IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC: 20 YEAR REVIEW

Background

In 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women and subsequently endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1996. The Beijing Platform for Action constitutes a global framework for realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

The Beijing Platform for Action calls upon governments, the international community and civil society, including the private sector, to empower women and girls by taking action in 12 critical areas: poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, the economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights, the media, the environment and the girl child.

Every five years, progress in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action is reviewed by the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). There have been three reviews to date – 2000, 2005 and 2010 – with each review resulting in an outcome document that reinforces global commitment to the empowerment of women and girls and outlines priority actions for the coming five years.

The Beijing+20 Review

In 2015, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will review implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000).

Supporting the 2015 global review, the United Nations Economic and Social Council, through Resolution 2013/18, called upon all States to undertake comprehensive national-level reviews of the progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

The regional review process for the Asian and Pacific region will involve:

a) a regional intergovernmental survey, conducted in early 2014, for the purpose of obtaining national perspectives for the preparation of a regional report on progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific;

b) holding of the third session of the Committee on Social Development, a legislative subsidiary body of ESCAP, from 18 to 20 August 2014 in Bangkok as a preparatory
body for the “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review”;

c) organization of civil society regional consultations on the Beijing+20 review in February and November 2014; and

d) convening of the “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review”, from 17 to 20 November 2014 in Bangkok, through which ESCAP member governments are expected to adopt a regional input to the global review process.

In Asia and the Pacific, the 20-year review of progress in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action will be a participatory process involving all member States, and supported by the ESCAP Secretariat in cooperation with UN Women. In fostering inclusiveness, the Beijing+20 regional review process for Asia and the Pacific will also engage civil society and other key stakeholders.

Further information about the above-mentioned regional review process is available on the ESCAP website at (http://www.unescapsdd.org/beijing20).

**Analytical Review**

In Asia and the Pacific, documentation of progress in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action will occur through two primary means, namely national-level responses to the global guidance note issued by the United Nations in September 2013 and completion of the afore-mentioned Asia-Pacific regional survey.

In order to facilitate the conduct of comprehensive national reviews, UN-Women and the United Nations Regional Commissions (e.g. ESCAP) prepared the *Guidance Note for the Preparation of National Reviews*. Alongside the guidelines on how to undertake a national-level review, the *Guidance Note* contains four substantive sections: overview and analysis of achievements and challenges since 1995, progress in the implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action since 2009, data and statistics and emerging priorities. Member States have been requested to submit their national review reports by 1 May 2014.

Supplementing the *Guidance Note*, and to enrich the regional analysis, ESCAP in cooperation with UN Women is conducting a survey of Asia-Pacific member States that specifically focuses on the 12 “Critical Areas of Concern” of the Beijing Platform for Action. The regional survey provides an opportunity for member States to reflect upon the status of women and girls nationally and regionally, recognizing achievements and noting where further work is required in the effort to realize gender equality. The format of the regional survey has been designed for ease of completion, through a combination of “tick box” answers and questions requiring summary responses.
Member States are requested to submit their completed surveys to ESCAP by 15 April 2014.

As with the national review reports, member States’ responses to the survey will constitute critical input to the regional report and to the development of the draft outcome document of the “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review”.

ESCAP, in cooperation with UN Women, will compile and analyze the data from both the national review reports and completed surveys of member States, producing a regional inter-governmental report on progress in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific. The engagement of member States in documenting progress in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action will also be critical in determining regional priorities and the Asia-Pacific input into the global process.

The contributions of member States to the review process will constitute the substantive content of a publication on progress in realising gender equality and women’s empowerment in Asia and the Pacific, as well as serve as background for the deliberations of the “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review”, scheduled to be held from 10 to 14 November 2014. Furthermore, the feedback received from the member States will provide the basis for the first draft of the outcome document for the “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review”.

Building Inter-Governmental Consensus and Stakeholder Engagement

To provide a regional intergovernmental platform for reviewing progress and the remaining challenges in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, two Asia-Pacific inter-governmental meetings will be convened in 2014: (a) the ESCAP Committee on Social Development, and (b) the “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review”.

