



**NATIONAL WOMEN'S MACHINERIES ON
STRENGTHENING CEDAW IMPLEMENTATION,
MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS





UN Women is the United Nations organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports Member States in setting global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design the laws, policies, programmes and services required to implement them. UN Women stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on the following five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

Summary of Proceedings: Regional Consultation with National Women's Machineries on Strengthening CEDAW Implementation, Monitoring and Accountability

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ACWC	ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CCC	Climate Change Commission
CEDAW	Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
CHR	Commission on Human Rights
CNCW	Cambodian National Council for Women
COB	Concluding observation
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSC	Civil Service Commission
CSO	Civil society organization
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CWC	Council for the Welfare of Children
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resource
DOH	Department of Health
DOJ	Department of Justice
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ESI	Environmental Sanitation Institute
ESCAP	Economic and Social Council for Asia Pacific
FMA	Foundation for Media Alternatives
GAD	Gender and development

GWG	Gender Working Group
IPPI	Ikatan Perempuan Positive Indonesia
MCW	Magna Carta of Women
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NAPC	National Anti-Poverty Commission
NCAW	National Commission on the Advancement of Women
NCFAW	National Committee for the Advancement of Women
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSAW	National Strategy for the Advancement of Women
NSEDP	National Social-Economic Development Plan
NWM	National women's machinery
OPAPP	Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
PCOO	Presidential Communications Operations Officer
PCW	Philippine Commission on Women
PKKK	Pambansang Kongreso Ng Kababaihan Sa Kanayunan
SEPI	Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality
TWGG	Technical Working Group on Gender
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VAW	Violence against Women
VAC	Violence against Children
WBCP	Women's Business Council Philippines
WE ACT 1325	Women Engaged in Action 1325
WFS	World Future Society
WSAP	Women's Studies Association of the Philippines

FOREWORD

The Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly, defines what constitutes discrimination against women and creates an agenda for national action to end it. It is the second most ratified human rights convention in the world after the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Twenty years ago, 189 countries also committed to the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA), an agenda for women's empowerment and blueprint for advancing women's rights around 12 critical areas of concern.

Today, both CEDAW and BPFA remain powerful sources of guidance and inspiration. However, vast implementation gaps continue to prevent the achievement of substantive equality, and no country has yet managed to eliminate discrimination against women. Women still earn less than men are more likely to work in low-quality jobs, suffer physical and sexual violence at alarming rates, and are underrepresented in government. And too often, the right to 'culture' trumps women's right to equality. While much progress has been made, clearly much more must be done to realize substantive equality for women as enshrined in CEDAW. The 20th anniversary of BPFA is an opportunity to reconnect and regenerate commitment to achieving the goal of substantive equality for all women and girls.

National women's machineries (NWMs) play a critical role in ensuring that governments are accountable for commitments made in CEDAW and BPFA. However, these institutions are too often marginalized and under-resourced, making it difficult to carry out their mandates. In order to hold governments accountable for ensuring gender equality, NWMs must raise their voice and demand a seat at the tables where budgetary and policy decisions are made.

This Consultation brought together NWMs from across South-East Asia to share best practices, challenges and proposed actions to strengthen their capacity for monitoring implementation of CEDAW and BPFA. A clear message that came out of the discussions was that women's machineries are not solely responsible for promoting and protecting women's rights, and they cannot do it on their own. In order to effectively carry out their mandates, they must develop closer partnerships with civil society, increase collaboration with other government agencies and ministries, and enlist the help of academia and research institutions. It is hoped that this report, which summarizes these discussions, will generate more ideas on how institutional mechanisms can ensure that women's concerns and experiences are taken into account in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all government policies and programmes.



Roberta Clarke
Regional Director and Representative
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INTRODUCTION

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, is the most comprehensive international treaty for ensuring the rights of women, and is one of only two international human rights treaties that have been ratified by all of the countries in South-East Asia, attesting to its importance in the region. States ratifying the Convention are required to enshrine gender equality into their domestic legislation, repeal all discriminatory provisions in their laws, and enact new provisions to guard against discrimination against women. Under article 18 of the Convention, States must report to the CEDAW Committee every four years on the progress they have made in implementing the Convention within their country. After consideration of the reports, and opportunities for constructive dialogue, the Committee adopts concluding observations (COBs) and makes recommendations to assist States parties to accelerate implementation of the Convention.

The Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, built on CEDAW and identified 12 critical areas that need to be given priority action in order to achieve true equality and empowerment of women: poverty, education, health, violence, armed conflict, the economy, power and decision-making, government institutional mechanisms, human rights, the media, the environment, and the girl-child. In preparation for the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration in 2015, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) called upon all States to undertake comprehensive national-level reviews of the progress made and challenges encountered in implementing BPFA.¹ National reviews should contain concrete, evidence-based assessments on the impact of actions taken and of results achieved, supplemented by evaluations, research publications, reports, as well as qualitative and quantitative data. Countries are encouraged to discuss progress and achievements as well as setbacks and challenges. The reviews should also discuss future plans and initiatives to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women.²

1 Resolution E/RES/2013/18 adopted by the Economic and Social Council on the future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women, 24 July 2013.

2 UN Women.(1985)

National Women's Machineries (NWMs) are key institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women and play a critical role in promoting and ensuring implementation of CEDAW and BPFA at the national level. One of the most important roles of NWMs is monitoring the implementation of the CEDAW and CEDAW Committee COBs and reporting back regularly to the Committee, as well as monitoring and reporting on implementation of BPFA. However, research conducted by UN Economic and Social Commission of Asia and Pacific (UN ESCAP) on NWMs indicates that many of the NWMs in South-East Asia remain marginalized, lacking the political support and financial and human resources necessary to influence national policies, budgets and programmes related to women's empowerment. These challenges and obstacles make it difficult to gather the information needed to analyse and report on progress in meeting international human rights obligations. In order to ensure accountability for these obligations, enhanced enforcement plans, collection of sex-disaggregated data and improved coordination between government entities is needed. Thus, UN Women organized this consultation in order to: (i) revisit the commitments made by Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam through CEDAW and BPFA; (ii) review implementation and accountability gaps; (iii) exchange experiences among NWMs from South-East Asia on addressing these gaps; and (iv) share monitoring tools and good practices towards ensuring substantive equality in the day-to-day lives of women. This report is a summary of these proceedings.

CEDAW is an international human rights treaty that defines core principles for ensuring substantive equality for women and girls. It establishes a theoretical framework and an agenda for national action to: identify barriers to women's advancement; assess needs; set goals; and undertake measures so that women can claim their rights to equality and non-discrimination in all areas of public and private life. It is a legally binding instrument with a monitoring mechanism for individual States Parties and includes a complaints process for individual victims of human rights abuses.

CEDAW AND ITS REVIEW PROCESS

CEDAW recognizes that it is each country's responsibility to determine how best to bring their policies and laws in line with ending discrimination against women. However, it does provide a blueprint for governments to achieve progress. For example, the first five Articles of CEDAW spell out States Parties' obligations to: (i) define discrimination against women to cover all facets of human rights and fundamental freedoms; (ii) eliminate discriminatory laws, policies, and practices in the national legal framework; (iii) take measures to uphold women's equality in the political, social, economic, and cultural fields; (iv) enact temporary special measures to accelerate women's equality; and (v) modify or eliminate practices based on stereotypes and assumptions about the inferiority or superiority of either sex.

These critical articles provide the broad legal and policy framework that must be in place in order to achieve substantive equality. In order to fulfill obligations in Articles 1-5, "*States must not only guarantee equality in their Constitution, but should also enact gender equality laws that operationalize constitutional obligations for equality and specifically prohibit direct and indirect discrimination, address customary law and plural legal systems that threaten women's equality, and prohibit discrimination in both the public and private sphere.*"³ CEDAW also makes it clear that, while laws are a critical step in promoting equality, they make little difference in women's lives unless they are implemented and monitored. Thus, CEDAW also obliges States Parties to allocate sufficient resources to build the capacity of government ministries, justice system actors and service providers to ensure that women actually benefit from laws, policies and programmes, and effectively monitor implementation by gathering disaggregated data and conducting gender analysis of the laws' effects.

The CEDAW Committee monitors States Parties' successes and challenges in implementing CEDAW by reviewing reports every four years from NWMs and other relevant stakeholders. The review process for each country entails:⁴

3 Remarks by Roberta Clark, Regional Director and Representative of UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

4 International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific, From Global to Local: A CEDAW Monitoring and Implementation Programme, available at <http://www.iwraw-ap.org/programmes/globaltolocal.htm>

- a pre-CEDAW session, which includes preparation and submission of the Initial/Periodic Report by the State Party; convening of a Pre-Sessional Working Group of the CEDAW Committee to review the report; followed by a list of issues and questions sent to the State Party, whose should respond within six weeks;
- a CEDAW session, during which States Parties, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and others stakeholders like NHRIs make oral presentations to the CEDAW Committee and answer questions from Committee members. COBs are then prepared by the Committee;
- a post-CEDAW session and follow-up procedure, whereby the State party submits a report to the Committee, within two years, on the measures taken in response to “priority concerns”.

