cultivation of which is having an impact on food production. The orientation toward producing food crops for an external (global) market, rather than for national or domestic food needs, makes island states even more economically dependent and kills the idea of national self-reliance in food which in the past was often articulated as a national development goal by island leaders.

All in all, the achievement of economic growth may prove extremely costly for Pacific islands peoples, a large majority of whom depend for their subsistence livelihoods on the resources of the sea and land. These resource bases are today being looked at by governments for what they can provide in terms of export dollars, rather than protected as vital life-sustaining resources of island peoples. It goes without saying that Pacific Island women have been generally excluded from resource use decision-making, even though they are the primary subsistence users of these resources. The evidence of growing poverty, in a region which until recent years was widely acknowledged to be 'poverty-free', testifies to the socially damaging effects of economic growth policies.

It is now commonly argued that although economic growth should not be equated with development, it is a precondition for development. Yet, it is not clear how the one will lead to the other in the absence of either strong, socially-oriented governments committed to social developmental goals and a strong effective civil society that can be informed on and question Pacific economic development goals. Economic growth strategies are primarily concerned with facilitating wealth accumulation in private hands, while development strategies must, of necessity, entail wealth sharing, which can only result from a broad social

consensus on social distribution and social justice.

### An Alternative Development Model

The economic growth model has to be countered by an alternative development model which unequivocally puts the well-being of the vast majority of people (rather than the interests of an economically advantaged or powerful minority) at the centre. Development must promote equitable and sustainable livelihoods for the people, not wealth for a few.

In support of an alternative model of development we, in the Pacific, need to challenge economic growth policies and strategies and to renounce the market approach to development. In doing so, we could usefully promote the ethics that underlie traditional Pacific resource use (i.e., of responsibility for the wider society rather than individual advancement). We need to emphasise that good governance means taking responsibility for the equitable allocation of a nation's resources. It means being responsive to peoples' needs, especially those people who are economically and socially vulnerable. It means protecting and supporting the bases of peoples' semi-subsistence livelihoods — two-thirds of the people of our region depend for their livelihood on the resources of the land and sea to which they have always enjoyed access under customary tenure arrangements.

As women, we need to become conscious of and informed about the forces which are currently shaping our lives and destinies and to seek to be heard in these matters. As Indian feminist economist and developmentalist, Gita Sen, points out in a booklet written for DAWN (1995:21), 'Women stand at the crossroads of production and reproduction'. In our region women are responsible both for producing food and for reproducing society. Ultimately it is women who are responsible for feeding, nurturing,

nursing and generally caring for men, children, the aged and the infirm in our families and communities. Development is a women's issue and economic policies should be very much our business. Indeed in other parts of the world they are. I hope that increasingly the voices of Pacific women will be heard on economic and political issues which for too long have been considered none of our business, which for too long have been simply the preserve of male decision-makers at all levels.

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# The Situation of Asian Women Migrant Workers: Current Trends, and Institutional and Social Problems

*(Extracted from a paper on women and migration presented at a regional meeting on 'Legal Protection for Migrant Workers' held in Manila, the Philippines)*

Hameeda Hossain\*

## Critical Issues in the International Migration of Women

The number of Asian migrant workers has expanded so much in the last decade that comparatively they outnumber their male counterparts from the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Female migration is promoted in South Asian countries as well. These trends have contributed to the predominant image of an Asian woman as a migrant and to the concept of the feminisation of migration.

The critical debates on migration have been set mainly by economically powerful receiving countries. Most of the debates have focused on restrictions and regulations of migrant movements in keeping with the economic needs and interests of receiving countries. In response, the sending countries have offered their competitive advantage of low cost and docile labour without seeking protective guarantees for their citizens.

Assuming that global movements are not likely to abate, the challenge is to devise dynamic and rational strategies for:

- the effective use of migrant labour, without undermining labour standards;

- addressing the causes for the systemic vulnerability of migrant labour;
- ensuring that the process of migration does not lead to instability in the community.

To understand the vulnerability of women migrant workers, we need to examine several issues, including the:

- discrimination created by trends of a demand driven market;
- contemporary migratory processes which are mediated by new forms of trade and powerful international syndicates;
- factors of demand and supply, and economic imbalances which have kept migrant issues outside the arena of international human rights mechanisms.

## Feminisation of Migration

The increased feminisation of migration is influenced by the demand for women's labour in developed countries and the organisation of the trade in women migrant workers with its extensive system of supply and delivery channels.

\* Hameeda Hossain is with Ain O Salish Kendra, Bangladesh. She is a founding member of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN).

### Market Demand

The use of migrant labour has become integral to economic growth in countries as far apart as those in Europe and the USA, the OPEC countries and the NICs (newly industrialised countries). The first reason is economic: migrants take on jobs that locals have moved away from because of their relative prosperity. Second, unregulated and marginalised workers provide a competitive advantage to countries promoting export growth; third, prosperity promotes a life style that creates employment in domestic service and entertainment. The migrant labour markets are highly segregated, and the invisibility of migrant workers enables more competitive production particularly in the export sector. Women migrant workers in domestic work and entertainment are even more isolated and remain outside any protective mechanism.

### Labour Supply

In the country of origin, women workers represent an unemployable surplus whose migration potential is determined by the needs of family survival and the country's need for foreign exchange. Migration can also serve a dual purpose — besides helping the family, the woman may also use migration to work towards personal autonomy.

ILO estimates suggest that some 800,000 Asian women leave their country to work abroad annually. According to a report collated by ESCAP<sup>1</sup> and other national agencies, since 1988 women represent 78% of registered labour migrants in Indonesia, 83.5% of total migrants by 1994 in Sri Lanka and 80% of labour migrants in 1995 in the Philippines. Other countries where female migration is on the increase are Bangladesh, Burma, China, India, Nepal and Pakistan. Women therefore make up the majority of migrant workers.

The major receiving countries in Asia are Brunei, Hong Kong, Malaysia and

Singapore which issue legal work permits. In Malaysia, government statistics suggest that there are 1.5 million documented migrant workers and 200,000-400,000 undocumented workers (both men and women). Reports indicate that in 1995 Hong Kong had 157,026 foreign domestic workers, of which the largest number came from the Philippines. Japan and South Korea have introduced a system of guest workers or trainee workers which evades national requirements for minimum standards. Saudi Arabia is the largest importer of migrant women workers.

### Migratory Processes

The different means through which women become economic migrants determines their terms of work, degree of vulnerability and access to institutional support. Migrant women workers generally fall into the following categories:

- *Documented workers* who are able to obtain employment contracts which can at least guarantee their name and status and the promise of a minimum wage;
- *Documented workers who become undocumented* due to various discrepancies in the system itself or due to manipulations of recruitment and employment agencies and are left to confront the law;
- *Workers who enter the country of destination through illegal routes*, without proper papers and need to evade the law. The situation is created by agents who get workers to enter into contracts in total ignorance of the requirements of cross country movements. This type of migrant workers are found mainly in the entertainment industry and domestic work.
- *Women who get trafficked when they seek to work overseas*, for example, Thai women were found working in sealed garment factories in the US. They had been brought in with false

1 C. Meel-Anoneuvo, "The Feminisation of Asian Labour", *The Nation*, Bangkok, 10 January 1997.

papers by agents and were deported upon discovery.

