

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Asia and the Pacific

PERSPECTIVES OF GOVERNMENTS ON 20 YEARS
OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION
AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries. Bibliographical and other references have, wherever possible, been verified. The United Nations bears no responsibility for the availability or functioning of URLs belonging to external entities.

This publication has been issued without formal editing. It follows United Nations practice in references to countries.

Reproduction and dissemination of material in this publication for educational or other non-commercial purposes are authorized without prior written permission from the copyright holder, provided that the source is fully acknowledged.

ST/ESCAP/2726

Copyright © United Nations, Bangkok 2015

All rights reserved

Social Development Division

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

United Nations Building

Rajadamnern Nok Avenue

Bangkok 10200 Thailand

E-mail: escap-sdd@un.org

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Asia and the Pacific

PERSPECTIVES OF GOVERNMENTS ON 20 YEARS
OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION
AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared as part of the Asia-Pacific regional review of progress in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and served as one component of the Asia-Pacific contribution to the global 20-year review.

The report was prepared by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in cooperation with the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

ESCAP and UN Women wish to acknowledge and express their appreciation to the members and associate members who undertook national-level reviews, contributing their findings through submission of national review reports and completion of the Asia-Pacific regional survey.

The report was designed by Daniel Feary.

Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
List of Figures	iv
List of Tables	v
List of Acronyms	v
Foreword	vii
Executive Summary	ix
Chapter 1 Introduction	2
Chapter 2 Achievements and challenges in advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment in Asia and the Pacific	8
Chapter 3 The 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action	14
Chapter 4 Implementing the Platform for Action	109
Chapter 5 Achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment	121
Annex A	127
Annex B	137

List of Figures

Figure 1	The five ESCAP subregions	7
Figure 2	2013 Human Development Index and Gender Inequality Index rankings for countries in Asia and the Pacific.	9
Figure 3	Reported range of proportion of female populations living below national poverty lines, by ESCAP subregion	17
Figure 4	Percentage of 2014 Beijing+20 respondent countries that reported national macroeconomic policies and measures that address the needs of women and girls living in poverty, by ESCAP subregion	19
Figure 5	Range of female and male primary school net enrolment rates (%), by ESCAP subregion	24
Figure 6	Range of female and male primary school net attendance rates, by ESCAP subregion	25
Figure 7	Range of female and male secondary school net enrolment rates (%), by ESCAP subregion	26
Figure 8	Range of female and male secondary school net attendance rates (%), by ESCAP subregion	27
Figure 9	Gender parity index for tertiary education enrolment, by ESCAP subregion	29
Figure 10	Range of female and male literacy rates, by ESCAP subregion	31
Figure 11	Percentage of the 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey respondent countries that provide health care services to women and girls, at no or minimal financial cost, by type of service	35
Figure 12	2013 average maternal mortality ratios, by ESCAP subregion	37
Figure 13	Percentage ranges of pregnant women who received one and four ante-natal visits, by ESCAP subregion	38
Figure 14	Percentage ranges of births attended by skilled birth attendants, by ESCAP subregion	39
Figure 15	The range of female and male labour force participation rates in Asia-Pacific and in the five ESCAP subregions	62
Figure 16	Female and male employment-to-population ratios, by ESCAP subregion	63
Figure 17	Percentage range of persons employed in the non-agricultural sector who are women, by ESCAP subregion	64
Figure 18	Percentage (range) of women and men engaged in vulnerable employment, of total employed populations, by ESCAP subregion.	65
Figure 19	Average percentages of employed females and males who are contributing family workers, by ESCAP subregion	67
Figure 20	Percentages (range) of employed women who are engaged in self-employment, by ESCAP subregion	69

Figure 21	The proportion (range) of national parliamentarians, in single and lower houses, who are women, by ESCAP sub region	74
Figure 22	Proportion (range) of national ministers who are women, by ESCAP subregion	75
Figure 23	Proportions of Beijing+20 respondent countries that attest to the existence of selected measures for eliminating discrimination against the girl child	82
Figure 24	Proportions of Beijing+20 respondent countries that attested to the types of issues that their measures for eliminating discrimination against the girl child address	105
Figure 25	Proportions of Beijing+20 respondent countries that attested to having specific measures in place for promoting the girl child's awareness of sociocultural, political and economic issues and participation in the public domain	108