The NWMs are the lead agencies on women’s rights and therefore play an important role in monitoring and reporting to the Committee on CEDAW implementation. However,

All government sectors, including parliament, courts/judges, cabinets of ministers, and ministries of finance, law, planning, foreign affairs and statistics bureaus, are responsible for CEDAW implementation and thus must endeavour to collect disaggregated data and conduct gender analysis to determine how different groups of women in the country (e.g. disabled, rural, ethnic minorities) are benefiting from laws, policies and programmes - and analyse where gaps in implementation lie. National women’s machineries should encourage more dialogue with these institutions to ensure that their priorities are aligned with their obligations to the Convention. CEDAW COBs should then be widely disseminated so that they may guide national planning of new measures to be undertaken to eliminate discrimination.⁵

5 Remarks by Shanthi Dairiam, former CEDAW Committee Member and founder of International Women’s Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP-AP).

THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND ITS REVIEW PROCESS

The Fourth World Conference on Women and the resulting Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA or 'Platform') was a watershed for the feminist movement and highlighted the centrality of human rights in women's struggle for equality. The Platform is a road-map that provides a comprehensive, universally agreed plan of action to realize women's rights and to counter and dismantle patriarchy.⁶ It is built on a rights framework and invokes the substance and the language of human rights in every section, referring specifically to CEDAW as well as to other human rights treaties. The Platform indicates policies that governments should adopt to address 12 areas of critical concern, including:

1. WOMEN IN POVERTY
2. EDUCATION & TRAINING FOR WOMEN
3. WOMEN & HEALTH
4. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
5. WOMEN IN ARMED CONFLICT
6. WOMEN & THE ECONOMY
7. WOMEN IN POWER & DECISION-MAKING
8. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN
9. HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN
10. WOMEN & THE MEDIA
11. WOMEN & THE ENVIRONMENT
12. THE GIRL-CHILD

6 Remarks by Kate Lapin, Regional Coordinator for Asia Pacific Women in Law and Development (APWLD).

COMPLEMENTARITY OF THE PLATFORM AND CEDAW

This following table highlights the relationship between the Beijing Platform for Action's Critical Areas of Concern and CEDAW.⁷

TABLE 1: TABLE REPRESENTING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION'S CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN AND CEDAW

Beijing Platform for Action	CEDAW
<p>Declaration/Mission Statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to equal rights as enshrined in the UN Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, CEDAW and CRC. • Recognize women's human rights as universal, indivisible, inalienable. • Take all necessary measures to eliminate discrimination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 1 Definition of discrimination • Article 2 Action obligations • Article 3 Take all appropriate measures, including legislation • Article 4 Temporary special measures to eliminate discrimination.
<p>1. Poverty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 3 Take all appropriate measures, including legislation • Article 5 Modify patterns of conduct to eliminate customary practices based on stereotypes • Article 10 Access to education, adult education, family planning information • Article 11 Right to work; equality in employment; equal pay; social security • Article 12 Full access to health care • Article 13 Family benefits, credit • Article 14 Rural women's participation in development planning; access to health care, education, social security, agricultural credit, equal treatment in land reform and resettlement schemes • Article 15 Recognition of legal capacity • Article 16 Equality as to ownership, management and enjoyment of property • General Recommendation No. 21 (Articles 15, 16)

7 Timothy and Freeman (2000)

Beijing Platform for Action	CEDAW
2. Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 5 Modify patterns of conduct to eliminate customary practices based on stereotypes • Article 10 Equality in all areas of education, including adult education and training • Article 11.1(c) Right to receive vocational education and training • Article 14.2(d) Rural women's right to education and training
3. Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 5 Modify patterns of conduct to eliminate customary practices based on stereotypes • Article 12 Access to health care, including family planning • General Recommendation No. 24 (Article 12)
4. Violence against Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 3 Take all appropriate measures, including legislation • Article 6 Trafficking • General Recommendation No. 19 indicates obligations to address Violence against Women under each Convention article
5. Armed Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 8 Right to represent their governments in international fora and to participate in international organizations
6. Employment, Economic Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 5 Modify patterns of conduct to eliminate customary practices based on stereotypes • Article 11 Equality in all areas of employment, right to work, equal pay, benefits, training, social security; protective legislation to be reviewed periodically

Beijing Platform for Action	CEDAW
7. Power and Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 7 Equal participation in public life • Article 8 Equal participation in international fora • Article 14.2(e,f) Rural women's right to organize self-help groups and cooperatives; participate in community activities • Article 16 Equal rights and responsibilities to freely choose a spouse; during the marriage and its dissolution; equal rights and responsibilities as to deciding on having and on raising children, choosing a family name and an occupation, managing property • General Recommendation No. 21 (Article 16), 23 (Articles 7 & 8)
8. Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 3 Take all appropriate measures to ensure women's development and advancement
9. Human Rights of Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entire Convention
10. Mass Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 5 Modification of patterns of conduct, to eliminate prejudice and stereotyping
11. Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 7 & 8 Participation in public life and decision-making that affects women's lives • Article 14 Rural women's participation in development planning
12. Girl-Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All articles except those that implicitly apply only to adults • Article 16.1 (d, f) Best interest of the child shall be paramount in making family decisions; equal decision-making as to number and spacing of children • Article 16.3 No child betrothal; minimum age for Marriage

Every five years, ECOSOC conducts a review to assess Member States' and stakeholders' progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform. The review includes national level reviews by Member States, regional reviews conducted by the UN's five regional commissions and a global review conducted by the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The CSW conducted five-year reviews in 2000, 2005 and 2010, each of which led to declarations on further implementation and action on the Beijing Declaration. In March 2015, the CSW will conduct the +20 review and further evaluate options for empowering women and strengthening gender equality in the post-2015 Development Agenda.

The critical factor in assessing progress under both the Platform and CEDAW is whether women and men are treated equally by, and benefit equally from, policies designed to implement rights. Measurement of implementation requires setting appropriate indicators and benchmarks for assessment and analysis of disaggregated data gathered over time. In deciding on indicators, it is helpful to examine the concluding observations of the CEDAW Committee, the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as well as the CEDAW Committee's General Recommendations, since they indicate the respective committees' concerns with specific implementation issues and specific practices.⁸

8 Timothy and Freeman (2000).

THE ROLE OF NATIONAL WOMEN'S MACHINERIES

The BPFA included “institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women” as one of its 12 areas of concern. Paragraphs 201 and 202 define national women’s machineries and describe conditions for their effective functioning, as follows:

NWMs have been established as key institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women in all countries of South-East Asia. However, there is large variation in the region with respect to NWMs’ composition and structure, which range from departments under Ministries of Social Development to fully-fledged ministries with dedicated resources. Many NWMs also are constrained by limited financial and personnel resources:

All government sectors, including parliament, courts/judges – research conducted by UN Economic and Social Commission of Asia and Pacific (UN ESCAP) on NWMs in Asia-Pacific indicate that there are cases where NWMs mostly remain marginalized in national government structures. Most lack sufficient financial and human resources and political support in order to effectively coordinate gender mainstreaming within government structures across national policy, budget and programmes and to influence policies directly focused towards women’s empowerment and rights. The better positioning, and enhanced capacities, of NWMs within the larger policy environment remains a common challenge across the region.⁹

9 UN Women (2014b).

BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION ON NATIONAL WOMEN'S MACHINERIES

201. A national machinery for the advancement of women is the central policy-coordinating unit inside government. Its main task is to support the government-wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective in all policy areas.

The necessary conditions for an effective functioning of such national machineries include:

- a. location at the highest possible level in the government, falling under the responsibility of a Cabinet minister;
- b. institutional mechanisms or processes that facilitate, as appropriate, decentralized planning, implementation and monitoring with a view to involving non-governmental organizations and community organizations from grassroots upwards;
- c. sufficient resources in terms of budget and professional capacity;
- d. opportunity to influence development of all government policies.

202. In addressing the issue of mechanisms for promoting the advancement of women, governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy on mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that before decisions are taken, an analysis is made on the effects on women and men, respectively.

Strategic Objectives

1. Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies.
2. Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects.
3. Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.

PROMOTING SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY

CEDAW and BPFA oblige member states to ensure both legal equality and substantive equality for women. The past century has seen a transformation in women's legal rights, with countries in every region expanding the scope of women's legal entitlements. However,

For most of the world's women the laws that exist on paper do not necessarily translate into equality and justice. In many contexts, in rich and poor countries alike, the infrastructure of justice – the police, the courts and the judiciary – is failing women, which manifests itself in poor services and hostile attitudes from the very people whose duty it is to fulfil women's rights. As a result, although equality between women and men is guaranteed in the constitutions of 139 countries and territories, inadequate laws and loopholes in legislative frameworks, poor enforcement and vast implementation gaps make these guarantees hollow promises, having little impact on the day-to-day lives of women.¹⁰

Further,

India is a perfect example of a country where there are marvellous laws related to women's equality: however, many of these laws have absolutely no effect, no money, no people, no guidelines and no operational procedures to implement them.¹¹

Thus, substantive equality requires more than a commitment not to discriminate.