- *South Asian women in transborder migration* within the sub-region where contractual work for citizens of neighbouring countries is not allowed. For example, Indian citizens cannot be contract-workers in Pakistan. Because of this stricture, illegal settlement migration often takes place.
- *Refugee women who become workers*, for example, Burmese refugees in Thailand or Bangladesh.

### **The Conditions for Migrant Workers in the Region**

Policies on migrant work in receiving countries are determined by concerns for the interests of trade and employment. Although receiving countries are dependent on migrant labour, restrictive measures such as levies on employers and the system of work permits deter the legal use of migrant labour and encourage undocumented employment. State practices therefore provide loopholes for corruption amongst state agencies and create the conditions for exploitative practices by recruitment and employment agencies.

On the other hand, labour exporting countries have made use of the situation created by the demand for workers by promoting emigration of the employable population to increase their revenue and foreign exchange reserves. As most sending governments have limited their responsibility to only negotiating for increased quotas for their countries' labour export, questions of standards or guarantees have not been raised. Therefore more migrant-responsive policies for foreign workers are rarely included in bilateral agreements between sending and receiving countries.

Because of the unequal relationship between sending and receiving countries, powerful regional economic blocs have ignored the entire issue of migrant labour in trade and other economic negotiations. APEC and

ASEAN debates on capital flows and global markets refuse to acknowledge the important part played by migrant labour in building their economies. Yet these economic blocs are important as major growth and employment centres with receiving countries dependent on migrant labour and sending countries encouraging migration.

However, the voices of migrant workers are now beginning to be heard, but only outside the main meetings of economic blocs. The intervention of migrant workers associations, trade unions, and human rights or women's organisations who form their caucuses and networks has attempted to influence the outcome of meetings. The challenge though is for migrant women's voices to be represented within the meetings of these key economic blocs themselves.

### **Negotiating for Better Contracts for Migrant Workers**

In recent years, some sending governments have responded to the pressures of a growing migrant worker community to advocate for migrant workers' rights and influence more favourable agreements. As a result of the negotiating process there is a wide divergence in the terms and conditions of migrant workers' contracts which depend on the negotiating strength and influence of receiving and sending countries.

The Philippines has enacted the "Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995" which mandates the government to institutionalise a higher standard of protection and promotion of the welfare of migrant workers, their families and overseas Filipinos in distress. Section 2(d) specifically provides that "the State shall apply gender sensitive criteria in ... policies affecting migrant workers and the constitution of bodies tasked for the welfare of migrant workers."

The Department of Labour, the Philippines Overseas Labour Officers

Corps and the Philippines Overseas Employment Agency, the three main agencies concerned with migrant workers have introduced responsive policies and institutional mechanisms. These include setting a minimum age requirement for domestic and entertainment workers, revised measures to protect domestic workers, monitoring entry and departure of domestic workers, skill enhancement programmes, on-site welfare programmes, monitoring of recruitment agencies, setting qualifications for and assessment of recruitment agencies, accreditation of foreign placement agencies and pre-qualification on employers. Following the outrage at Flor Contemplacion's execution<sup>2</sup> in Singapore, the Philippines Government set up an advisory and fact finding commission in 1995. In addition, more women officers have been posted in countries with a large proportion of women migrants.

The Sri Lankan Government, under Act No. 4 of 1994, set up the Sri Lanka Bureau of Overseas Employment to introduce pre-departure training, compulsory insurance and licensing of recruitment agencies. The Bureau has negotiated agreements with employment agencies in Singapore and United Arab Emirates for employment contracts for Sri Lankan domestic workers.<sup>3</sup>

In Indonesia, government regulations specify arrangements for pre-departure preparations, information on job opportunities and contracts, and accident and death insurance. However, according to researchers these are mainly pro-forma and their implementation has not been monitored effectively.<sup>4</sup>

Most sending countries have raised the minimum age limit as a measure of

protection. This ranges from 18 years in Nepal and 21 years in Philippines and Bangladesh to 35 years in Pakistan.<sup>5</sup> In most of these countries the procedures for age registration is very defective, so the minimum age stipulation is difficult to implement.

Bangladesh revoked the ban on migration of women workers in 1991, but has imposed a requirement of a guardian's permission for a woman migrant worker to obtain a passport and exit permit. This is obviously gender discriminatory and encourages agents to use their supposed status as guardians to push women into illegal migration or trafficking. No other protective or welfare measures have been introduced.

Government mechanisms for migrant workers in most countries, perhaps with the exception of the Philippines, remain weak and insensitive to gender concerns. The responsibilities for training, registration and complaints procedures are generally divided amongst four or five different agencies, with little coordination. Most government departments and agencies have not adapted to structural changes in migration processes. For instance, there are very few women serving these departments and the training is often limited to explaining responsibilities of workers rather than their rights and the risks involved in overseas employment.

Competitive supply is a driving factor in sending countries and collective arrangements by all sending countries to promote protective measures or minimum standards is not a consideration. In fact, sending countries

*"The different means through which women become economic migrants determines their terms of work, degree of vulnerability and access to institutional support."*

- 2 Flor Contemplacion, a Filipino domestic worker, was charged with the murder of another Filipino domestic worker and her Singaporean ward in Singapore and subsequently executed.
- 3 M. Dias, "An Assessment of Migration Policies with Special Reference to Female Domestic Workers, Sri Lanka", mimeo for ANWIM's Consultative Meeting, APDC, 1996.
- 4 C.J. Natan, "Situation of Indonesian Migrant Workers Overseas", mimeo for Regional Consultation on "Impact of Trans-Boundary Migration on Urbanisation", AP2000, 1996.
- 5 L.L. Lim, "International Labour Migrant of Women: Distinctive Characteristics and Policy Concerns", ILO, 1996, p. 16.

undercut each other for short term financial gains. After the Flor Contemplacion case, it did not take very long for the governments of Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka to seize the opportunity to sign contracts with Singapore. These offers were made without settling on conditions of employment or specifying the responsibilities of employers and employment agencies.

Violence against Migrant Workers called for more systematic data and documentation on incidents of violence against foreign domestic workers, on the exploitation inherent in the entertainment industry and to the risks and hazards of industrial work.

## Strategies to Address Migrant Women Workers' Situations

Human rights and women activists, as well as associations of migrant workers are concerned at the lack of an acceptable legal and policy framework to stabilise the system of migration. There is also concern about the absence of an environment to negotiate bilateral agreements to protect worker interests and the weakness of support structures.

Work on migrant women workers issues have been carried out through research and investigations (Scalabrini Centre, Philippines); provision of shelters and other forms of support (Asian Migrant Centre and Kalayaan, Philippines) and documenting violence and taking up cases of violations (Tenaganita, Malaysia). These experiences now being projected in regional and international fora, clearly indicate the urgent need for policy intervention and institutional change.