Gender will be the thematic focus of the third session of the ESCAP Committee on Social Development to be held from 18 to 20 August 2014. The ESCAP Committee on Social Development will consider preliminary data emerging from the national-level reviews and regional survey, as well as contribute to the formulation of the agenda for the succeeding high-level intergovernmental meeting - “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review”.

The “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review”, to be held from 17 to 20 November 2014, will bring together ministers and senior officials from Asian and Pacific countries, including representatives of the national women’s machineries and key line ministries, as well as civil society representatives in observer capacity. The regional report of progress in implementation
of the Beijing Platform for Action will inform the deliberations of the Conference and its consideration of the outcome document.

Alongside the intergovernmental meetings, civil society consultations will be convened. The initial civil society consultation will be held in February 2014, for the purpose of briefing civil society organisations on the Beijing+20 review processes, obtaining their input and identifying means for their engagement. A subsequent civil society consultation will be held back-to-back with the “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review” (17-20 November 2014), wherein the civil society organisations will have the opportunity to prepare a statement for delivery during the Conference.

Representatives of non-governmental organisations with gender mandates and regional focus will reflect upon successes and challenges in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and identify areas requiring continued and further work in relation to realising gender equality and empowering women.

**Expected Outcomes**

In addition to the value that derives from dialogue between governments in Asia and the Pacific, the regional review of progress in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action will culminate in an outcome document; prospectively in the form of a ministerial declaration of the “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review”. The outcome document will be informed by the regional report analysing achievements, challenges and current priorities. Through the outcome document, member States will be able to both (a) reconfirm commitment to concerted action on the 12 “Critical Areas of Concern” of the Beijing Platform for Action, and (b) delineate the priority actions for the coming 10 years.

The outcome document of the “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review” will be considered, with the prospect of endorsement, by ESCAP at its seventy-first session in May 2015.

Furthermore, both the regional report and the Conference outcome document will serve as inputs to the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (March 2015). As well as guiding countries in Asia and the Pacific, the Conference outcome document will contribute to the formulation of the global agenda for realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women for the coming ten years.
## Beijing+20 Review: 2014 Activities and Events in Asia and the Pacific

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<th>Dates (2014)</th>
<th>Event/Activity</th>
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<th>Outcomes</th>
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| 10-11 February | Civil Society Consultation                                      | To engage civil society organisations in the regional Beijing+20 review process. | → Input from CSOs as to the achievements, challenges and priority actions in relation to implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.  
   |                                                      |                                                                        | → CSOs determine the nature and modality of their engagement in the Beijing+20 review process. |
| 8 March       | Submission of Government responses to regional survey           | To receive national-level data on the 12 Critical Areas of Concern.      | → Input for the regional report.                                           |
| 1 May         | Submission of national review reports                           | To receive national-level analyses on progress in implementation of the BP4A. | → Input for the regional report.                                           |
| 18-20 August  | Committee on Social Development                                 | Preparatory meeting for the November Conference.                        | → Draft agenda for the November Conference.                                |
| September     | Report on progress in implementation of the BP4A in Asia and the Pacific | To document regional progress in implementation of the BP4A.            | → Input to the November Conference (background documentation).             |
| 14 November (TBC) | Civil Society Consultation                                    | To support CSOs in formulating their statement to the Conference.       | → Civil society joint statement for delivery at the Conference.           |
| 17-20 November | Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review | To convene a high-level intergovernmental meeting to review progress in implementation of the BP4A. | Ministerial declaration that:  
   |                                                      |                                                                        | → sets the regional agenda, and  
   |                                                      |                                                                        | → serves as the regional input to the global process. |
Roadmap of the Beijing+20 Regional Review Process for Asia and the Pacific

**TRACK 1**
Intergovernmental Consensus Building

- ESCAP Committee on Social Development (18 to 20 August 2014)
- Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review (17 to 20 November 2014)
- 59th Session of CSW (March 2015)
- 71st Session of ESCAP (2015)

**TRACK II**
Research & Analysis

- National Reviews (1 May 2014)
- Regional Survey (15 April 2014)
- Analysis of Feedback from Governments
- Issuance of Regional Report (September 2014)

**TRACK III**
Stakeholder Engagement

- Regional Consultation with Civil Society Organisations (February 2014)
- Civil Society Forum back-to-back with the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review (17 to 20 November 2014)