

— LOOKING TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE: PROGRESS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC IN 2014

UN WOMEN REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific ANNUAL REPORT 2014

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ACRONYMS

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	civil society organization
EVAW	Elimination of Violence Against Women
FGE	Fund for Gender Equality
GRB	gender-responsive budget
GTG	Gender Theme Group
LGBTI	lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgendered and intersexed
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MPs	members of parliament
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	non-governmental organization
SCR	Security Council Resolution
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SOP	Standard Operation Procedure
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator Office
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

— UN WOMEN WORKED IN 2014 ACROSS 32

COUNTRIES REGIONALLY IN COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNMENTS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND THE UN SYSTEM. OUR WORK REACHED THE MOST MARGINALIZED WOMEN AND GIRLS BY TACKLING STARK AND RISING INEQUALITIES AND MULTIPLE FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION.



ABOVE: Ambassador Rosario G. Manalo (seated second from left), the first Filipino to chair the CEDAW committee, chairs the session at the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review. Photo credit: UN Women/Pornvit Visitoran

Foreword by the Regional Director

GLOBAL GENDER EQUALITY POLICY MEETS LOCAL NEEDS



In 2014, UN Member States from across Asia and the Pacific came together with civil society organizations to review the implementation status of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Platform is a stirring call to action to end the historical subordination of women and girls. It recognizes that equal rights, opportunities and access to resources, as well as equal sharing of family responsibilities by women and men, are critical to human development. The Platform further affirms that peace and security are inextricably linked with the advancement of women and that women must be involved as leaders in decision-making at all levels for effective conflict resolution and the promotion of lasting peace.

National reports prepared for the 20-year review of the BPFA show that the region has made progress toward gender equality as laws and policies respond to the specific needs and interests of women and girls. Most countries have attained parity in secondary education and several have higher female-to-male ratios in attendance at this level. This trend is also evident at tertiary level for some countries, especially in East and Southeast Asia. Maternal and child mortality has decreased in most countries and life expectancy has increased. These reports show that addressing intersecting inequalities is a critical enabler of women's empowerment and that universal gender-responsive provision of education, health and social protection is key to redressing inequitable power relations between women and men as well as to creating a more equal and just society for all.

Despite this progress, however, unequal gender roles continue to constrain women's lives. Discriminatory and harmful practices such as son preference and child marriage persist and violence against women and girls is pervasive, with perpetrators subjected to little moral or legal sanction. Women's parliamentary representation in the Asia-Pacific region is just 18 per cent, only a marginal improvement from 1995 when they comprised 12 per cent. While gains in educational attainment have contributed to narrowing gender gaps in labour force participation, important gender differences in outcomes remain, with women most likely to be found in the most vulnerable employment in agriculture and the informal sectors and undertaking most of the unpaid work in the productive and reproductive spheres.

Notwithstanding these challenges, there are incredible opportunities in this diverse and dynamic region for leadership on gender equality and social justice. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) worked in 2014 across 32 countries regionally in collaboration with governments, civil society organizations, the private sector and the UN system. Our work reached the most marginalized women and girls by tackling stark and rising inequalities and multiple forms of discrimination. We utilized a range of approaches: partnering with governments in their programmes to advance women's rights; supporting feminist and women's movements to exert influence in policy decisions; encouraging greater contributions of men as gender equality advocates; and advocating for increased investments to realize gender equality.

This Annual Report, the first to be produced by the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, documents this work.

We know what needs to be done to accelerate progress, and we look ahead to 2015 when the Sustainable Development Goals will be adopted. In the words of Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women: "A sustainable world that is without poverty depends on gender equality."

Roberta Clarke

Regional Director

UN WOMEN'S MANDATE AND NETWORK IN THE REGION

UN Women's mandate is to assist UN Member States and the UN system to effectively progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment. It works in the Asia-Pacific region with Member States, civil society, partner UN agencies and other development partners to design and implement laws, policies, programmes and services in three ways:

- NORMATIVE to support policy formation and the setting of global standards and norms.
- OPERATIONAL to help Member States meet global standards by providing technical and financial support and to form effective partnerships with civil society.
- COORDINATION to lead, coordinate and promote the accountability of the UN system to work towards gender equality and the empowerment of women



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