Discussions on the issue of women migrant workers in the region focusing on bringing labour migration into a rights framework point to the need to evolve:

- A regional code of conduct between sending and receiving governments, employers and employment agencies;
- Agreements or contracts to protect both the employer and employee through mechanisms for insurance, access to legal aid and social support;
- Standard work contracts which can be enforceable in both countries;
- State worker contracts (in sending countries) to provide a system of guarantees for workers' livelihoods after repatriation and ensure that their savings are used for the welfare of their families alone;

## International Standards

Although international instruments for migrant workers have set theoretical principles of equality and human rights, these principles are rarely applied. Thus the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990) has been ratified by only eight countries, and even sending countries such as Bangladesh have evaded ratification for unknown reasons.

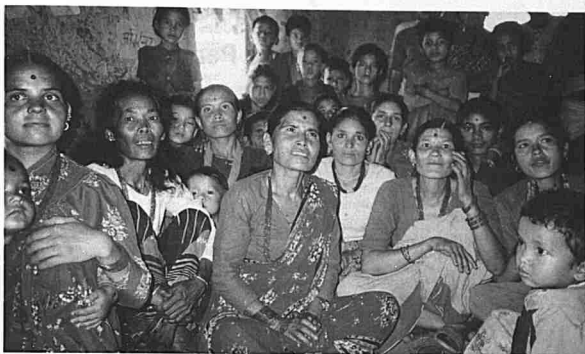
The UN system has acknowledged the issue of female migration and it has featured in the deliberations of UN Conferences since 1994. The Population and Development Conference in Cairo drew attention to the issue in a special chapter on international migration and development.

*"Because of the unequal relationship between sending and receiving countries, powerful regional economic blocs have ignored the entire issue of migrant labour in trade and other economic negotiations."*

The World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen called for a response to the problems of documented and undocumented migrant workers. The issue of violence against migrant workers was addressed at the World Conference on Women in 1995. The UN Commission on the Status of Women and the UN Commission on Human Rights have initiated steps to recognise and monitor incidents of violence against migrant women workers which could lead to recommendations for protective measures.

The third report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and the UN Expert Group Meeting on





- A dispute resolution system set up with government and non-government coordination to prevent abuses as well as to build a more rational work relationship;
- Regulatory and monitoring mechanisms for recruitment and employment agencies to make them accountable.

These suggestions may appear idealistic in a situation dominated by big business syndicates, but in the long term interest of development and growth, even profit motives demand corrective measures. Only a few countries such as the Philippines and Sri Lanka are beginning to raise human rights standards under pressure from their workers.<sup>6</sup> In some of the countries, informal support structures set up by the church, women's groups, human rights activists and trade unions have set up shelters, taken legal action, or provided other forms of support. While some governments have recognised the value of such work, other governments have victimised the defenders of migrant workers.

Networks of migrant support groups which have begun to emerge in the region need to move their agenda forward for institutional reform of policies on migrant workers. This requires action at different levels:

- Lobbying and advocating for ratification of UN Conventions;
- Setting up fact finding commissions and advisory committees;
- Setting up a migrant human rights' watch group;
- Developing more formal systems of support and information in collaboration with human rights networks involving inter-state actors (such as IOM, UNHCR, ILO);
- Instituting bilateral cooperation between NGOs in sending and receiving countries for legal aid, monitoring, communication and repatriation; and,
- Setting up cooperative systems for saving and insurance.

6 PJ Smith, "Asia's Economic Transformation and its Impact on Intra Regional Labour Migration", 1995

# Trafficking in Women: A Regional Perspective

*[Summarised from a paper presented for a Roundtable Discussion on  
Traffic in Women organised by the European Union and GAATW  
(Global Alliance Against the Traffic in Women) in Bangkok, February 1997]*

Siriporn Skrobanek\*

## Background

Violence against women is being increasingly recognised as a matter of public concern and there are calls for intervention through international legislation and regulation. The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 recognised that violence against women in all its forms constitutes a serious violation of the human rights of women. The UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in 1993. One of the forms of violence against women included in the Declaration is forced prostitution and trafficking in women.

Trafficking in women in the Asian region is growing in magnitude and manifesting itself in many forms. It has shifted from physical recruitment for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation to many other purposes such as domestic work, servile marriages, and forced labour.

## Situation of Trafficked Women

Intra and inter-regional trafficking of women occurs in the Southeast Asian region. Many countries in the Mekong region such as Thailand and Cambodia serve as the origin, destination and transit places for women involved in cross-border trafficking. The socio-economic and political transformation of the countries in the Mekong region has

resulted in an alarming growth of the trade in women and children. Accompanying the open door policy and the development of market-oriented economy, is the emergence and expansion of the commercialisation of women's sexuality for local and foreign consumption.

Poor women are increasingly forced to migrate within and/or outside their own country. They relocate in search of employment to ensure economic survival and improvement. These women are particularly vulnerable and forced into work situations where they are subjected to virtual slavery-like conditions with exploitative practices and gender specific violations. Victims of abuse and violence tend to under-report their cases for fear of deportation, reprisal, shame and embarrassment. Often there is some pressure from middlemen or traffickers. Women who are trafficked for purposes of prostitution are also placed in almost total confinement which prevents them from making any report of the violence.

The mobility of migrant women workers including domestic workers, entertainers or workers in sweat shops is restricted because recruiters or employers commonly confiscate workers' passports and other legal documents. Official departure from the country is also prohibited because governments of receiving countries impose inflexible procedures for travelling out of the country such as exit visas and the

\* Siriporn Skrobanek works for women's rights and is based in Bangkok, Thailand. She is the coordinator of the Global Alliance Against the Traffic in Women (GAATW).

original passport and/or official document. Women who have been trafficked often do not try to escape because they have no knowledge of how to return home on their own and are reliant on the traffickers for their safe passage.

When the women are illegal immigrants, they live in fear of being imprisoned in detention centres. There are many reports of harsh treatment and conditions including sexual abuse and sexual harassment of women in detention centres in various receiving countries. They are often subjected to racism and discrimination. There are also a number of women from ethnic minority groups who have become stateless persons and are kept in detention centres in receiving countries. They cannot return to the country of origin because they are not citizens of that country. So far, the international treaty regarding stateless persons is not applicable to this particular group of women who are victims of international trafficking. When trafficking is defined as illegal immigration or residence, the crime is not perceived as violence against women, instead the migrant women are viewed as criminals and are endangered by their alien status.

## **The Legal System and Trafficked Women**

Although laws against trafficking in persons exist in many countries in the region, they are not effectively enforced. Perpetrators are not penalised and the laws often do not protect victims of trafficking. Trafficked women sometimes become targets of laws that criminalise prostitution and illegal migrants. Another contributory factor to the ineffectiveness of the law and the legal system is the widespread involvement of officials and police in trafficking networks.

Governments of both receiving and sending countries are also reluctant to address the issue because of national pride and fear of tarnishing the country's

image. They prefer to enforce laws which have a negative impact on migrant women. There has been a lot of discussion on state sanctioned abuse of migrant women and trafficked victims. For instance, in Singapore, women migrant domestic workers are subjected to a three month medical check up to test for pregnancy and venereal disease. These women are penalised not just for being foreign, but also for being female. If the pregnancy or venereal disease test results are positive, they are sent home immediately without investigation or medical care, even if they had been raped. Singapore also legalised discrimination against unskilled migrant workers by prohibiting their marriages to Singapore nationals.