List of Tables

Table 1	2014 Social Institutions and Gender Index categorization of countries from Asia	10
Table 2	The institutional forms of the national women's machineries, and their proportional representation, in Asia and the Pacific	82

List of Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ICT	information and communications technologies
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Foreword

Gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental human rights issues and cornerstones of sustainable and equitable development. For the last 20 years, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action have guided the realization of these essential elements of the future we want.

In recognition of the significance of gender equality, especially for the new global development agenda, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in cooperation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), conducted a study of the perspectives of Governments in the Asia-Pacific region with respect to progress in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

This report is the result of the analytical review, outlining the perspectives of ESCAP members and associate members with respect to progress towards, and fundamental requirements for, the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment in Asia and the Pacific.

At the regional level, governments highlighted three key areas of progress, namely (a) strengthening gender equality in national governments and governance; (b) addressing violence against women and girls, and (c) promoting the leadership and political participation of women. The Governments also highlighted progress in the areas of women's economic empowerment, education, health, and peace and security.

Alongside these achievements, the Governments also identified challenges in realizing gender equality and women's empowerment in the Asia-Pacific region. The common challenge concerned normative frameworks and institutional mechanisms, with associated obstacles pertaining to the formulation of policy and legislation; implementation and monitoring; technical capacity; data and statistics, and patriarchal ideology.

Governments also noted that, in spite of progress, further efforts will be needed to end violence against women and girls; increase women's political participation and leadership; enhance women's economic participation; improve women's and girls' health, and address environmental issues, such as climate change and natural resource management as ongoing challenges to the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment.

In order for gender equality to be a reality in the Asia-Pacific region, Governments identified the need for: (a) comprehensive normative frameworks and institutions; (b) better partnerships and cooperation; (c) improved data and statistics, and (d) greater budgets and funding. There is thus a critical need for concerted collective, collaborative and resourced action to empower all women and girls in Asia and the Pacific and to realize gender equality for all persons.



Shamshad Akhtar

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations
Executive Secretary of ESCAP

Executive Summary

In 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which were subsequently endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1996. The Platform for Action constitutes the global policy document that articulates the objectives and actions for realizing gender equality and women's empowerment.

Implementation of the Platform for Action is reviewed every five years. In preparation for the fourth five-year review, through national reports and a regional survey, ESCAP member and associate members were invited to recount their progress in implementation of the Platform for Action, identifying achievements, challenges and future priorities.

The statements of the ESCAP members and associate members are compiled in this document, thereby providing a regional overview of implementation of the Platform for Action. More specifically, this report provides a summary of the identified achievements and challenges of ESCAP members and associate members in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment (Chapter 2), including in relation to the 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action (Chapter 3). This report also outlines the key means of implementation of the Platform for Action (Chapter 4), along with the members' and associate members' delineated priorities for strengthening implementation and achieving gender equality (Chapter 5).

As articulated by the ESCAP members and associate members, achievements in the areas of gender equality and women's empowerment have been recorded in relation to (a) strengthening gender equality in national governments and governance; (b) addressing violence against women and girls, and (c) promoting the leadership and political participation of women. At the subregional level, ESCAP members and associate members variably highlighted progress in the areas of women's economic empowerment, education, health and peace and security.

Alongside achievements, the ESCAP members and associate members identified challenges in realizing gender equality and women's empowerment. The common challenge for all subregions concerned normative frameworks and institutional mechanisms for gender equality and women's empowerment, with associated obstacles pertaining to policy and legislation formulation, implementation and monitoring, technical capacity, data and statistics and patriarchal ideology. At the subregional level, ESCAP members and associate members also identified challenges in eliminating violence against women and girls; increasing women's political participation and leadership; enhancing women's economic empowerment; improving women's and girls' health, and addressing such environmental issues as climate change and natural resource management.