It requires the recognition of pre-existing inequality and subordination that women face, that leaves their capacities reduced compared to men. This approach imposes positive duties on the State to help women gain merit and equalize their capacity to seize opportunities on par with men.¹² "Substantive equality allows for non-identical treatment of women (as compared to men) both for reasons of protection (maternity functions) and correction (acceleration of the achievement of de facto equality). Such action, according to Article 4 of CEDAW, is not discriminatory. To achieve substantive equality women must be granted not merely formal equal opportunities but also a truly equal start, plus an enabling environment in which they can attain equality of results. These aspects, as well as the obligations outlined above, must be kept in mind when trying to achieve substantive equality with men in public and political life.¹³

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Remarks by Gita Sen, Professor (Retired) Centre for Public Policy, Indian Institute of Management and Adjunct Professor of Global Health and Population, Harvard School of Public Health.

¹² Dairiam (2014).

¹³ Schöpp-Schilling (2004).

Achieving substantive equality requires the transformation of the social relations of women and men. Equality measures must aim to bring about social change by ensuring equal access to opportunities and equality in outcomes, sustaining equal outcomes through institutional reforms, and creating an enabling environment. Ensuring substantive equality requires a multi-faceted approach and cooperation among all areas of government, which should be facilitated by NWMs.

MONITORING AND REPORTING ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM AND CEDAW

While the institutional architecture of women's machineries in the region differs from country to country, all of their mandates include promoting the implementation of CEDAW and BPFA. For most NWMs, this consists in: coordinating, facilitating and monitoring policy formulation to ensure the incorporation of women's empowerment perspectives; facilitating the exchange and sharing of experiences, information and best practices on promoting substantive equality; developing the gender competency of stakeholders to influence engendering of policies, programmes and projects; and lobbying for increased measures and resources to address gender inequality.

Additionally, one of the most important roles that NWMs play is monitoring the implementation of national equality laws and international commitments to CEDAW and BPFA. Effective monitoring requires the regular collection and analysis of data from relevant government sectors such as the National Statistics Office, Department of Education or Ministry of Health in order to determine the effect that national policies are having on the day-to-day lives of women. NWMs are then responsible for reporting this information to the CEDAW Committee (every four years) and to the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) (every five years). In 2015, the CSW will carry out another review and appraisal of the implementation of BPFA. ECOSOC has issued guidance on the content of national reviews, stating that they *"should place emphasis on implementation and contain concrete, evidence-based assessments on the impact of actions taken and of results achieved, supplemented by evaluations, research publications, reports, as well as qualitative and quantitative data"*.¹⁴

USING THE CEDAW COMMITTEE'S CONCLUDING CLOSING OBSERVATIONS

The implementation of CEDAW is monitored by the CEDAW Committee, which consists of experts in gender equality who are nominated by governments and elected every four years. The Committee's task is to monitor how governments put CEDAW into practice by regularly reviewing States Parties' reports as well as reports from civil society, and questioning governments that have ratified or acceded to the treaty on their progress in guaranteeing substantive equality. The Committee then issues a series of Concluding Observations (COBs) that assist the State under review in the further implementation of the Convention. These COBs outline positive aspects, principal subjects of concern and the Committee's recommendations on critical measures that need to be taken to address challenges faced by the State Party and to successfully implement the Convention.

14 UN Women (2014a).

COBs will have different implications for different sectors of government, depending on the sector's responsibility (e.g. lawmakers, Ministries of Health and Education, justice mechanisms, etc.). The Committee's recommendations are generally categorized by themes such as obligations for parliaments, reservations, legal status of CEDAW, Beijing Declaration, Millennium Development Goals, access to justice, violence against women, trafficking and exploitation, property rights, education, employment, health, power and decision-making, women's participation in the political process and temporary special measures for advancing substantive equality for women and girls.

COBs are very important resources for gender equality work. Not only do they provide authoritative guidance about what CEDAW requires in individual country contexts, but they are also valuable tools to advocate for necessary changes in a country. For example, COBs can be used:

- as a basis for measuring progress, by comparing the most recent observations with those from the previous reporting cycle to see if advances has been made in critical areas;
- to develop a framework for government policies and national strategies and action plans to advance gender equality (e.g. action plans to address violence against women);
- as a tool to advocate for larger budget allocations to promote equality;
- as a guideline for awareness raising and debate in the legislative process;
- as a monitoring and advocacy tool by NGOs to hold government, as well as the private sector, accountable for ensuring respect for women's human rights;
- as a way to put gender equality at the centre of international negotiations.

While COBs are powerful tools for monitoring and evaluating progress in CEDAW implementation, States Parties do not always make full use of them. As one observer noted, *"Sometimes the concluding observations "sleep" for a long time and only when the next cycle of CEDAW reporting comes, do they get pulled out, dusted off and looked at again."*¹⁵ In attempts to avoid this situation, some have suggested creating intersectoral working groups to study the COBs closely, group them by area and priority, and assign responsibility for them to relevant actors who create a road-map and action plan to track implementation. Another suggestion is to create manuals, customized for different government agencies, with indicators and targets that are tied to the COBs.¹⁶ For these ideas to be successful, however, it is critical that an adequate budget be allocated to effectively carry out this work.

15 Remarks by Cao Thi Thuy, Deputy Director General of International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Labor invalids and social affairs, Vietnam.

16 Remarks by Anita Baleda – Chief Division, Philippines Commission on Women.

USING GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING AS A TOOL FOR MONITORING AND ADVOCACY¹⁷

Budgeting is a:

process that entails aligning national development plans and goals and human rights commitments with budget policies in a transparent and coherent manner. Budgeting is not only an exercise that seeks to balance income and revenue but one that ought to utilize available resources in an efficient, effective and equitable manner to address needs and achieve aspired development goals. People's access to services and resources are determined by how budgets are formulated. Discrimination can either be reinforced or eliminated by budget policies. Therefore, budget actors are mandated to situate people's rights at the core of their policies.¹⁸

CEDAW does not specify what budgetary resources are required for its implementation. However, it does require States Parties to take “all appropriate measures” to eliminate discrimination against women, effectively obligating States to allocate sufficient resources to fulfill women's equality. Additionally, some general recommendations (GRs) of the CEDAW Committee such as GR24 on Women and Health require budgetary measures to ensure that women are able to realize their human rights.¹⁹ Gender-responsive budgeting is a tool for analysing government expenditures and revenues to monitor CEDAW implementation. In analysing expenditures from a CEDAW perspective, three critical areas must be addressed: (i) the adequacy of public expenditure; (ii) the priority accorded to gender equality; and (iii) the impact of public expenditure on equality.

In order to assess the adequacy of public expenditure on ensuring gender equality, it is important to look at the bigger ‘envelope’ of public sector spending, such as allocations for health and education, since these two areas have a major impact on women's equality. In South-East Asia, most governments spend significantly less on those areas than in other regions.

TABLE 2: TABLE REPRESENTING PRIORITY FOR SOCIAL SECTOR SPENDING IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURES IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

PUBLIC SPENDING (% GDP)	HEALTH (2010)	EDUCATION (2005-10)
VERY HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT		
Singapore	1.4	3.3
Brunei Darussalam	2.4	2.0
HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT		
Malaysia	2.4	5.8

¹⁷ Remarks by Yamini Mishra, Gender Responsive Budgeting Specialist, UN Women Office for India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka.

¹⁸ Elson (2006) (comments by Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director UNIFEM).

¹⁹ CEDAW Committee General Recommendation 24, para. 17.

PUBLIC SPENDING (% GDP)	HEALTH (2010)	EDUCATION (2005-10)
MEDIUM HUMAN DEVELOPMENT		
Thailand	2.9	3.8
Philippines	1.3	2.7
Indonesia	1.3	3.0
Viet Nam	2.6	5.3
Cambodia	2.1	2.6
Lao PDR	1.5	3.3
LOW HUMAN DEVELOPMENT		
Myanmar	0.2	0.6 (2000)

TABLE 3: TABLE REPRESENTING PRIORITY FOR SOCIAL SECTOR SPENDING IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURES IN OTHER REGIONS

PUBLIC SPENDING (% GDP)	HEALTH (2010)	EDUCATION (2005-10)
Arab States	2.6	3.9
East Asia and the Pacific	2.5	...
Europe and Central Asia	4.3	4.1
Latin America and the Caribbean	3.8	5.3
South Asia	1.2	3.2
Sub-Saharan Africa	3.0	5.2
World	6.5	4.9

Gender-responsive budget analysis should also consider how much governments are allocating specifically to women's equality. At the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4), which took place in Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2011, one of the indicators that was agreed upon was the number of countries that can track, and make public, expenditures on women's equality. However, this needs to be looked at critically, since some 'gender budgets' have included spending on programmes that do not necessarily advance gender equality. When analysing gender budgets, it is more important to look at the objective of the expenditure and whether it is advancing women's rights, than whether the money is spent on women versus men. Some countries, such as Indonesia, are recognizing the importance of looking at budgets in this way and are categorizing spending by objective of the expenditure. The question that government ministries should be asking is how can the budget best be used to improve women's situation.