It is also difficult for women, particularly for non-citizen migrants, to obtain legal redress in receiving countries. For instance, in Japan, a Japanese employer cannot be charged for breaking the country's anti-prostitution law unless the foreign worker is present to testify. Since 70% of the illegal foreign workers are subjected to summary deportation and the rest are usually deported within a year, the chances of unscrupulous employers being charged are very slim.

*"There is a need to form a new alliance which includes the representation of women from all affected sectors including sex workers, domestic workers and mail-order brides."*

## **Suggestions for Intervention**

There is a need to broaden the definition of trafficking of women and international standards. The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, in her report which addressed violence against women in the community including the issue of trafficking in women and forced prostitution, refers to the prevailing lack of consensus within the international community regarding the definition of trafficking. Historically, the trafficking of women is defined only for the purpose of prostitution, thus excluding contemporary forms of trafficking for domestic work, marriage and sweatshop labour. The report points to the failure of the 1949 Convention on the Suppression

of Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of Prostitution of Others, due to its broad terminology, weak enforcement mechanism and abolitionist perspective. The report stresses the need to reformulate international standards to meet the exigencies of current forms of trafficking. This includes a new definition of trafficking and setting down principles to guide national and international action to provide redress for women victims.

The Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) has formulated the working definition of trafficking to include the nature of recruitment and the slavery-like situation women face in the destination. GAATW has also drafted a set of Standard Minimum Rules concerning the treatment of trafficked persons. These rules include the right to freedom from persecution or harassment by those in positions of authority, protection against reprisals either from violators or from the authorities, and access to legal possibilities of compensation and redress.

The Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women also emphasises the need for a constructive dialogue within the international community to overcome the

*"Victims of abuse and violence tend to under-report their cases for fear of deportation, reprisal, shame and embarrassment."*

present controversy surrounding the issue of prostitution among women's rights advocates and anti-trafficking activists and among states. Currently there are two main positions: the first is the abolitionist position which is based on the moral rejection of prostitution and defines prostitution per se as abuse and violence against women and seeks to rescue women by advocating elimination of prostitution under the banner of sexual exploitation. The second position, taken by many NGOs including GAATW, recognises prostitution as work and supports the rights of sex workers as well as other workers engaged in the informal labour sectors, to work and live freely and with dignity. Proponents of this view, do not seek a blanket ban on prostitution, domestic work or the mail-order bride market, or on migrant work,

simply on the basis that there are instances of abuse of women in these informal sectors of work. They maintain that it is the lack of legal recognition and protection of these sectors that creates the conditions that give rise to such abuse and violation of women's human rights. There is a strong call therefore to decriminalise prostitution and place it under the ambit of existing labour laws.

Some activists are also calling for a review of legal demands and its implication for women as many conceptual and strategic questions need to be raised before the demand for more effective laws is made. Anti-trafficking organisations persist in promoting and promulgating anti-trafficking laws under the assumption that such instruments protect women. We need to review the anti-trafficking movement, particularly how we may have become caught up in the reactionary current of history, and are reinforcing the humiliation and isolation of affected women. We should also critically examine whether our well-minded demands empower the state to have more control over the life of individual women particularly poor women who are struggling with livelihood issues.

Finally, there is a need to form a new alliance which includes the representation of women from all affected sectors including sex workers, domestic workers and mail-order brides. Activism among the anti-trafficking organisations has become increasingly a rescue operation that are somewhat justified by the enormous scale and persistence of violation of women. Many of us may not be comfortable with the term victims, yet we have done very little to change the status of victims in a way that they become their own agents and have full representation in our activities and dialogues. We must truly shift from representing other women and work towards having a self-representation of these women in the movement instead of campaigning on behalf of individual victims.

We need to urgently form a new alliance to ensure that any work done does not jeopardise or re-stigmatise any groups of women in the gender-biased society. I believe that the totality of women's human rights includes the rights of women in all sectors of society.

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# Implementing Recommendations on Women's Reproductive Health at the Regional Level

Rashidah Abdullah\*

*ARROW, a regional NGO based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, focuses on women's health and women's rights. Its long-term programme objective is the re-orientation of health, population and family planning policies, programmes and services to include women's and gender perspectives, particularly within the context of the recommendations from the Cairo and Beijing conferences. This article is based on observations made from implementing ARROW's work programme.*

## Implementing Recommendations on Women and Health from the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA)

The women and health section of the PFA provides a comprehensive overview of what needs to change in order to improve women's health. However, the principles on which the recommendations are based need to be translated into concrete actions which are guided by a clear understanding of concepts and a vision of the outcome in terms of health services. For example, the recommendation . . . "Design and implement in cooperation with women and community-based organisations, gender-sensitive health programmes . . .", cannot be implemented unless there is a clear understanding of

what constitutes a gender-sensitive health programme. The PFA does not describe such a programme or give any criteria and indicators. From feedback received by ARROW, the understanding of concepts is one of the main difficulties faced by health agencies, both government and NGOs, when they plan the implementation of the PFA. Another difficulty is the general lack of clarity in the understanding and use of concepts and terms from the PFA such as reproductive health, reproductive rights, gender inequality, women's health and rights, and women-centred research.

These barriers to implementation are similar to those identified in ARROW's regional research project on "Changes in Population Policies and Programmes Post-Cairo" carried out in 1996 in eight countries (China, Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam). Country research coordinators who interviewed key government, NGO and donor agency personnel in positions ranging from policy to field-level, often heard expressions of uncertainty about new concepts. In Southeast Asian countries, views from government officials indicated that health and family planning programmes for women were already meeting women's needs and were gender-sensitive, and therefore there was

\* Rashidah Abdullah is with the Asia-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), a regional NGO specialising in women's health issues, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

no need for any re-orientation. Obviously, the understanding of women's needs and perceptions of gender-sensitivity in approaches to women's health differ widely.

## Responding to Implementation Needs

Based on the above situation, ARROW has produced publications to assist in clarifying concepts on women and health as well operationalise recommendations through policies, programmes and activities. *Arrows for Change*, a quarterly bulletin, has focused on issues such as improving women's health, violence against women, men's roles and responsibilities in reproduction, sexuality, monitoring changes after the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994, and women and HIV/AIDS and women's rights to health. The bulletin provides a framework for change and shares information on innovative actions and key resources.

ARROW's 1996 resource kit on women-centred and gender-sensitive experiences in health policies and programmes for women in the Asia-Pacific region offers case studies and tools such as check lists, curriculum and frameworks to assist in the re-orientation of efforts in addressing women and health issues. An information package on gender relations and the effects on women's health was brought out in 1997. Other publications have similarly contributed resources to implement actions in key areas of concern. ARROW focuses on the production of action-oriented resources as one of the main strategies to assist implementation of the PFA. It also provides some support to training and raising awareness on gender issues among health providers.

## Monitoring of the PFA

Monitoring implementation of the recommendations from the PFA to assess progress and identifying problems associated with implementation are as

important as providing support to implementation. From ARROW's experience in receiving reports on Beijing implementation for the review section in *Arrows for Change* called 'Ahead With Cairo and Beijing: Monitoring Country Activities', it is evident that the monitoring of implementation is limited to reporting on events by GOs and NGOs making it difficult to assess the quality, depth and significance of implementation. ARROW has therefore designed a framework to facilitate in-depth monitoring of women's health status and advocacy of women's health rights through the development of a research project which gives guidelines on indicators for monitoring and assessing women's health status in the areas of women's health and rights; sexual and reproductive rights; violence against women and gender-sensitive health programmes. The research project covers Southeast Asia and country papers are being prepared in 1998.