In relation to the 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action, the ESCAP members and associate members described actions taken with resulting gains and continuing hurdles to be overcome. In this respect, poverty amongst women and girls was noted, along with the application of macroeconomic policies and measures, most commonly manifesting as social protection and employment and livelihood schemes, and less frequently as gender-responsive taxation and budgeting.

Gains have been documented in the area of education, notably gender parity in primary, and increasingly, secondary school enrolment rates. With the exception of some countries in South and South-West Asia, gender parity is also increasingly evident in literacy rates. While normative frameworks provide for equality between women and men, girls and boys, in education, disparities remain. Challenges to realizing policy and legislative intentions were identified in relation to the quality of education, resources, access and subject-streaming.

Concerning the health of women and girls, ESCAP members and associate members attested to policies

and legislation mandating provision of a range of health services to women and girls. While noting that women, statistically, live longer than men, the reporting members and associate members identified persistent challenges to women's and girls' health and well-being, such as partial implementation of policies and programmes, insufficient resources, lack of specialised services, barriers to access and health sectors that are not entirely gender-sensitive.

ESCAP members and associate members recounted measures taken to eliminate violence against women and girls; measures encompassing the adoption of policies and legislation, the implementation of action plans and the provision of services. Within the prevention, protection and access to justice frameworks, and perceived high prevalence rates, the ESCAP members and associate members reported barriers to elimination of violence against women and girls, ranging from a dearth of data and service provision to inhospitable judicial systems and discriminatory sociocultural norms.

When it comes to “women and armed conflict”, a minority of countries in the Asia and Pacific region have formulated national action plans on women, peace and security. While women are present in conflict-resolution and peace-building bodies, they constitute the minority of representatives. Education and training initiatives are variably being implemented by the ESCAP members and associate members to address issues of awareness and capacity to respond to the “women, peace and security” agenda, along with implementation of protective measures and services for women and girls who experience violence during and after conflict.

In terms of women's engagement in the economy, ESCAP members and associate members reported the existence of policies, legislation and programmes focussed on the equal access of women and men to employment and decent work, as well as ownership and control of productive resources. Despite the existence of enabling policies and programmes, inequalities prevail between women and men in the area of employment, such as are demonstrated by lower rates of female, than of male, labour force participation, the gender pay gap and both vertical and horizontal occupational segregation. The ESCAP

members and associate members, in turn, attested to measures promoting entrepreneurship amongst women, while simultaneously acknowledging hindrances to women pursuing self-employment.

In the area of leadership and decision-making, the ESCAP members and associate members attested to women constituting a minority of holders of national and subnational political office, as well as of senior level public and private sector positions. Through such measures as affirmative action, quotas and capacity-building, countries in Asia and the Pacific have sought, and are seeking, to increase the political participation of women and their assumption of decision-making posts. Prejudicial sociocultural norms, partial implementation of policies and legislation, insufficient resources and lack of capacity, for example, are all reported impediments to realising the equal representation of women and men in leadership and decision-making positions.

Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women exist in countries across Asia and the Pacific. Taking various forms, the institutional mechanisms are mandated to realise gender equality and empower women. The ESCAP members and associate members reported achievements of their institutional mechanisms; achievements related to gender equality normative frameworks, governmental gender architectures, tackling violence against women and girls, empowering women economically, promoting women's leadership and strengthening gender equality data and statistical systems. Lack of political will and accountability, limited awareness of and appreciation for gender equality, low status, insufficient resources, scant data and poor coordination between government entities were some of the challenges, cited by the ESCAP members and associate members, to their institutional mechanisms being able to fulfil their mandates.

In relation to human rights, all except for three countries in Asia and the Pacific have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), although for several countries reservations have been applied. Translation of the Convention to national contexts reportedly remains incomplete, although there

are constitutional and legislative human rights provisions. ESCAP members and associate members have noted that the human rights of women and girls are violated, as evidenced in the prevalence of violence against women and girls, and the associated need to strengthen women's and girls' access to justice and legal literacy.

