HIGHLIGHT

From 14 to 16 November, over 400 feminist women activists working on women’s rights met in Bangkok at the Asia-Pacific CSO Forum on Beijing+20. They worked to develop a collective statement of their visions and expectations of States in their investment on women’s rights in the upcoming years and prepared to keep states accountable to the promises made in the Beijing Platform for Action, at the regional review of Beijing+20, beginning on 17 November.

Activists from the region discussed the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and cross-cutting issues, such as race, class, ability, age, HIV status, sexual orientation and gender identities. Women couched their recommendations on women’s human rights and agreed that leadership among women and opportunities to meaningfully and effectively participate in political scenarios around these issues is crucial.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“WOMEN’S HUMAN RIGHTS ARE BOTH THE GOALS AND THE MEANS”

- Gita Sen, Adjunct Professor
Harvard School of Public Health

YOUTH DIARY

Twenty years can seem like a very long time when you think of how much technology, globalization and development has evolved, even more so when 20 years encompasses more than two-thirds of your personal lifetime. But after my first day at the Asia Pacific Civil Society Forum on Beijing+20 surrounded by 400 over women’s human rights activists - that number gained both a smaller scale and a larger significance. Hearing the history of the ongoing ever-evolving fight for our rights by women who were present at the Fourth World Conference, women who have seen laws change and mentalities shift, women who have brought causes from the grassroots to the global platform, women who are still going and gave no intentions of stopping - it was amazing to realize how much 20 years can contain, but also how short a time it is in the larger context of the women’s movement storied history.

Where will we be in the next 20 years? I couldn’t help but try to divine the future, trying to see if I would be in a room like this again, occupying a different position, speaking to this version of myself. The issues have evolved; inequality, oppression, injustice, violence, marginalization, and apathy are still monsters we have to fight. It’s humbling and very scary to join the march forward, but we step up, and step up, and step up.

Syar S. Alia
Malaysia, Young Women Leaders Programme
@syarsalia

#Beijing20

IT’S TIME TO FULFILL THE PROMISE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Every year, on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, we are reminded how every day women and girls experience violence in their lives.

Women are beaten in their homes, harassed on the streets, bullied on the Internet. Globally, one in three women will experience physical or sexual violence at some point in her life. The World Health Organization has declared violence against women to be a global health problem of epidemic proportions.

In 1995, close to 20 years ago, 189 governments came together in Beijing. They adopted a Platform for Action that spelled out key strategies for governments, civil society, the private sector, international partners and all stakeholders to end violence against women, empower women, and achieve gender equality.

The promises from 20 years ago are still valid today. Together we must make 2015 the year that marks the beginning of the end of gender inequality. Now is the time for action. Now is the time to end violence against women and girls everywhere in the world.

Read more: http://ow.ly/ElbGk
NEWS

CIVIL SOCIETY SPEAKS UP ON BEIJING+20

After three days of robust discussion, civil society representatives at the Asia Pacific Civil Society Forum were last night putting the finishing touches on their outcome statement, demanding that their governments finally deliver on the commitments they made in Beijing almost 20 years ago.

Pointing out that two-thirds of the world’s poorest people – many of them women – live in the Asia-Pacific region, the statement details the national and regional mechanisms each of the caucuses need to better engage with as well as the key issues women in the region must deal with on a day-to-day basis. Some of those issues include migration, HIV, media, women and power, violence against women and international trade systems.

The statement will be presented in front of government delegations and civil society participants at today’s intergovernmental session at the Asia and Pacific conference on gender equality and women’s empowerment: Beijing+20 Review.

Read the full text of the declaration here: http://ow.ly/ElbAi
Reported by: Ellie van Baaren/UN Women Fiji.

EVENT’S TODAY | 17 NOVEMBER

- 09:30 17:00 Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review. Full programme: http://ow.ly/Elbuz
- 09:00 17:00 Regional Dialogue among Parliamentarians on the Implementation of CEDAW in conjunction with Beijing Platform for Action. Full programme: http://ow.ly/Elbw
- 09:00 17:00 Reporting for the Beijing+20, Youth Engagement and Gender Responsive Advocacy for media in Asia and the Pacific. Full programme here: http://ow.ly/ElbAl

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The regional Beijing+20 review process is supported by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in cooperation with UN Women.

This newsletter is produced daily by the UN Women Asia and the Pacific Regional Office Communications Team. If you are interested to contribute kindly submit your articles, pictures or information to:

Diego De La Rosa <Diego.delarosa@unwomen.org>

The editorial committee will review and edit the submissions and will try as much as possible to include all the contributions received.

CONTACT

UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
United Nations Building, 5th Floor, Rajdamnern Nok Avenue
Bangkok 10200, Thailand.
Tel: +66 2 288-2093
Fax: +66 2 280-6030
asiapacific.unwomen.org

@unwomenasia

Contact: Montira Narkvichien
Regional Communications Specialist
Email: montira.narkvichien@unwomen.org

REGIONAL DIRECTOR’S CORNER

SOLIDARITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY (PART 2)

The BPFA is far reaching in the analysis and prescriptions. It speaks to intersecting inequalities; to the redistributive role of the state; to the need to end impunity for violence against women; to women’s access to economic assets and opportunities; to actions to reduce militarization and to build a culture of peace. And all the way through, women’s agency as the precondition for this transformation is reiterated.

Using this document as the guide, since 1995, many member states have formulated national gender policies and sector plans. And in the process of this formulation, we have learnt some lessons. Where institutional mechanisms responsible for coordinating gender equality outcomes are under-resourced and without sufficient authority to compel the accountability of sector ministries, the gender policies remain mostly paper commitments.

We have learnt too that where women and the most marginalized amongst them secure the attention of the state, there is a higher likelihood of progress. So because women’s movements and service providers were so much ahead in activism on impunity for domestic violence, one of the significant achievements of the last nineteen years is the almost universal adoption of laws addressing domestic violence.

There have been other important achievements, including the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 and associated resolutions which seeks to secure women’s voice and influence in peace and security processes and which identifies gender-specific harms inflicted on women in conflict contexts.

Read more: http://ow.ly/EdUSg