### *A Framework for Indicators of Action on Women's Health and Reproductive Rights*

The framework prioritises the PFA recommendations on health in the four key areas of women's health and rights, sexual and reproductive health/rights, violence against women and gender-sensitive health programmes and develops a set of indicators for assessing action on women's health and reproductive rights.

For example, for the paragraph on abortion in the PFA which reads: "Recognise and deal with the health impact of unsafe abortion as a major public health concern", and which also concurs with Paragraph 8.25 of the Programme of Action from the ICPD, monitoring of action would include indicators such as:

- women's health status which can be assessed from the number of reported abortions and the categorisation of abortions, i.e., as legal, safe or unsafe by class, ethnicity, geographic area,

etc. and the number and percentage of women dying as a result of unsafe and illegal abortions;

- health services assessed from the extent of availability and affordability; and the extent of provision of legal abortion services;
- laws assessed by the current abortion law and the most recent review / amendment; also, whether or not the law allows abortion in rape and incest cases.

The country papers will report on the extent to which the women and health section of the PFA has been included in the national plan of action, chart the progress made in actually implementing the national plan of action and identify obstacles to implementation. The monitoring of women's health status will be guided by the framework on indicators to measure women's health status in the four identified areas. There will also be a section on women's empowerment and decision-making in relation to health. Indicators on women's health status, health service provision, use and quality; and national laws, policies, plans and regulations will be compared to the critical objectives and recommendations from the PFA. Therefore the monitoring, which will be based on research guided by indicators, will determine the specific actions taken by GOs or NGOs post-Beijing and gauge the current status of women's health and rights. The compilation of the data for each country which would have been gathered during the course of the project will also serve as the basis for monitoring progress in implementation in the area of women's health, in the future.

The country papers produced with this form of monitoring based on a framework of indicators, will be discussed at a Regional Policy and Implementation Dialogue to be held in mid-1998, organised together with the Gender and Development Programme of the Asian and Pacific Development Centre (APDC). This policy dialogue will bring together top-level government

policy makers, NGO country researchers and women's NGOs monitoring and assisting in implementation of the PFA. An expected outcome of the project is to increase the commitment and capacity of both GO and NGO actors to implement the recommendations in the Platform for Action on women's health at the national level.

#### *Assessing Women's Access to Health Programmes*

ARROW's regional research on "Women's Access to Gender-sensitive Health Programmes" covers Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Researchers will monitor and evaluate the implementation of health and family planning programmes with reference to some of the objectives of the PFA, for example, the need for high quality, gender-sensitive health services which are accessible to women. Besides monitoring change in health services, the project will also develop and disseminate effective methodologies and tools for programme evaluation which will involve the women themselves and the health service providers. The research will be carried out in 1998 and the findings used for advocacy purposes at national, regional and international levels.

In carrying out the work of monitoring the PFA as well as the Programme of Action from the ICPD, ARROW has networked with other women's NGOs and researchers to develop monitoring and advocacy strategies as well as to identify appropriate health indicators. We recognise the importance of sharing information with one another as quickly as possible in order to strengthen efforts and make our actions more effective.



## A Review of the Concept of Participation and Pressuring for Alternative Development

Gita Sen \*

### Looking Outward: the Field of Action

To my mind the biggest challenge that civil society organisations face when they decide to engage with governments and donors in this era of globalisation is the poorly defined concept of "participation". The term originated in a language of critique of the dominant development paradigms of the 1960's and 1970's, which resulted in the rich discussions of the pedagogy of the oppressed, and the calls for participatory needs assessment in rural development. But the term has now become part of the mainstream, used equally (though often with different meanings) by multilateral and bilateral donors, governments, and civil society. When social actors with divergent ideologies, approaches, and practices begin to use the same concepts, there is scope for considerable confusion. Inevitably, there is mistrust among the critics of globalisation and dominant development models who first began to use the idea of participation. Fears about cooption, dilution, and distortion abound. In particular, there has been considerable concern that participation is a new form of downsizing government, re-directing resources to a burgeoning number of new organisations, some of which are themselves the creations of donor agencies. Participation, in itself, is a concept that is compatible with multiple and conflicting ends. Where its aim is to genuinely involve people, and particularly the powerless, in

formulating development strategies and policies, making decisions about programmes, and monitoring and evaluating them, it can create an environment that is conducive to their empowerment. On the other hand, spaces may be opened up for groups or communities to participate in government development programmes simply because governments or agencies wish to pass on some of the costs of them, or primarily to improve programme efficiency. Indeed, if the intent as it sometimes is, is not to empower people to have a voice in making decisions, then the scope of participation can be tightly circumscribed and limited. Participation may also be entirely superficial, intended to satisfy donor agencies (who may themselves be espousing it only to prove to their domestic advocates or others that they are being ethical!) or to dampen pressure for greater democracy. In actual practice, it may consist of nothing more than cursory consultation with an arbitrary selection of groups, or more purposive selection of groups who are unlikely to pose a challenge. Calls for participation can therefore be side-stepped or subverted unless objectives are clearly specified, the methods to be used are transparent, and accountability is built into the process.

Groups in civil society are quite concerned, for example, at the fact that the World Bank has so strongly espoused

*"The relationship of civil society organisations and governments is a complex and changing one at the present time."*

\* Gita Sen is Professor of Economics, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, India, and Research Co-ordinator on Alternative Development Frameworks, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN).



cost recovery mechanisms, and increased targeting and narrowing in public service provision also includes community participation in an increasing number of its projects. While it is important to recognise that the Bank is not a monolith, and this is not the place to discuss what motivates this seemingly schizophrenic behaviour, the concern raises a genuine challenge for civil society organisations themselves - to participate or not?

Take the example of a large donor-funded project for, say, watershed development, that is going to be implemented in the villages where an NGO has been working with the community on a range of rural development programmes over the years. Non-participation in the project will not mean that the project will not happen in those villages; other organisations may step in or, possibly, be created. On the other hand, the NGO with its experience and linkages with the community, may be able to ensure a modicum of transparency to the process. But there is need for great vigilance here. If neither the agency nor the government is serious about the participation process, it may be structured in ways that soon become irrelevant and trivial. I stress the importance of vigilance here because even the most experienced of organisations can fall into the structures of a project, without adequate internal reflection and/or evaluation, or open discussions with the community. On the other hand, there are also cases where NGOs have participated effectively in such projects, making them

more open to the community, and even using them to help the community challenge power at new levels. But donor agencies who are serious about participation must recognise that they have to allow time and resources for this process; build in institutional structures so that the community's voices are heard on time in the right fora; and ensure that there is a full sharing of information and knowledge.

The relationship of civil society organisations and governments is a complex and changing one at the present time. Many governments are turning to NGOs for instance because of pressure from donors or because they want to pass some of the burdens of public service provision (often the difficult services in the most difficult areas). But civil society organisations (and I refer here to the ones that have a serious track record of commitment to the well-being of the community) view their relationship with governments as one that includes a mixture of challenge, playing the watchdog, and some co-operation. The UN conferences of the 1990's have opened up the questions of implementation and accountability in this period in a significant way.