Concerning media and information and communications technology (ICT), significant regional variability exists in relation to the participation and portrayal of women and girls in the media. ESCAP members and associate members highlighted initiatives to increase rates of participation, including programmes for and by women, provision of education and training, and measures to raise the number of women occupying leadership and decision-making positions. Initiatives promoting balanced and non-stereotypical portrayal of women and girls are also, reportedly, in place, such as legislation proscribing pornography and awareness-raising of media personnel.

With respect to environmental issues, ESCAP members and associate members variably reported responding to the particular needs and interests of women and girls in relation to natural resources, climate change and disaster risk reduction. A primary undertaking for the ESCAP members and associate members is mainstreaming gender in policies, plans and programmes that seek to promote women's and men's equal command of natural resources, access to energy sources, engagement in climate change initiatives and disaster risk responses.

ESCAP members and associate members described measures undertaken to eliminate discrimination against the girl child and to promote the girl child's participation in economic, political and social life. Policies, legislation, public campaigns, education and training initiatives reportedly address a range of issues to enhance the status of the girl child, from matters relating to education, marriage, inheritance, sociocultural norms to creation of spaces and opportunities for girls to engage in physical activities, social exchange and life skills development.

When it comes to the mechanisms for implementing the Platform for Action, the ESCAP members

and associate members listed requirements that can be categorised into four general categories: (a) normative frameworks and institutions, (b) partnership and cooperation, (c) data and statistics, and (d) budgets and funding.

Finally, as well as reflecting upon implementation of the Platform for Action for the past (almost) twenty years, the ESCAP members and associate members identified priority actions for the coming years, along with the core implementation requirements. The priority actions for the future are increasing women's engagement in public and political life, empowering women economically; eliminating violence against women and girls; improving women's and girls' health; advancing women's and girls' access to justice; implementing the women, peace and security agenda; addressing environmental issues, and replacing patriarchal ideology with sociocultural norms and values grounded in equality of rights and gender justice.

Addressing the identified priority areas for action is understood as requiring a "whole-of-government" approach, where gender consciousness, commitment and enactment, capacity and collaboration contribute to the formulation and implementation of policies, legislation, action plans and services that support the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Further requirements include comprehensive, valid and reliable gender data and statistics, which are components of the needed monitoring and accountability. Coordinated action and partnerships, both between government entities and between government and non-government entities are required. Furthermore, all actions need to be adequately resourced and responsive to the different needs and interests of the diversity that is embodied in the categories "women" and "girls".

To achieve gender equality, there must be investment in women and girls; investment that extends from valuing women and girls to the allocation of tangible resources. The impacts of such investment extend beyond women and girls themselves, to entire societies and the Asia-Pacific region itself, given that gender equality is a prerequisite for peace, "development" and democracy.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Being universal, the internationally agreed upon inalienable, indivisible and inter-dependent human rights are applicable to all persons “without distinction of any kind”. Yet, with “distinction” persisting between women and men, girls and boys, beyond the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹ in 1948, the global community came together at the World Conferences on Women in Mexico City in 1975, in Copenhagen in 1980, in Nairobi in 1985 and in Beijing in 1995 to progress the ability of all persons, regardless of their sex, to fully and freely exercise their fundamental human rights and freedoms.

The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, was particularly significant in terms of advancing achievement of equality of rights between women and men, girls and boys. This is because the Fourth World Conference on Women resulted in the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.² Subsequently endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1996, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action constitute the global policy documents for realizing gender equality. Moreover, in delineating strategic objectives and actions, the Platform for Action is the principal international agenda guiding countries in creating enabling environments – constructed from policies, legislation, programmes, service provision and other initiatives – for women’s and girls’ empowerment.

1.1 THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND ITS REVIEW

As the global framework for achieving the goal of “the empowerment of all women”, which is contingent upon “[t]he full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women”,³ the Platform for Action calls upon “[g]overnments, the international community and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector”,⁴ to take action in 12 critical areas of concern: poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, the economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights, the media, the environment and the girl child.

Every five years since 1995, progress in achieving the strategic objectives of the Platform for Action is reviewed by the Commission on the Status of Women,⁵ being a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). There have been four reviews to date – 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015 – with each review resulting in an outcome document that reinforces global commitment to the empowerment of women and girls and outlines priority actions for the coming five years.