In order to assess the priority accorded to gender equality allocations and spending, one must focus on the share of expenditure for services that are important for advancing women's equality. India has tracked this in the following way, with Part A listing schemes where 100 percent of the beneficiaries are women, and Part B listing schemes where 30-99 percent of beneficiaries are women:

TABLE 4: TABLE REPRESENTING PRIORITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY ALLOCATIONS AND SPENDING IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURES IN INDIA

Year	No. of budget demands	Total allocations under part A	Total allocations under part B	Total magnitude of GRB (%)
2007/8	33	8,428	13,919	3.3
2008/9	33	14,875	34,748	5.5
2009/10	33	15,480	40,813	5.5
2010/11	33	18,473	48,601	5.5
2011/12	33	20,496	56,449	5.8
2012/13	33	18,878	59,232	5.5
2013/14	33	27,248	69,885	5.8

One complication, however, is that:

Actual expenditure is often different from budgeted expenditure. Actual expenditure of any particular department may be less than budgeted expenditure for a number of reasons, including:

- *slow and complex disbursement mechanisms;*
- *the inability of spending departments to design programmes that comply with spending guidelines;*
- *instructions from the Ministry of Finance to make cuts in spending because of shortfalls in revenue or unexpectedly high spending in other departments.*

Actual expenditure may also exceed budgeted expenditure for a number of reasons, including:

- *cost overruns on infrastructural projects;*
- *unexpected increases in statutory payments for welfare benefits and pensions;*
- *unexpected increases in debt repayments due to unexpected increases in interest rates.*

In some countries it is common for there to be at least one supplementary budget during the financial year. So it is important that analysis of public expenditure looks at actual as well as budgeted expenditure wherever possible.²⁰

20 Elson (2006:24).

Assessing the impact of public expenditures on gender equality requires looking at whether programmes actually transform gender equality or just reinforce gender stereotypes. For example, a conditional cash transfer scheme in India to stop the marriage of young girls specified that the money could not be spent on dowries: however, a great deal of the money ended up being used to pay dowries – thus reinforcing gender stereotypes. Another government scheme in India supported hostels for girls from socially deprived backgrounds who dropped out of school. A different government scheme supported hostels for talented boys and girls. The hostel for poor girls had a much smaller budget and did not include money for cleaners, because it was thought the girls could clean, whereas the budget for the talented boys’ and girls’ hostel included money for cleaners, because the privileged children were not expected to clean after themselves. The impact of this is to reinforce harmful stereotypes.

In order to determine whether budget expenditures are actually benefitting women, disaggregated data must be collected and analysed. Some spending on projects, such as roads or improved transportation networks, may not be part of a ‘gender budget’, but is likely to greatly improve women’s situations. However, that effect won’t be captured unless information is looked at in a disaggregated way. Additionally, categorizing allocations in a binary fashion (men and women) is not helpful, because it precludes an intersectional analysis of people with other identities.

TAXATION

Taxation schemes, are usually gender-neutral. When assessing these, they must also be critically analysed for gender bias and the impact on women. For example, the introduction of user fees for services is often followed by a subsequent fall in utilization. The magnitude of this drop is often greater and occurs over a longer period for the poor, particularly for poor women. Studies from Kenya have shown that the introduction of user fees (amounting to half a day’s pay for a poor person) in government outpatient health facilities led to a dramatic reduction in utilization of services by both men and women, but the fall was significantly greater for women. However, nine months after their introduction, the fees were revoked and women’s utilization rose to a greater level than the pre-fee levels.

Increased efforts at tax mobilization must be made, keeping in mind how gender inequalities may be built into the system. For example, an individual filing structure is usually seen to be more gender-equitable than joint or family taxation. But individual filing systems introduce inequities between households. Some argue that if financially dependent spouses provide unpaid work in male-breadwinner households, this household ‘production’ creates in-kind income that should be factored into total household income. However, if unpaid work is quantified and included in total household income, the tax burden of low-income households would increase. Moreover, taxes have to be paid in money and cannot be paid through unpaid domestic work. Recognizing these dynamics, reducing the excessive burden on the poor, and redistributing income in a fair way should be foremost on the mind of gender equality advocates.

SPENDING ON WOMEN’S MINISTRIES

There are no studies on how much money is actually being spent on women’s ministries in the region. However, preliminary data indicate that it is a shockingly low percentage of the GDP – almost always less than 1-2 percent. Because women’s ministries are so poorly resourced and poorly supported, they are set up to fail. Instead of continuing

to operate on the periphery, effective institutional space must be created so that women's machineries can take part, for example, in the budget-making cycle. In that way they can advocate that more resources are allocated for their work – by redistributing funding between programmes, increasing tax revenues, etc. and ensuring that all four stages of the cycle (planning, budgeting, tracking and auditing) are gender-responsive.

CEDAW obliges governments to go beyond the question of whether expenditure is distributed equally and to assess what is required for the full development of women. Ultimately, taxes and expenditures should help transform the traditional gendered roles in society that are inequitable.

ENSURING MULTI-MINISTERIAL COORDINATION

National women's machineries usually have broad agendas, but small budgets and little influence. Thus, instead of trying to do everything by themselves, NMWs should act as catalysts for change and focus on building relationships with others who can help them to accomplish their goals. This requires open dialogue and coordination between women's machineries and other government institutions to ensure that their priorities and actions are aligned with the CEDAW. Unfortunately, however, most government ministries do not understand their role in implementing and monitoring CEDAW. CEDAW is seen as a 'women's concern' and therefore implementation and monitoring is too often solely left to the government agency charged with 'women's affairs.'²¹

CEDAW addresses many different dimensions of women's lives, including justice, education, employment, political representation and health. Thus, in order for women to equally enjoy their human rights, governments must adopt an integrated approach and ensure that all ministries and government departments are engaged in promoting women's equality and eliminating discrimination. NWMs should play the role of a coordinating body to help agency planning and development of frameworks for action with guiding principles and targets for CEDAW-related activities.

As a coordinating body, NWMs are in a good position to:

- a. review substantive progress reports, and plans, including expenditure reports from the different ministries and make appropriate recommendations;
- b. organize capacity development activities to assist ministries in fulfilling their obligations under CEDAW;
- c. undertake studies and analysis to regularly collect information on the situation of women, particularly with regard to the right to equality and non-discrimination;
- d. ensure opportunities for civil society and private sector participation and coordination in the CEDAW process;

21 Remarks by Gita Sen, Professor (retired) at the Centre for Public Policy, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, and Adjunct Professor, Global Health and Population, Harvard School of Public Health.

- e. establish a multidisciplinary team for the preparation of the country's periodic reports and oversee its work;
- f. organize and coordinate the process of reporting back to the nation, after presentation of the periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee, highlighting the areas of progress and those where more effort is required, in accordance with the Concluding Remarks of the CEDAW Committee.²²

INVOLVING CIVIL SOCIETY

ECOSOC has:

strongly encouraged Governments to continue to support the role and contribution of civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations and women's organizations, in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and in this regard calls upon Governments to collaborate with relevant stakeholders at all levels of preparations for the 2015 review so as to benefit from their experience and expertise.²³

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are at the forefront in advocating for equality and non-discrimination for women in the different spheres of life. They also offer direct services, including legal rights awareness, legal aid, training for women and credit. They generally work in communities and therefore have developed significant technical expertise to complement government's effort in the implementation and monitoring of CEDAW. As a result, CSOs are in a great position to mobilize, sensitize and support communities on the rights of women and raise awareness on CEDAW and the obligations of different stakeholders, including the state and individuals. They can also be called upon to help develop capacities within different institutions, including ministries and local governments, and should be afforded space in the inter-ministerial CEDAW Committee meetings. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly for NWMs, CSOs should be encouraged to participate in and support the collection of data and compilation of the national periodic reports to be submitted to the CEDAW Committee. *"Women's machineries need the voice of civil society to raise the issues, make noise, and push - and CSOs absolutely need the women's machinery. It's critical that both sides come up with a strategy for moving forward together."*²⁴

²² Delpont (2009).

²³ UN Economic and Social Council Resolution E/RES/2013/18.

²⁴ Remarks by Gita Sen, Professor (retired), Centre for Public Policy, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, and Adjunct Professor, Global Health and Population, Harvard School of Public Health.