But how to play the watchdog when there are few institutional structures at national or international levels that provide for such a role? Governments (at least some of them) have their own internal structures of accountability complemented possibly by processes of political democracy, and they are increasingly accountable to donors. But it does not ensure accountability to the poor and the marginalised. Getting government officials to be responsive in the absence of structural mechanisms becomes entirely contingent on personalities and random events.

This is equally true of many donors who are subject to political economic pressures from within their own countries, and where there are few structures to make them accountable to the recipients of development funds. Traditionally, host governments are

expected to be the guardians of their citizens' interests in both bilateral and multilateral relations. But the collapse and cooption of states in the South makes this highly dubious. As large multilateral donors have pressured governments to implement structural economic changes in the last fifteen years, there has been no accountability to the citizens of those same countries. Also, as donors turn increasingly to setting up and funding NGOs directly, what structures are there to ensure accountability to ordinary people? In the absence of effective mechanisms, making governments or donors accountable can be like trying to grab a jellyfish! Although some innovative experiments and ideas are beginning to surface, this is a critical question which requires a lot more debate and consideration. One idea, for instance, is that projects should have an independent review mechanism involving representatives of "beneficiaries" and civil society on par with the review mechanisms set up by donors.

One of the areas that is particularly critical here is transparency of information. In the state of Rajasthan in India, there is a people's movement of obtaining the right to information about the details of government budgets and programmes. Open access to information is a critical area, since both governments and donors wrap themselves in the mantle of secrecy; they recognise full well that knowledge is truly power. Especially when globalisation means that decisions that affect people's lives can be taken in far-flung places, it is impossible for civil society to meet the challenge of action without timely access to information.

#### *What kind of world do we want?*

The implications of what I have been saying so far means change along a multiplicity of fronts. For development policy, the kind of world we want has some basic requirements:

- It means taking on collectively the challenge of making global trade more fair and just, and correcting the

biases of a system tilted towards the powerful and wealthy.

- We will need to think in terms if new global systems of taxation — a new social democracy at the global level, that will over time replace the current system of development assistance. After all, when the income tax was first proposed in the last century, the wealthy initially greeted it with shock and horror. But there are few other mechanisms for ensuring that social development and the eradication of poverty will be adequately resourced. Financial belt-tightening of already weak systems will only go so far. As an African activist said, "my belt has been tightened so much that I now have nothing but holes!"
- A critical need is to build a system for global regulation of the operations of TNC's. If governments recognise that anti-trust and anti-monopoly regulation are essential to ensure that corporations play fair within their domestic borders, why does this logic not apply at the international level? The Multinational Investment Agreement has to stop pulling in the opposite direction.
- The Bretton Woods institutions need to be made more transparent and accountable for their actions, as befits large bureaucracies that always express considerable concern for the non-accountability of other bureaucracies, especially those within governments.
- The existing capacity within the rest of the UN system to provide alternative development models and advice needs to be strengthened and expanded to encompass issues such as gender and environmental sustainability.
- Genuine democracy is going to require that the state, national and global, be rebuilt in the image of citizens, with spaces opened up for a



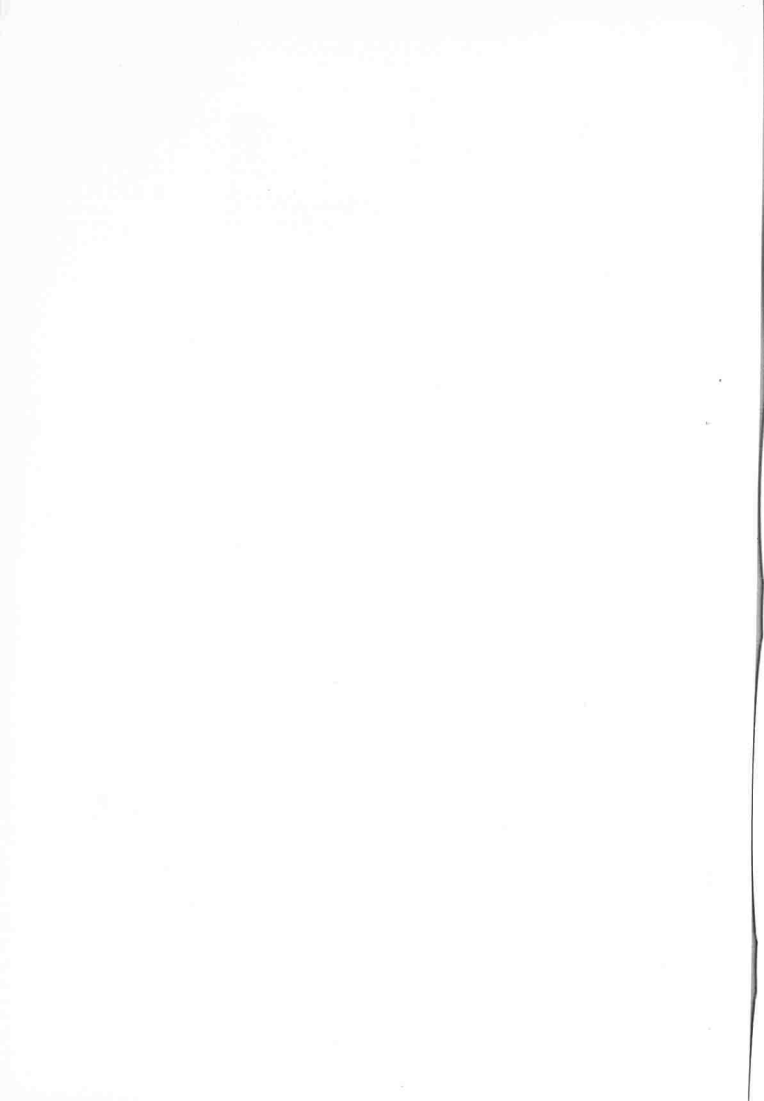
true role at all levels for civil society  
– co-operation, challenge, and if  
need be, resistance. Donors have to  
stop treating NGOs as substitutes for  
the state who can be managed in a  
more pliable manner than  
governments can.

As we prepare to enter a new millennium  
we are faced with the increasing  
desperation of those who are told that  
things are improving when the evidence  
of their senses - hunger, violence and  
despair - tell them they are getting worse.  
The challenge of globalisation in the  
21st. Century will be a challenge to re-  
imagine our common humanity. It will  
require bold initiatives, political courage,  
and sustained effort on the part of all  
those who believe still, at the closing of  
a century of brutal wars and unspeakable  
horrors, and as we face the consequences  
of our own quest for control over natural  
forces, that what will see us through is  
the ethical recognition that we will, as a  
species, survive or sink together.

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## **APPENDIX**

The appendix carries the full text of the Korean Women's Development Act enacted by the government of South Korea after the Beijing Conference, as an example of a concrete post-Beijing policy measure made for women's advancement in this region.