The fourth review took place in 2015, marking the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In Resolution E/RES/2013/18, the Economic and Social Commission called upon all States to undertake comprehensive national-level reviews of the progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In addition, the Resolution encouraged “the regional commissions to undertake regional reviews so that the outcomes of the intergovernmental processes at the regional level can feed into the 2015 review” overseen by the Commission on the Status of Women.

1 www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/

2 www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/

3 Platform for Action, Chapter II, “Global Framework”, paragraph 9

4 Platform for Action, Chapter III, “Critical Areas of Concern”, paragraph 44

5 www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/

In accordance with this mandate, in 2014 the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in cooperation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), undertook a regional review of progress in implementation of the Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific.

1.2

ASIA-PACIFIC BEIJING+20 REGIONAL REVIEW PROCESS

In Asia and the Pacific, the 20-year regional review of progress in implementation of the Platform for Action (“Beijing+20 review”) is comprised of three components: research and analysis, inter-governmental consensus building and stakeholder engagement.

In terms of research and analysis, ESCAP members and associate members were invited to complete the Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 survey and to submit national review reports based on the global Guidance Note for the Preparation of National Reviews,⁶ as issued by the United Nations Secretary General to Permanent Representatives of Member States and to the Permanent Observers of Non-Member States to the United Nations. The resulting data and information provided by ESCAP members and associate members has been compiled and analysed to produce this regional report of progress in implementation of the Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific.

The key elements of the inter-governmental consensus building component of the Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional review process were two high-level inter-governmental meetings; specifically the third session of the ESCAP Committee on Social Development and the “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review”. A legislative subsidiary body of ESCAP, the Committee on Social Development was convened from 18 to 20 August 2014, in Bangkok. The third session of the Committee on Social

Development served as a preparatory body to the later Conference, including consideration of the zero draft of the outcome document of the subsequent “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review”.

The “Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review” (“the Conference”) constituted the culmination of the Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional review process. Held in Bangkok from 17 to 20 November 2014, senior government officials, ministers and heads of government reviewed the obstacles and challenges to achieving gender equality in Asia and the Pacific with respect to implementation of the Platform for Action, with adoption by the ESCAP member States of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, which serves as the Asia-Pacific regional input to the global Beijing+20 review process.

Contributing to both the research and inter-governmental components of the regional Beijing+20 review process, was the participation of civil society, as well as of inter-governmental organizations and United Nations entities in addition to ESCAP and UN Women. Two civil society consultations – one held in February 2014 and the other in November 2014 immediately prior to the Conference – constituted the key Asia-Pacific platforms for civil society input to the Beijing+20 regional review process.

Thus, in Asia and the Pacific, the 20-year Beijing+20 review was a participatory and inclusive process, reflecting attribution of responsibility in the Platform for Action to governments, United Nations entities, non-government organizations and other civil society actors for achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment.

⁶ A copy of the Beijing+20 global Guidance Note is provided in Annex A.

1.3

ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

As stated in the preceding section, in Asia and the Pacific, the analytical review of regional progress in implementation of the Platform for Action was undertaken through administration of a regional survey and submission, by members and associate members to ESCAP, of national review reports.

The analytical review encompassed ESCAP members and associate members geographically located in the Asia and Pacific region,⁷ with consideration of implementation of the Platform for Action at the Asia-Pacific regional level and at the subregional level. The five ESCAP subregions, and their constituent countries, are shown in Figure 1.

Beijing+20 National Review Reports

When preparing their Beijing+20 national review reports, members and associate members were invited to refer to directions provided in the global Guidance Note for the Preparation of National Reviews. Alongside the guidelines on how to undertake a national-level review, the Guidance Note contained four substantive sections: overview and analysis of achievements and challenges since 1995, progress in the implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action since

2009, data and statistics and emerging priorities. ESCAP members and associate members drafted their national review reports between the date of request (September 2013) and the point of submission (with the last report received by ESCAP in August 2014).