GOOD PRACTICES FROM COUNTRIES ACROSS SOUTH-EAST ASIA

The BPFA included “institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women” as one of its 12 areas of concern. Paragraphs 201 and 202 define national women’s machineries and describe conditions for their effective functioning, as follows:

NWMs have been established as key institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women in all countries of South-East Asia. However, there is large variation in the region with respect to NWMs’ composition and structure, which range from departments under Ministries of Social Development to fully-fledged ministries with dedicated resources. Many NWMs also are constrained by limited financial and personnel resources:

Beijing +20 is an opportunity to take stock of the progress that has been made in promoting and protecting women’s human rights. While experiences in South-East Asia are mixed, every country in the region has taken significant steps to eliminate discrimination in laws and policies. Many have also gone further, using treaty body reporting and comments from the CEDAW Committee to advance substantive equality for women. The following is a summary of some of the good practices that have been developed in South-East Asian nations to monitor implementation of CEDAW COBs and BPFA Commitments:

CAMBODIA²⁵

- The Cambodian National Council for Women (CNCW), the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MWA) and Provincial Women’s Affairs Departments, the Technical Working Group on Gender of line ministries (TWGGs) and the Gender Focal Points of line departments are responsible for reporting on CEDAW implementation.
- Skills training on report writing is provided for the TWGGs of all line ministries and Public Sector Governance (PSG)/CNCW staff.
- Several tools have been developed to assist in gathering data and relevant information for reporting. Currently, a standardized form is used by all municipalities, provincial governors and departments to collect information on *“concerns, priority challenges, and measures for improvement in the next year”*.

25 Remarks by Hou Samith, Secretary General, Cambodian National Council for Women, Ministry of Women’s Affairs (CNCW).

- Information is gathered related to women's participation in political and public life, access to health care, land titles and other critical areas affecting women. The following tools are used for data collection:

TABLE 5.1: TABLE REPRESENTING DATA FOR MONITORING GENDER EQUALITY IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC LIFE (ARTICLE 7 OF CEDAW) - PROVINCIAL PLANNING DEPARTMENT

No. of women in decision making	2013		2014	
	Total	Females	Total	Females
Provincial Councillors				
Provincial Governors				
District Councillors				
District Governors				
Commune Chiefs				
Commune Councillors				

TABLE 5.2: TABLE REPRESENTING DATA FOR MONITORING GENDER EQUALITY IN HEALTH (ARTICLE 12 OF CEDAW) - PROVINCIAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Number of:	2012	2013	2014
Hospitals			
Referral centres			
Health centres			
Doctors			
Female doctors			
Midwives			
Women who die during Delivery			

TABLE 5.3: TABLE REPRESENTING DATA FOR MONITORING EQUALITY IN LAND TITLING (ARTICLE 14 OF CEDAW) - PROVINCIAL LAND DEPARTMENT

Number of:	2012	2013	2014
No. of land titles			
No. of women receiving land titles			
No. of minority women			

- The CNCW oversees the writing of the national periodic report on CEDAW implementation by holding group meetings to collect data and information from line ministries and then formulating the report in consultation with ECOSOC. Subsequently, a pre-meeting is held with Council Ministers, followed by a meeting with the Prime Minister.
- After the CEDAW Committee issues COBs, the CNCW disseminates these together with the national report and government recommendations.
- The CNCW monitors implementation of CEDAW Committee COBs and related laws by conducting annual meetings with stakeholders and by coordinating with various ministries. For example, during the last reporting cycle, follow-up on recommendations by the CEDAW Committee were assigned to various government ministries as follows:
 - » Recommendation 11: All ministries and institutions, especially the Ministry of Justice (MOJ)
 - » Recommendation 13: MOJ, CNCW, the Anti-Corruption Unit
 - » Recommendation 15: MWA
 - » Recommendation 17: CNCW
 - » Recommendation 19: MWA, Ministry of the Interior (MOI), CNCW, Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MOPT)
 - » Recommendation 21: MOJ, MWA, CNCW
 - » Recommendation 23: Ministry of Health (MOH), CNCW.
- The reporting process in 2013 was significantly improved from previous years. CNCW now enjoys stronger support from the central government and departments. CNCW is stronger and has assumed more ownership over the process. After consultations and participation with all stakeholders, the report to the CEDAW Committee was completed on time. The report and COBs were widely disseminated, and as a result, stakeholders' knowledge about CEDAW has greatly improved. Subsequently, there have been regular meetings to provide updates on the progress of CEDAW and COBs implementation.
- The national budget allocation for CEDAW monitoring is approximately US\$100,000 per year for support monitoring activities at the sub-national level, dissemination workshops, meetings and capacity-building workshops.
- UN Women has also provided support to hold consultative workshops, capacity-building training on report writing and mock CEDAW sessions.
- Plans for the future include:
 - » organizing a consultative workshop with line ministries to review CEDAW COBs and update the government response on violence against women and sexual assault under the Khmer Rouge;
 - » organizing a consultative workshop with TWGGs to follow up CEDAW COBs;
 - » continuing to conduct dissemination workshops on CEDAW/Optional Protocol/COBs and government recommendations;

- » conducting an annual meeting between MWA/Provincial Departments and CNCW;
- » cooperating with MWA to review the progress of CEDAW/COBs implementation;
- » reviewing monitoring tools and integrating CEDAW COBs; and
- » conducting national consultation with the National Assembly's Technical Committee for Women and Children.

INDONESIA²⁶

- The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection is one of the key ministries responsible for reporting on CEDAW, together with the National Commission on Anti-Violence against Women (KOMNAS PEREMPUAN), which is focused specifically on implementing CEDAW General Recommendation 19, the National Commission on Human Rights and the National Commission on Child Protection. All of these entities work closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in CEDAW reporting. These agencies, together with the Ministries of Law, Education, Health, Social Welfare, Manpower, Statistics and Internal Affairs, are part of a working group that provides information related to advancement of women in Indonesia.
- Most of the provinces have family planning institutions and centres on women's studies, which focus on decreasing maternal mortality and empowerment of women in general.
- There has been increased emphasis on enhancing women's participation in public life and representation in politics. Currently, 8 of the 34 government ministers are women.
- There is a new law and regulation in empowering and protecting women in social conflict and a national plan of action in this area.
- Work is being carried out to revise regulations in order to: make female genital mutilation (FGM) illegal; increase the minimum age of marriage from 16 to 18; prohibit polygamy; protect women in interreligious marriages; and eliminate all laws that discriminate against women at the provincial and local level.
- The Ministry of Health conducted dialogues with CSOs to produce data and findings, and subsequently issued a regulation prohibiting from conducting FGM.
- In 2014, the Indonesian Positive Women's Network, Ikatan Perempuan Positive Indonesia (IPPI), conducted peer-based research among 122 women living with HIV in 8 provinces to highlight the link between the issue of violence against women HIV. In a second study, "*Positive and pregnant - How Dare You*", conducted with 757 pregnant women living with HIV in 6 Asian countries, many of the 109 Indonesian women participants recounted experiences of verbal abuse and physical neglect by staff before, during and after their delivery.

26 Remarks by Rita Kalibonso, Chairperson, Foundation of Violence against Women, and former Representative of the Republic of Indonesia to the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC).

- In response, awareness-raising and advocacy efforts have increased. Ikatan Perempuan Positif Indonesia (IPPI, Association of Positive Women Indonesia) members protested at the National AIDS Summit to raise the issue of forced sterilization; conducted CEDAW training workshops; conducted training of trainers on sexual and reproductive health and rights in ten provinces; and produced a film documenting violence against women, “HARUS”, to be used as an advocacy tool.
- IPPI is now a partner of the National Violence against Women Commission, as well as a member of the CEDAW Working Group Indonesia (CWGI). IPPI successfully collaborated with CWGI to integrate research findings on violence against women living with HIV into Indonesia’s CEDAW NGO Shadow Report.
- The National AIDS Council (NAC) has also included IPPI as a member and involved them in the policy planning process. Indonesia’s new Minister of Health has committed to resolving sterilization issues together with women living with HIV and NAC is currently preparing an action plan for Indonesia’s HIV prevention programme that will have a strong gender perspective.

LAO PDR²⁷

- There is joint commitment of national-level (including line ministries’ Sub-CAWs) and local and community-level actors (provincial Sub-CAWs) to monitor CEDAW implementation and to evaluate progress in meeting the goals set in the National Social-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) and the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women (NSAW).
- Every five years, NCAW reports to the CEDAW Committee and receives COBs, which are subsequently integrated into the five-year NSAW, with indicators for monitoring progress. This work is carried out in consultation with the Lao Women’s Union, trade unions, civil society and research institutions. Mid-term and annual reviews to assess outcomes are conducted by NCAW board members, including provincial Sub-CAWs. Every two years, the Secretariat issues a report on progress and challenges in implementation, which is passed in a consultation meeting of NCAW Board Members and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and then approved by the Government.
- With the assistance of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), NCAW and Sub-CAWs are developing a comprehensive CEDAW/BPFA/NSAW monitoring and evaluation framework, and working to introduce systems for sharing data between provincial and national bodies. Training of trainers has taken place to pilot the new systems in five selected ministries (Agriculture, Public Works, Education, Health and Home Affairs) and provinces – in preparation for an expanded roll-out of the monitoring system.
- There has been increased emphasis on strengthening networks and cooperating more with stakeholders at the regional and national level. NCAW has also developed a good relationship with the Lao Women’s Union, and have representatives in each ministry to disseminate information.