# The Women's Development Act

Ministry Of Political Affairs, Republic of Korea

## *Text of Act (unedited)*

Recognising the reality of discrimination based on gender deeply rooted in our society, this Act is enacted, by prescribing the forwarding system and the concrete plan for women's policy, and the responsibilities of the State and the society for promoting gender equality, expanding the social participation by women, and advancing women's welfare, in order to promote gender equality and ensure the expansion of women's participation in all political, economic, social and cultural fields in accordance with the Constitutional basic principles, to ensure that both women and men may, on equal basis, participate in and take responsibilities of realising the healthy family and society as a whole.

## **Essential Substance of the Women's Development Act**

- i. General Provisions
  - ii. Basic Women's Policy Plan, etc.
  - iii. Basic Measures On Women's Policy
  - iv. Women's Development Fund
  - v. Support For Women's Organisation, etc.
  - vi. Supplementary Provisions
- Addenda

## **Essential Substance**

1. The Women's Development Act is composed of six Chapters and thirty six Articles, of which the main contents are the Basic Women's Policy Plan, the basic measures on women's policy, the Women's Development Fund, and the support for women's organisation, etc.
2. The purpose of the Act is to promote gender equality and increase women's participation in all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural fields by prescribing the responsibilities of the State and the local government to realise the Constitutional principles of equality based on gender (Article 1).
3. The fundamental principle of the Act is to ensure that both women and men, on an equal basis may take part in, and share the responsibilities of realising the healthy family and through promoting the gender equality, protecting the maternity, eliminating the gender discrimination and developing the ability of women (Article 2).
4. The State and the local government shall be responsible for providing the appropriate legal and institutional arrangements and for procuring the financial resources necessary for promoting gender equality, expanding women's social participation and enhancing women's welfare and may take interim affirmative actions, in accordance with the relevant statutes, to promote the participation of women in the fields where the participation is quite inactive (Article 5 and 6).

5. The State shall establish the basic plan for the women's policy every five years and the Central Administrative Agencies and local government, in accordance with the Basic Plan, establish and execute the annual execution programme; And, the Central Administrative Agencies, the local government, public institutions, or other juristic person or organisation shall cooperate wherewith (Article 7 through 9).
6. The source of legal authority for establishing the National Committee on Women's Policies, the Gender Discrimination Elimination Committee, and the Korean Women's Development Institute shall be provided in this Act (Article 10 through 12).
7. The Act prescribes the scope of basic measures on women's policy which shall include, but not limited to, the political process, public office, employment, education, social welfare, family and international cooperation, and the responsibilities of the State and the local government for the development of women (Article 15 through 28).
8. The State shall establish the Women's Development Fund in order to secure the financial resources necessary for supporting the projects for fulfilling the purpose of the Act, which shall be administered and operated by the Government (Article 29).
9. The State and the local government may support expenses required for activities of the women's organisation, etc. (Article 32) .
10. The Minister who will administer the governmental affairs prescribed under this Act, including the establishment of basic plan on women's policy, and the management and the operation of fund, etc., shall be designated by the President (Article 36).

## **I. General Provisions**

### *Article 1 - Purpose*

The purpose of this Act is to promote the gender equality and to ensure the development of women in all the aspects of political, economic, social and cultural fields by prescribing the basic matters including, but not limited to, the responsibilities of the State and the local government necessary for embodying the Constitutional principles of gender equality.

### *Article 2 - Fundamental Principle*

The fundamental principle of this Act is to ensure that women and men on an equal basis may take part in, and share the responsibilities of realising a healthy family and society as a whole, under the basic principles of human dignity, promoting the gender equality, protecting the maternity, eliminating the bias of gender discrimination and developing the ability of women.

### *Article 3 - Definitions*

The definition of the terms used in this Act is as follows;

1. The term "women's policy" means those policies relating to the promotion of gender equality, the expansion of women's social participation, and the enhancement of women's welfare, which shall be prescribed by the Presidential Decree.
2. The term "women's organisations" means those organisations which shall be established for the purpose of promoting gender equality, expanding women's social participation and enhancing women's welfare, or other organisations which shall be prescribed by the Presidential Decree.



3. The term "women's facilities" means those facilities intended for promotion of gender equality, expansion of women's social participation and enhancement of women's welfare, which shall be prescribed by the Presidential Decree.

#### *Article 4 - Responsibility of Citizens*

All citizens shall recognise the importance of, and endeavour to realise the promotion of gender equality and the development of women.

#### *Article 5 - Responsibility of State and Local Government*

The State and the local government shall be responsible for providing the appropriate legal and institutional arrangements and for procuring the financial resources necessary for promoting gender equality, expanding women's social participation and enhancing women's welfare.

#### *Article 6 - Interim Affirmative Actions*

The State and the local government may, in a reasonable scope, adopt interim affirmative actions, in accordance with the relevant statutes, in order to promote the participation of women in the fields where the participation is quite inactive.

## **II. Basic Women's Policy Plan, etc.**

#### *Article 7 - Establishment of Basic Women's Policy Plan*

1. The State shall establish the basic plan on the women's policy (hereinafter referred to as "Basic Plan") every five years.
2. The basic plan shall include the following matters.
  1. Basic direction for women's policy
  2. Forwarding Goal of women's policy
    - a. Promotion of gender equality
    - b. Expansion of women's social participation
    - c. Enhancement of women's welfare
    - d. Other important measures related to women's policy
  3. Measures of procuring financial resources for executing women's policy

#### *Article 8 - Establishment of Annual Execution Programme*

1. The head of the Central Administrative Agencies, the mayor of the Special City, the mayor of the Megalopolitan City, and the governor of the Province (hereinafter referred to as "city/province governor") shall, in accordance with the basic plan, establish and execute the annual execution programme (hereinafter referred to as "execution programme").
2. The Government shall adjust the execution programme and review the progress thereof.

#### *Article 9 - Cooperation for Establishment and Execution of Plan*

1. The Government, the head of the Central Administrative Agencies, or the city/province governor may request cooperation, if required for establishment and execution of the basic plan or the execution programme, to the relevant Central Administrative Agencies, the local government, public institutions, or other juristic person or organisation.
2. Any one, who is requested cooperation under paragraph (1), shall comply with it unless there are any special causes which may justify the exemption.

*Article 10 - National Committee on Women's Policies*

1. The National Committee on Women's Policies (hereinafter referred to as "National Committee") shall be established under the control of the Prime Minister in order to deliberate the major policies with regard to women's policy.
2. Any matters necessary for function, organisation and operation, etc. of the National Committee shall be prescribed by the Presidential Decree.

*Article 11 - Gender Discrimination Elimination Committee*

1. The Gender Discrimination Elimination Committee (hereinafter referred to as "Elimination Committee") shall be established by the Government in order to correct the gender discrimination in the fields of law, institution, administrative actions, and custom, etc., and to ensure the development of women.
2. Any matters necessary for function, organisation and operation, etc. of the Elimination Committee shall be prescribed by the Presidential Decree.

*Article 12 - Establishment of Korean Women's Development Institute*

1. The Korean Women's Development Institute (hereinafter referred to as "Development Institute") shall be established in order to undertake research and study efficiently on the issues related to women.
2. Any matters necessary for establishment, organisation, and scope of duty, etc., shall be prescribed by other statute.