ESCAP received 36 national review reports submitted by Afghanistan, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Georgia, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Nauru, Nepal, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Republic of Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Russian Federation, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.

Beijing+20 Asia-Pacific Regional Survey

Supplementing the Guidance Note, and to enrich the regional analysis, ESCAP in cooperation with UN Women conducted a survey of Asia-Pacific members and associate members that specifically focused on the 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action.⁸ The regional survey provided an opportunity for members and associate members to reflect upon the status of women and girls nationally, recognizing achievements and noting where further work is required in the effort to realize gender equality.

Consisting of 13 sections (A to M), one section for each “critical area of concern” and a final section for additional comments, the regional survey was designed for ease of completion, through a combination of “tick box” answers and questions requiring summary responses. In completing the regional survey, Governments were encouraged to involve concerned ministries and agencies, as well as to engage with civil society. Members and associate members submitted their completed surveys to ESCAP between April and September 2014.

7 The ESCAP members and associate members constituting the “Asia and Pacific region” are, in alphabetical order, Afghanistan, American Samoa, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, the Cook Islands, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Fiji, French Polynesia, Georgia, Guam, Hong Kong China, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Macao China, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, the Northern Mariana Islands, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Samoa, Singapore, the Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu and Viet Nam. Not included in the foregoing list are the four non-regional ESCAP members, namely France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

8 A copy of the “2014 Asia-Pacific Regional Survey of Progress in Implementation of the 12 Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action” is provided in Annex B.

Of the 58 regional ESCAP members and associate members that were invited to complete the Beijing+20 regional survey, 40 surveys were received, constituting a response rate of 69 per cent. Surveys were submitted by Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, China, the Cook Islands, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, French Polynesia, Hong Kong, China, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Macao, China, Maldives, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Russian Federation, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uzbekistan and Vanuatu.

At a subregional level, the response rates were 76.2 per cent for the Pacific,⁹ 45.5 per cent for South-East Asia,¹⁰ 85.7 per cent for East and North-East Asia,¹¹ 80.0 per cent for South and South-West Asia¹² and 44.4 per cent for North and Central Asia.¹³

It should be noted that the majority of Beijing+20 regional survey responses received were incomplete (33, being 82.5 per cent of submitted surveys); information was not provided in relation to one, and more often more than one, question.

The information provided by ESCAP members and associate members through both the national review reports and responses to the Beijing+20 regional survey was collated and is presented in the following chapters of this report on implementation of the Platform for Action in Asia and the Pacific.

As a regional report, this document provides an overview of issues pertaining to gender equality, within the framework of the Platform for Action and as addressed by the ESCAP members and associate members in their national review reports and survey submissions. As an “overview” document, there is frequent use of the category labels “women” and “girls”. It is, however, recognized that great variability exists amongst “women” and “girls”, who pursue their lives in diverse and changing contexts.

9 The ESCAP members and associate members from the Pacific subregion that did not submit the Beijing+20 regional survey were American Samoa, Fiji, Guam, Niue and the Northern Mariana Islands.

10 The ESCAP members from South-East Asia that did not submit the Beijing+20 regional survey were Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Singapore and Viet Nam.

11 The ESCAP member from East and North-East Asia that did not submit the Beijing+20 regional survey was the Republic of Korea.

12 The ESCAP members from South and South-West Asia that did not submit the Beijing+20 regional survey were Afghanistan and Pakistan.

13 The ESCAP members from North and Central Asia that did not submit the Beijing+20 regional survey were Armenia, Georgia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

FIGURE 1
THE FIVE ESCAP SUBREGIONS



Chapter 2

Achievements and challenges in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in Asia and the Pacific