27 Remarks by Chansoda Phonethip, Director General of the National Commission on the Advancement of Women (NCAW – Lao PDR).

- There is strong commitment from the Government to support NCAW. NCAW has achieved Budget Level 1 and been given the status of a Commission rather than a standing committee, which indicates that the Government has made the advancement of women a priority. Every government ministry is now obliged to integrate NCAW's strategy into their action plan.
- A national study was conducted on violence against women (VAW), which was followed by the development of a VAW national action plan. This plan has been approved by the Government and will be implemented throughout the country from 2014-2020. Additionally, with support from partners, NCAW has developed a draft law on VAW, which is expected to be passed in the next legislative session.

PHILIPPINES²⁸

- The Magna Carta of Women (MCW) and The President's Social Contract No. 13 on Gender Equality was passed in 2009. It expanded the mandate of the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) as the overall monitoring body and oversight to ensure the implementation of MCW. PCW regularly partners with NGOs, CSOs and academics to carry out its work.
- MCW is the national translation of CEDAW. Its definition of discrimination is based on CEDAW Art. 1
- According to MCW's implementing rules and regulations, PCW is charged with policy advocacy related to gender and development (GAD), technical assistance, and monitoring implementation of MCW and CEDAW. PCW also reviews and endorses GAD Planning and Budgets (GPB) of all agencies, bureaus, attached agencies, regional offices, government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), state universities and colleges (SUCs) and other government agencies. Reports to Congress and partner agencies on progress (annual accomplishment) of gender mainstreaming
- PCW has delivered policy issuances on: the GAD Focal Point system; annual GAD Plans and Budgets and accomplishment reports to implement MCW (PCW/Department of Budget and Management [DBM]/National Economic and Development Authority [NEDA]); implementation of the Women's EDGE Plan (2013-2016); the localization of the Magna Carta of Women; formulation of GAD Codes; and the creation and strengthening of Barangay VAW Desks.
- In partnership with DBM, NEDA and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), PCW has participated in the following inter-agency mechanisms: the Inter-Agency Committee on Gender Statistics (IACGS); the Media and Gender Equality Committee (MGEC); the Steering Committee of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP WPS); and the Human Development and Poverty Reduction (HDPR) Cluster.
- Gender perspectives and concepts have been integrated into national development plans, including: the Philippine Development Plan (2010-2016), the Philippine Statistical Development Plan (2011-2016) – the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2010-2016) (NAP SC) and the Women's Empowerment and Development and Gender Equality Plan (Women's EDGE Plan 2013-2016).

28 Remarks by Anita E. Baleda, Chief of Division, Philippine Commission on Women (PCW).

- Tools/modules have been developed on gender sensitivity, gender analysis and GAD planning and budgeting (e.g. gender sensitivity training (GST), gender planning and budgeting (GPB), harmonized gender and development guidelines (HGDG), gender mainstream evaluation frameworks (GMEF)).
- An online system for managing GAD profiles, GPBs and GAD accomplishment reports (GAD ARs) and for generating GAD-related reports has been initiated to monitor gender mainstreaming.
- A tool for monitoring MCW implementation was developed (customized per agency) containing questions corresponding to MCW provisions and indicators related to the agency's mandate. See below:

TABLE 6: TABLE REPRESENTING ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MAGNA CARTA OF WOMEN (MCW) AND OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING AS A STRATEGY OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PHILIPPINES



Philippine Commission on Women (PCW)

MAGNA CARTA OF WOMEN MONITORING TOOL

The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) is currently establishing the 2009 baseline data on the status of Filipino women and conducting a three-year (2010-2012) assessment of the Magna Carta of Women (MCW) implementation and of gender mainstreaming as a strategy for its implementation. By law, all government agencies and local government units (LGUs) are required to submit these reports. Kindly fill in the information in this Monitoring Tool.

Name of Agency			
Office Address of the Agency			
Contact Details			
Name of Agency Head			
		Signature of Agency Head	
Name and Position of Respondent/s	Name/s	Position	Contact Details
			Tel. No. Mobile No.: Fax No. Email.

PART I: STATUS OF WOMEN AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MCW PROVISIONS

Section 12: Protection from all forms of violence – Enhanced policies, programs, facilities and services to ensure protection of women against all forms of violence

1. What policies/measures has your agency implemented within the periods 2009-2012 to comply with international standards on humanitarian actions or interventions in disaster and armed conflict situations?

Title and Purpose of Policies/Measures	Date Issued

2. Has your agency recommended standards and measures to PCW on the following:

- a. Establishment of the VAWDesk : Yes _____; No _____
- b. Design of the prescribed module for VAW Desk capacity building: Yes _____; No _____
- c. Development of the VAWDesk Monitoring and Evaluation: Yes _____; No _____

3. If yes, please describe recommended standards and measures by VAW Desk area of concern.

Barangay VAW Desk Areas of Concern	Standards and Measures			
	2009	2010	2011	2012
Establishment of the VAW Desk				
VAW Desk capacity				

Department of Health (DOH)

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Section 20: Women's Right to Health. Increased access to and utilization of comprehensive , culture-sensitive and gender-responsive health services and programs covering all stages of a woman's life cycle that address major causes of morbidity and mortality

1. Please indicate ten the leading causes of women's morbidity from 2009-2012 at the table below:

Diseases	2009		2010		2011		2012	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate

2. Please indicate the ten leading causes of women's mortality from 2009-2012 at the table below:

Department of Health (DOH)

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- The GAD Focal Point System (national, regional and local) ensures the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of agency/local government unit (LGU) policies, programmes and projects; provinces - 44, cities - 59, municipalities - 811 (as of 2010).
- The Gender Resource Pool is a group of gender trainers who provide technical assistance on gender mainstreaming currently 63 members.
- GAD Codes are local legislation that consolidate local ordinances related to women and gender equality, and serve as guide for LGUs in identifying local policies, plans and programmes to address women's concerns and gender. As of January 2013, 120 municipalities and one region (the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao [ARMM]) had GAD Codes.
- GAD budgets are guided by national and international instruments (e.g. the General Appropriations Act [GAA], MCW, CEDAW and BPFA) and are synchronized with the annual planning and budgeting process of agencies and LGUs. At least 5 percent of agencies' total government appropriations must be allocated for programmes and activities to address gender issues. A total of 261 FY 2015 GPBs were submitted to PCW as of 15 October 2014.
- The GPB form below is used for National Government Accounting Systems (NGAs) (Joint Circular (JC) 2012-01).

TABLE 7: TABLE REPRESENTING DIVISION OF LABOUR MONITORING ON CEDAW IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

ANNUAL GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT (GAD) PLAN AND BUDGET FY 20__						
GENDER ISSUE AND/OR GAD MANDATE (1)	CAUSE OF GENDER ISSUE (2)	GAD RESULT STATEMENT/ GAD OBJECTIVES (3)	RELEVANT AGENCY MFO/ PAP (4)	GAD ACTIVITY (5)	OUTPUT	GAD BUDGET (7)
Client-focused						
Total					xxx	
Prepared by: Chairperson, GAD FP System			Approved by: Head of Agency		Date: Day/Month/year	

- CEDAW implementation is monitored by disseminating CEDAW information to government agencies and various groups, and soliciting feedback through various fora, workshops, exhibits and brochures. Duty bearers and claimholders/ CSOs are trained to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of. Following is an example of the division of labour.

Area of concern	Lead agency	NGO Co-convenor
Women and Poverty	National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC)	NAPC Women Sectoral Council
Education and Training	Commission on Higher Education (CHED)	Women's Studies Association of the Philippines (WSAP)
Women and Health	Department of Health (DOH)	Likhaan Center for Women's Health
Violence against Women	Department of Justice (DOJ)	WCC and Saligan
Women and Armed Conflict	Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP)	Women Engaged in Action 1325 (WE ACT 1325)
Women and the Economy	National Economic and Development Authority	Women's Business Council Philippines (WBCP)
Women in Power and Decision-Making	Civil Service Commission (CSC)	Pilipina, Inc.
Human Rights of Women	Commission on Human Rights (CHR)	
Women and Media	Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO)	World Future Society (WFS), Foundation for Media Alternatives (FMA)

Area of concern	Lead agency	NGO Co-convenor
Women and the Environment	Climate Change Commission (CCC) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)	Environmental Sanitation Institute (ESI), Pambansang Kongreso Ng Kababaihan Sa Kanayunan (PKKK)
The Girl-Child	Council for the Welfare of Children(CWC)	Phil. NGO Council on Children's Rights

- There is strong CSO engagement in the BPFA monitoring process. The process was as follows: preparatory meetings both by government organizations and NGOs followed by creation of Technical Working Groups (TWGs) and the identification of government office (GO)/ nongovernmental organisation (NGO) conveners per TWG.; TWG Validation Workshops followed by a Women's Consultative Conference.
- Organized consultation among Muslim women and men to discuss ways to address the discriminatory provisions in the Code of Muslim Personal Laws (CMPL) on early marriage, polygamy and divorce as well as unequal inheritance rights. Intensified advocacy is needed to change mindsets towards removing the discriminatory provisions under the CMPL. The Regional Sub-Committee on GAD of ARMM spearheaded the development of the ARMM GAD Code, which led to the provision on discouragement of marriage to a child.
- Cases related to violence against women, especially among indigenous peoples (IPs), are often not brought to court since some are mediated by IP elders. Due to cultures of silence and priority on preserving the family, women's rights are not upheld; to address this, an Anti-VAWC law was passed prohibiting mediation on VAWC cases.
- Child birthing in homes of some IPs (due to tradition) has led to higher maternal mortality rates. In response, DOH's maternal, newborn, child health and nutrition (MNCHN) strategy encourages facility-based deliveries and emphasizes that deliveries should only be attended by professional birth attendants. The strategy also sought to change fundamental societal dynamics that influence decision making on matters related to pregnancy and childbirth.