*Article 13 - Research on Women's Issues*

1. The Government shall conduct researches on the women's issues in order to establish the efficient women's policy through taking public opinion poll or formulating the gender statistics.
2. The Government shall endeavour to provide information about women through building an information system.

*Article 14 - Women's Week*

The Government shall designate one week a year as the Women's Week in order to enhance the development of women, and to attract the nation wide attention of people on the promotion of gender equality.

### **III. Basic Measures on Women's Policy**

*Article 15 - Participation in Decision-Making Process and Politics*

1. The State and the local government shall take measures to expand women's participation in the policy making process including various government-affiliated committees, etc.
2. The State and the local government shall endeavour to support for the expansion of women's participation in the political process through various measures.

*Article 16 - Participation in Public Office*

The State and the local government shall create the conditions for the expansion of women's holding of public office through the reasonable administration of hiring, job assignment, promotion, reward, and education and training, etc.

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#### *Article 17 - Equal Employment*

1. The State and the local government shall, in accordance with the relevant statutes, ensure that the gender equality for employees in the various areas of hiring, education and training, promotion, and retirement, etc. will be fulfilled.
2. The State and the local government shall provide institutional arrangements, including but not limited to maternity leave, for employees to harmonise family obligations with workplace responsibilities.
3. The State, the local government or the employers shall take appropriate measures, including but not limited to sexual harassment preventing measures, required for fostering equal working environments on a gender basis in the work-place.

#### *Article 18 - Strengthening Maternity Protection*

1. The State, the local government and the employers shall, in a special manner, protect women who are in the period of pregnancy, procreation and lactation, which must not be a basis for disadvantages.
2. The State and the local government shall, through the social insurance and the public finance, etc. under the Social Security Basic Act, share social expenditure in the cost for protecting maternity in relation with working women's pregnancy, procreation and lactation.

#### *Article 19 - Home Education*

The State and the local government shall make an effort that the education and discipline on gender equality must be provided at home.

#### *Article 20 - School Education*

The State and the local government shall ensure that the school education will inspire the consciousness of gender equality and shall expand the opportunity of education for women.

#### *Article 21 - Community Education*

The State and the local government shall make an effort that the national and public training institution, the community educational institution, and the enterprise training centre will provide education enhancing the consciousness of gender equality.

#### *Article 22 - Promotion of Women's Welfare*

1. The State and the local government shall provide measures to meet the demands of women's welfare in accordance with the change of social structure.
2. The State and the local government shall, in accordance with the relevant statutes, prevent the occurrence of low income fatherless families, unmarried mothers, runaway women, and other needy women and shall guide and protect them.
3. The State and the local government shall endeavour to promote the welfare of those women in the rural areas and women elderly.

#### *Article 23 - Infant and Child Care*

1. The State and the local government shall, in accordance with the relevant statutes, expand the child care facilities and take other necessary measures required for the protection and education for infants and children.
2. The State and the local government shall provide the appropriate after-school care programmes to protect and guide children at school age.

*Article 24 - Promotion Equality in the Family Relationship*

1. The State and the local government shall endeavour to establish the democratic and equal values and norms in the family relationship.
2. The State and the local government shall provide the necessary supports for the dual-income family and the single-parent family in accordance with the change of family structure.

*Article 25 - Prevention of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence*

1. The State and the local government shall, in accordance with the relevant statutes, prevent the sexual assault crime and protect the victim thereof.
2. The State and the local government shall provide the measures to solve the violence problem occurring in the family.

*Article 26 - Estimating Value of Housework*

The State and the local government shall estimate the proper economic value of housework and endeavour to reflect it on the law, institution or policy.

*Article 27 - International Cooperation for Women*

1. The State and the local government shall expand the opportunity for women to participate in the work of international organisation or international conference and shall support the activities of women for promoting the international peace and strengthening the international cooperation.
2. The State and the government shall endeavour to enter into and observe the international treaties relating to women including the "United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women," etc.

*Article 28 - Elimination of Gender Discrimination Through Mass Media*

The State and the local government shall provide the support to improve the sexually discriminatory content in the mass media and to disseminate the principle of gender equality through the mass media.

#### **IV. Women's Development Fund**

*Article 29 - Establishment of Fund*

1. The State shall establish the Women's Development Fund (hereinafter referred to as "fund") in order to secure the financial resources necessary for supporting the projects for fulfilling the purpose of this Act.
2. The fund shall be raised from the following financial resources;
  - a. Contribution by the State
  - b. Cash, goods, and other property contributed by any individuals and organisations other than the State
  - c. Proceeds accruing from management of the fund
  - d. Other revenues prescribed by the Presidential Decree.
3. The fund shall be managed and operated by the Government.

#### **Article 30 - Usage of Fund**

The fund shall be appropriated for the following projects.

- a. Support of projects for advancing women's right and interest
- b. Subsidy in activities of women's organisation
- c. Support of establishing and operating women's facilities
- d. Subsidy in women's international cooperative activities
- e. Other projects for attaining gender equality and developing women, which shall be prescribed by the Presidential Decree.

#### **Article 31 - Accounting Office for Fund**

1. The Government shall appoint, among the government officials, the fund accounting director and the fund accounting officer who shall take charge of revenue and expenditure of the fund.
2. Among the provisions of the Accounting Officer Responsibilities Act, those pertaining to the financial officer and the revenue officer shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the fund accounting director, and those pertaining to the expenditure officer and accounting officer shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the fund accounting officer.

### **V. Support For Women's Organisation, etc.**

#### **Article 32 - Support for Women's Organisation**

1. The State and the local government may provide administrative supports necessary for organisation and operation of the women's organisation, and assist with a part of expenses necessary for its activities, etc. within its budget capability.
2. Any individuals, juristic persons or organisations may contribute money or other property in order to support the facilities and operation of the women's organisations.

#### **Article 33 - Establishment and Operation of Women's Facilities**

The State and the local government may establish and manage the women's facilities whose purposes are to promote the women's right and interest, and welfare.

#### **Article 34 - Support of Women Volunteer Activities**

The State and the local government shall provide the support necessary for activating the women's volunteer service.

### **VI. Supplementary Provisions**

#### **Article 35 - Delegation and Assignment of Authority**

The Government may, in accordance with the Presidential Decree, delegate a part of its authority vested under this Act to the city/province governor, or assign a part of its duty to the development institution or the women's organisation.

#### **Article 36 - Designation of Minister for Administering Affairs**

The governmental affairs prescribed under this Act, including the establishment of Basic Plan, and the management and the operation of fund, etc., may be administered, as prescribed by the Presidential Decree, by the Minister other than the head of Board, Ministry, or Office, who shall be designated by the President in accordance with Article 18(1) of the Government Organisation Act.

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## **Addenda**

### **1. *Enforcement Date***

This Act shall enter into force six month after its promulgation (1996. 7.1)

### **2. *Revision of Other Laws***

The Fund Administration Basic Act shall be amended as follows; Section 119 shall be added to the separate table as follows. 119. The Women's Development Act.

### **3. *Interim Measures***

The National Committee on Women's Policies established under the National Committee on Women's Policies Regulation at the time of enforcement of this Act shall be regarded as the National Committee on Women's Policies established under the Article 10 of this Act.