

**Advancing SDG 5 in Asia and the Pacific:**  
**An analysis of Beijing+25 national review**  
**reports**

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### Asia and the Pacific: A snapshot of the key achievements and challenges of the Beijing+25 review period and the top priority areas going forward

Achievements	Challenges	Top priority areas for action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <i>Adoption of laws, regulations, policies and action plans</i></li> <li>ii. <i>Advancing women's economic empowerment</i></li> <li>iii. <i>Promoting women's political participation and decision-making</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <i>Advancing women's economic empowerment</i></li> <li>ii. <i>Gender norms and stereotypes</i></li> <li>iii. <i>Lack of gender capacities</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <i>Eliminating VAWG</i></li> <li>ii. <i>Women's leadership</i></li> <li>iii. <i>Women's entrepreneurship</i></li> <li>iv. <i>Equality and non-discrimination under law</i></li> <li>v. <i>Quality education</i></li> <li>vi. <i>GRB</i></li> </ul>

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

GBV: Gender-Based Violence

GRB: Gender-Responsive Budgeting

DV: Domestic Violence

NAP: National Action Plan

NAPVAW: National Action Plan on Violence Against Women

NCD: Non-Communicable Disease

NWM: National Women's Machinery

SDP: Service Delivery Protocol

SRH: Sexual and Reproductive Health

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training

VAWG: Violence against Women and Girls

WPS: Women, Peace and Security

## Introduction

The world is in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic. Women health workers are at the forefront of the health response to the crisis. With lockdowns and curfews implemented in several parts of the world, the incidence of violence against women and girls has increased. Women are over-represented in sectors hardest hit by the outbreak such as manufacturing, garment, tourism and hospitality. Lastly, but as importantly, the burden of additional care work and domestic chores falls on the shoulders of an already over-burdened womenfolk. In short, the pandemic has exacerbated gender inequalities and discriminatory social norms that exist in our society.

The COVID-19 crisis is a wake-up call for our planet. It is pertinent that we introspect our policies and to treat the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development in an integrated manner. The Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are critical resources that member States could use to move forward without leaving anyone behind. The 2030 Agenda – with its commitment to leave no one behind – and the Beijing Platform – with its wide and far reaching scope – could together forge a more equal and inclusive planet. Such synergies need to be harnessed in order to create a more gender equal Asia and the Pacific.

### The Asia-Pacific Beijing+25 review

In 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, was adopted and subsequently endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly. Every five years since 1995, progress in achieving the strategic objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is reviewed by the Commission on the Status of Women. The fifth review marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In its resolution 2018/8, the Economic and Social Council called upon all States to undertake national-level reviews of the progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Platform for Action. Additionally, the resolution encouraged “regional commissions to undertake regional reviews so that the outcomes of intergovernmental processes at the regional level can feed into the 2020 review”.

In accordance with this mandate, ESCAP, in cooperation with UN Women and with the support of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (RCM-TWG-GEEW), undertook in 2019 a [regional review](#) of progress in implementing the Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific. Out of its 49 member States and 9 associate members, ESCAP received 45 reports. The analytical review encompassed ESCAP member States geographically located in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>1</sup>

*“it is this type of platform (Beijing platform) that pulls all of us together and provides all of us the opportunity to share and learn from one (an)other as neighboring islands and states. a collaborative effort with key stakeholders, development partners, and civil society organization in addressing our many challenges and achieving our goals. this is a special place where we as asia and pacific come together as one and promote what is good for our nations, for our children, and for our part of the region in this world”*

[Palau, Country statement](#)

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<sup>1</sup> To see the countries in the Asia-Pacific geographical category, see: <https://www.unescap.org/about/member-states> [accessed 25/11/2020]. For the national review reports, see: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw64-2020/preparations>. (accessed 27/10/2020). Unless otherwise specified, all information reported in this document has been taken from the respective national review reports submitted by member States for the Beijing+25 Review.

The 25-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2020 was the first time that the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was reviewed with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development fully in place. The Beijing+25 review harnesses the synergies between the Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda to consolidate efforts to accelerate the achievement of key international commitments on gender equality.

The 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action have been clustered into six overarching themes that highlight the alignment of the two frameworks (see table 1): inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work; poverty eradication, social protection and social services; freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes; participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions; peaceful and inclusive societies; and environmental conservation, climate action and resilience-building. In addition, member States have reported on their key priorities, achievements and challenges with regard to gender equality; national institutions, processes and partnerships; and data and statistics for advancing the empowerment of women and girls in the region.

The present document contains a summary of the identified achievements, challenges and key actions taken by ESCAP members and associate members to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. Furthermore, the key priority areas for action for countries in the region for the next five years are identified, with a view to accelerating the achievement of gender equality in the region.

**Table 1 Linkages between the Beijing+25 Review, the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

Beijing +25 Clusters	Critical Areas of Concern	Sustainable Development Goals
<i>Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work</i>	A. Women and poverty F. Women and the economy I. Human rights of women L. The girl child	SDGs 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 17
<i>Poverty eradication, social protection and social services</i>	A. Women and poverty B. Education and training of women C. Women and health I. Human rights of women L. The girl child	SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
<i>Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes</i>	D. Violence against women I. Human rights of women J. Women and the media L. The girl child	SDG 5

<i>Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions</i>	G. Women in power and decision-making H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women I. Human rights of women J. Women and the media L. The girl child	SDGs 5, 16 and 17
<i>Peaceful and inclusive societies</i>	E. Women and armed conflict I. Human rights of women L. The girl child	SDGs 5, 10, 16 and 17
<i>Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation</i>	K. Women and the environment I. Human rights of women L. The girl child	SDGs 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 17

## Achievements and challenges

*“It is time to stop trying to change women, and start changing the systems that prevent them from achieving their potential. Our power structures have evolved gradually over thousands of years. One further evolution is long overdue. The 21st century must be the century of women’s equality.”*

*-UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres<sup>2</sup>*

The following section reviews the key achievements of the countries in the region with respect to advancing gender equality over the last five years and challenges faced in its pursuit.

### Achievements

#### Adoption of laws, regulations, action plans and policies

58 per cent of the countries in the review identified the adoption of laws, regulations, action plans, and policies as one of the key achievements over the review period. In Asia and the Pacific, 34 countries have a valid gender strategy or national action plan on gender equality and 47 countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, several countries have adopted progressive legislation to prevent violence, promote women’s economic participation and leadership, and provide land rights.<sup>4</sup>

*“Our experience indicates that the strength of policy and legal frameworks is a necessary condition for the promotion of girls and women’s rights and gender equality” -Mongolia, Country Statement*

#### Advancing women’s economic empowerment

58 per cent of the countries reported advancing economic empowerment of women as one of the key achievements. Despite declining female labour force participation rates and rising informality, countries have strengthened legislations offering equality at workplace, have developed laws, policies, and programmes to achieve work-life balance, and supported the transition of informal sector workers to the formal sector. Women’s entrepreneurship is seen as a pathway towards women’s economic empowerment. Several countries reported to have conducted time-use surveys during the review period to impute value to unpaid work carried out mostly by women. If included in measurement of GDP, unpaid care work undertaken by women in the Asia-Pacific region would add about 3.8 trillion USD to the total

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