THAILAND²⁹

- The national mechanism for monitoring CEDAW and BPFA implementation is the National Commission on the Policy and Strategy for the Improvement of Status of Women, which is composed of high-level representatives from government, NGOs and civil society, and is chaired by the Prime Minister.
- Sub-committees are periodically created to report to the CEDAW Committee and monitor implementation of the COBs. These sub-committees collect and analyse data, and identify gaps in implementation. They are ad hoc and are dissolved once the work is completed. This work is coordinated with the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD), Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.
- Chief Gender Equality Officers (CGEOs) and Gender Focal Points (GFPs) are central and provincial mechanisms for coordinating monitoring of CEDAW COBs and BPFA commitments.
- After receipt of CEDAW Committee COBs, they are translated into Thai, analysed, prioritized and disseminated. A national meeting is then convened on how best to implement them.
- There are plans for:
 - » building capacity of staff in NWMs to be equipped with skills in preparing an effective periodic report and monitoring the implementation of COBs;
 - » establishing indicators and other instruments to monitor the implementation of CEDAW;
 - » learning best practices from other countries and regions in implementing CEDAW and COBs and monitoring systems.

TIMOR-LESTE³⁰

- The Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI) is the national mechanism charged with monitoring implementation of CEDAW and the BPFA. It was established under Decree Law No. 7/2008, which passed on 5 September 2008, as a successor to the Advisory Office for the Promotion of Equality (OPE).
- In 2012, Decree Law No. 14/2012 was passed, which established SEPI focal points in all 13 Districts and created the Auditor and Inspector in SEPI. In 2014, the Council of Ministries adopted a new Organic Law of the Secretariat of State for the Promotion of Equality. The new structure set by the law aims to increase the efficiency of SEPI's monitoring and oversight roles.
- SEPI acts as the Government's principal entity responsible for planning, executing, coordinating and evaluating policies in order to promote and defend gender equality. SEPI reports to the Vice Prime Ministers. Its main roles are coordinating and oversight. It is not an implementing agency.

29 Remarks by Napapen Phumnikom, Director of Thailand's Promotion and Protection of Women's Rights Group, Bureau of Gender Equality Promotion.

30 Remarks by Ubalda Felipe Alves, Gender Adviser to the Timor-Leste's Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI).

- CEDAW and its Optional Protocol were ratified without any reservations by the Parliament on 16 April 2003.
- Timor-Leste also envisions a “*gender-fair society where human dignity and women’s rights are valued, protected and promoted*” by 2030 in its strategic development plan.
- National Parliament approved a gender-responsive budgeting resolution on 14 July 2009 – re-stating that gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting is the responsibility of all government institutions. The Resolution called on all parliamentary committees to use and promote gender budgeting instruments and methods, and established a parliamentary process, and assigned roles to government and NGOs.
- Resolution No. 27/2011 was adopted by the Council of Ministers in August 2011 to set up a mechanism composed of Gender Working Groups (GWGs) at the national and district levels to take forward gender mainstreaming. The role and responsibility of GWGs is to identify opportunities and challenges in implementing an integrating gender perspective; and to develop strategies and tools to support implementation and monitoring of gender mainstreaming in policies, programmes, legislation, budgets, to contribute to the preparation of periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee.
- The 2009 Parliamentary Resolution gives SEPI a mandate to review Annual Action Plans (AAPs) from a gender perspective with the aim of improving the implementation of gender-responsive budgeting.
- The Budget Circular from Ministry of Finance calls for the integration of gender perspective into budgets and plans.
- SEPI designed a checklist to support the line ministries in integrating national and international gender commitments in the planning and budgeting process.
- The general comments and suggestions applicable to most AAPs include the desirability of setting minimum targets for women, the need for data to be disaggregated by sex, and the need for AAPs to meet the requirements of the relevant national legislation and international conventions (including CEDAW).
- SEPI plays an important role in the budget cycle and is part of the budget review committee, which reviews the AAPs of all line Ministries.
- SEPI also lobbies with women’s caucus (GMPTL) and Commission E (the Parliament’s commission for gender equality) to mainstream gender into the Annual Action Plans and budgets of all government institutions.
- GWGs are established in line ministries. Their role is to ensure that gender is integrated into policies, programs and budget of each ministries and state secretary. Each year, GWG members receive checklists to ensure that AAPs and budgets are gender-sensitive. GWGs must also report to SEPI on the implementation of the CEDAW Committee’s COBs, BPFA and national gender commitments.
- To prepare the state periodic reports, SEPI developed a questionnaire, which includes concrete questions/indicators for each article and COB. The questionnaires were submitted to GWG members and assists SEPI in data collection.

VIET NAM³¹

- Viet Nam has created a Plan of Action to implement COBs issued by the CRC Committee. Using this plan as a model, a new Plan of Action will be developed to implement CEDAW COBs. The Action Plan will help to: reaffirm political commitments; create a legal framework for the implementation of COBs; enhance CEDAW implementation, monitoring and reporting; and encourage the active involvement of related agencies, NGOs, localities and women.
- In creating the CRC Plan of Action, the Government first formed an intersectoral working group, headed by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), which consisted of representatives from the National Assembly, Government's Office, and Child Rights Association, and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Education and Training, Planning and Investment and Culture and Information. The intersectoral working group studied the 84 COBs issued by the CRC Committee in 2012, and grouped them into different areas and top priorities. The group then identified the roles and responsibilities of relevant agencies and localities, and proposed a road-map and activities for implementing, supervision, monitoring and reporting on progress made. The Action Plan was approved by the Prime Minister in early 2014. The objectives of the plan are to:
 - » identify responsibilities of relevant ministries, central agencies and localities to implement the COBs;
 - » work out a road-map for the implementation from 2014-2020 in harmonization with the country's socio-economic development;
 - » request the relevant agencies and localities to propose budgets for implementation.

Key contents of the plan include:

- » continuing the harmonization of national legislation with the CRC;
- » promoting IEC on child rights, the CRC Concluding Observations for broader population;
- » mainstreaming child rights into related programs, plans and projects at different levels;
- » enhancing capacity-building for staff working on children's issues.

MOLISA is charged with: providing guidelines for ministries and localities in development of their own detailed action plans; reporting to the government; implementing key recommendations; and acting as the coordinating mechanism for resource allocation for various areas, such as children living in difficult circumstances or lacking family environments, and proposing a budget to implement the plan of action. The Ministries of Education and Training, Health, Justice, Home Affairs, Finance and localities are charged with developing and approving their own action plans with proposed budgets.

31 Remarks by Cao Thi Thanh Thuy, Chair of ACWC in Charge of Women's Rights, and Deputy Director of Vietnam's International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA).

- Since 2008, MOLISA has been the State Management Agency (SMA) for gender equality and is in charge of monitoring implementation of CEDAW. Past initiatives have included the development of a National Strategy and National Programme on gender equality and publication of leaflets on CEDAW in ethnic minority languages such as Hmong, Dao, etc. MOLISA's CEDAW reporting team is headed by the MOLISA Deputy Minister, who is also the Vice Chairperson for the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW), and consists of 38 members from various other ministries, agencies and unions. The team submitted the seventh and eighth CEDAW reports in early 2013. Monitoring is done by the National Assembly and by MOLISA in coordination with related agencies.
- The Government is considering developing an action plan to implement CEDAW COBs as a follow-up action after constructive dialogue with the CEDAW Committee in 2015. It will also integrate related issues into the Socio-Economic Development Plan for 2016-2020 and enhance collaboration with related regional and international mechanisms, including the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC).

MYANMAR

- A National Human Rights Commission was established in 2011, and a National Human Rights Law was enacted in 2014.
- A complaints mechanism was established to examine and address allegations of human rights abuses.
- Customary law is being examined to identify where it contradicts CEDAW.
- A National Action Plan for the Advancement of Women has been adopted.
- The Committee for Women's Affairs meets with parliamentarians and representatives from line ministries to discuss gaps and challenges in implementing CEDAW and discuss how best to move forward.
- Myanmar plans to seek funding and technical support in order to provide training on gender-responsive budgeting for all ministries.

CRITICAL CHALLENGES AND ACCOUNTABILITY GAPS

The NWMs have been called upon to advocate and support policy implementation on gender equality and monitor implementation of international human rights commitments such as CEDAW and BPFA. However, NWMs are too often marginalized and hampered by inadequate support, money and staff, making their effectiveness uneven. It is clear that most NWMs in the region need stronger mandates and more resources to carry out their work. Some of the critical challenges facing NWMs in the region have been identified as follows:

- **DATA COLLECTION:**

- » There are no monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
- » There is no systematic and regular data collection.
- » There are no sex-disaggregated data.
- » There is a lack of disaggregated data pertaining to different groups such as rural women, the poor, disabled, LGBT, which makes it difficult to evaluate specific women's situations.
- » There is a lack of data-sharing policies and difficulty in accessing data held by line ministries and other institutions.
- » There is a need for better management information systems.
- » Data analysis is difficult due to inconsistent definitions of terms across ministries.
- » There are gaps in data flows from the sub-national to the national level.

- **COOPERATION:**

- » There is a lack of cooperation with relevant stakeholders at community, provincial, regional (ASEAN) and global levels.
- » There is limited collaboration between relevant government agencies.

- » There is insufficient cooperation between NWMs and civil society during CEDAW reporting and often is no real strategy for working together.
- » There is a lack of coordinating mechanisms between ministries to share information.
- » NWMs have very little space to influence planning in ministries.

- **CAPACITY:**

- » Understanding of CEDAW/OP/COBs is limited.
- » There is inadequate and limited capacity for integrated CEDAW/BPFA/NSAW assessment and reporting.
- » Human resources are limited in using and analysing the monitoring tools.
- » There is a lack of capacity within parliaments to oversee CEDAW and BPFA implementation.

- **GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY:**

- » NWMs are too often weak and lack independence.
- » There is a lack of stand-alone women's machineries at the ministerial level with strong mandates for oversight over other ministries.
- » There is limited understanding on obligations of States Parties in implementation of treaties and their COBs.
- » Many ministries consider promoting gender equality as additional work that they do not have time for.
- » There is constant staff turnover at central and provincial level committees and technical working groups on gender.
- » Line ministries have difficulty grasping the meaning of gender mainstreaming.
- » Gender focal points need more training to ensure that they are knowledgeable about how gender equality intersects with their technical area (e.g. education, health, etc.).
- » Some NWMs are not allowed to be involved in council of ministries meetings where main governmental decisions are taken.
- » There is lack of understanding, commitment and capacity from line ministries to monitor the implementation of CEDAW COBs and BPFA.
- » Government offices of statistics pay little attention to gender issues.
- » Local government units are not always aware of policies and commitments to gender equality that have been made at the national level.

- » National plans of action on CEDAW implementation and VAW must be strengthened with more specific targets and indicators to measure progress.
- » Many countries in the region do not have national plans of action to implement all 12 critical areas of the BPFA, which makes monitoring difficult.
- » COBs are too often put aside and not referred to until the next reporting cycle.
- » There is lack of legal frameworks to implement CEDAW COBs.

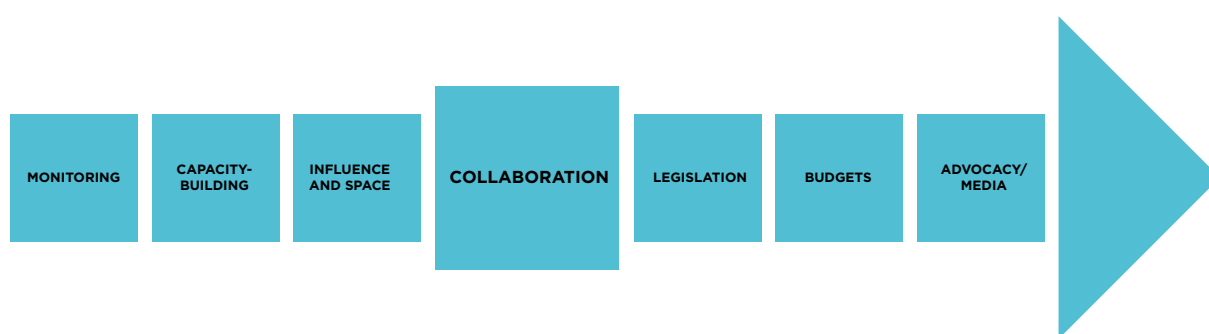
- **FUNDING:**

- » Financial resources are limited.
- » There is a lack of coordination with ministries of finance to ensure that the budget circulars sent to all line ministries include checklists that emphasize gender priorities.
- » There is a lack of understanding on how to assess gender budgeting; it is difficult to track how much governments are spending on women's equality.
- » NWMs do not have sufficient space in the mainstream budget-making cycle.
- » NWMs lack line items in their budgets to allow them to effectively interact with CSOs.

- **CULTURE:**

- » It is difficult to build political will to address harmful cultural norms and practices.
- » It is difficult to change the minds and attitudes of people, particularly around gender stereotypes.
- » Plural legal systems that rely on cultural specificities often result in international human rights standards being sidelined.

CONCRETE ACTIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD



An understanding of the challenges faced by NWMs in CEDAW reporting and monitoring allows for the opportunity to address them and put in place a plan of action for closing the accountability gaps. Below is a summary of concrete ideas that emerged from the Regional Consultation to help NWMs ensure that the government meets its obligations and commitments to women.

MONITORING

- Create an **inter-agency working group** on CEDAW implementation and ensure that representatives from the ministries of finance and statistics are included.
- **Review existing tools for monitoring** and revise/update where necessary based on concluding observations.
- Develop **National Plans of Action** (both short- and medium-term) on implementing CEDAW COBs.
- Develop **guidelines/checklists for line ministries** to monitor implementation of CEDAW COBs.
- Develop checklists to **monitor gender-responsive planning and budgeting**.
- Conduct training for relevant stakeholders on **how to use monitoring tools**.

- Create systems to **ensure that data collected is disaggregated** by sex and other criteria, in order to make analysis more meaningful.
- Develop better **indicators** that provide more useful information and improve reporting on CEDAW implementation.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

- **Develop curricula** implementing CEDAW, which will be designed for specific stakeholders such as legal practitioners, parliamentarians, ombudsmen, national human rights commissions.
- Build NWMs' capacity to **work together with CSOs** and learn how to complement each other's work.
- **Train gender focal points** on how to promote gender equality in their specific sector and better monitor CEDAW implementation.
- Build the understanding of NWMs to be able to articulate, their specific **objectives and priorities**.
- Integrate CEDAW into **judicial training**.

INFLUENCE AND SPACE FOR NWMs

- Report the **outcomes of this workshop** to relevant government leadership and **make recommendations for follow-up** actions.
- Generate **support from legislators** for women's priority issues.
- Develop a **framework for bringing proposals to national assemblies**.
- Make sure that CEDAW COBs are incorporated into **government strategic plans**.
- Ensure that all ministries have **Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans** that identify cutting-edge issues and incorporate CEDAW COBs.
- NWMs must continue to **push for space at the heart of the policy and budget development process**. Insist on taking part in high-level meetings across all ministries.

COLLABORATION

- Develop a concrete plan and **framework for networking and collaborating with CSOs**.
- Hold **regular meetings** with CSOs to build trust and understanding.
- Create a **joint CEDAW monitoring board** with half of the members from the government side and half from CSOs.
- Ensure that **CSOs are involved in the design of projects** on gender equality.
- Enlist **CSOs and academia to support data collection** and analysis.

LEGISLATION

- Continue to advocate and push for a **gender equality laws**.
- Develop a policy on legislation to **ensure that all bills crafted by executive agencies are aligned with CEDAW** and BPFA.
- Continue to push for review and amendment of customary laws that are not in line with CEDAW and other human rights standards.

BUDGETS

- Develop a gender budget planning tools - with separate planning and monitoring templates.
- NWMs must request budgets to work with CSOs.
- Investigate how money is being spent to promote substantive equality for women - not just for women's machineries, but in other government programmes.
- Review other countries' mechanisms for monitoring GAD budgeting - to get new ideas and fresh approaches.
- Provide training on gender-responsive budgeting to all ministries.

ADVOCACY/MEDIA

- Develop a good communications strategy.
- Use the traditional media/social media to keep gender equality issues visible, to tackle stereotypes and myths, and to raise awareness.
- Make greater efforts to raise awareness about CEDAW and gender equality in rural and poor areas using simplified terms and local languages.
- There is a lack of data-sharing policies and difficulty in accessing data held by line ministries and other institutions.
- There is a need for better management information systems.
- Data analysis is difficult due to inconsistent definitions of terms across ministries.
- There are gaps in data flows from the sub-national to the national level.

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