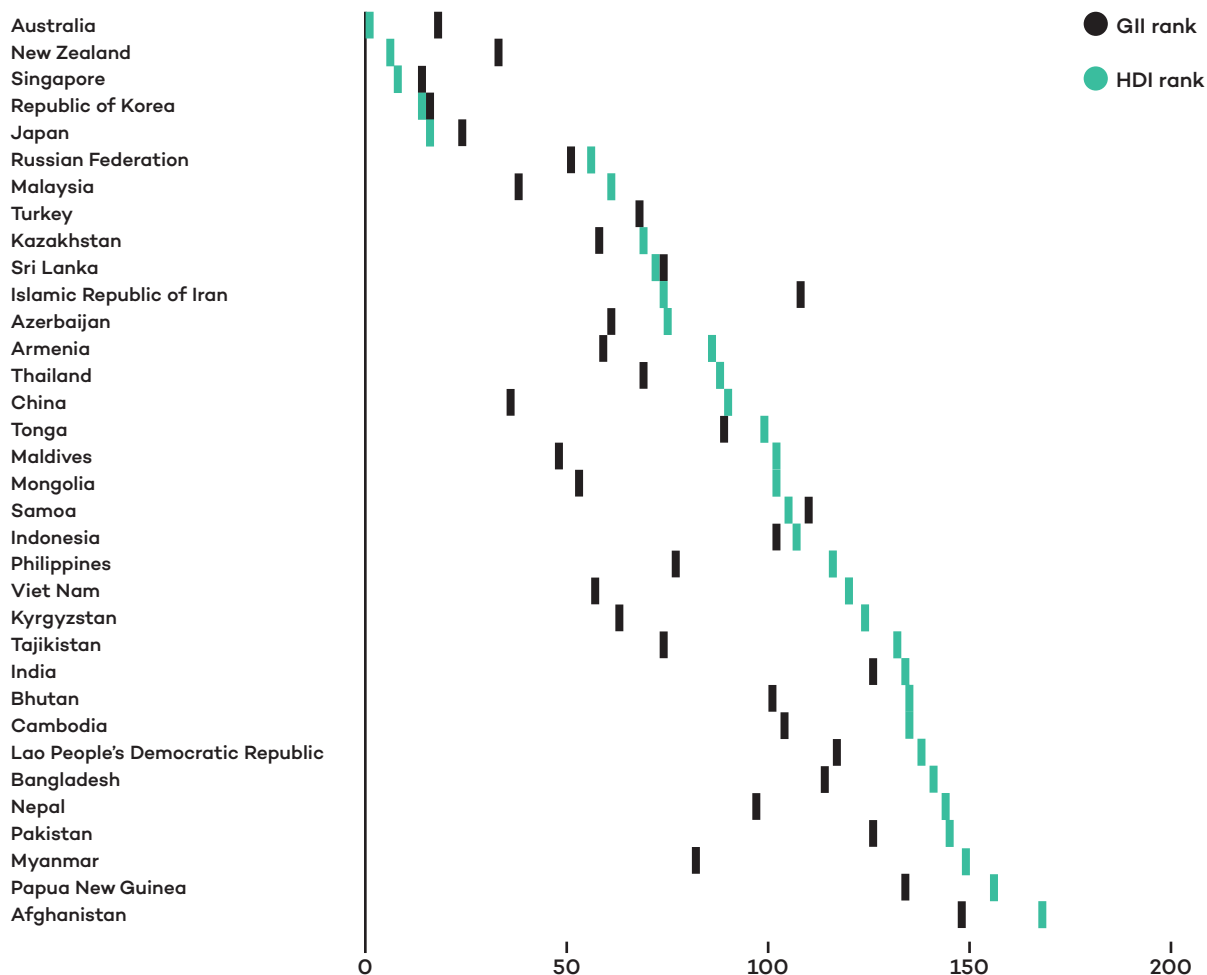
The Beijing+20 respondent countries¹⁴ of Asia and the Pacific identified achievements and challenges in implementation of the Platform for Action across an almost 20-year timeframe. Awareness and understanding of the achievements and challenges in implementation of the Platform for Action are important if gender equality is to be achieved. Gender equality is, in turn, important because it is fundamental to all persons – women, men, girls and boys – fully and freely exercising their fundamental human rights and freedoms, to their living lives with dignity, agency and voice, and for the “development” and preservation of inclusive, equitable, democratic and peaceful societies.

The relationship between gender equality and “development” is reflected in Figure 2, where the 2013 Human Development Index and Gender Inequality Index rankings¹⁵ for countries of Asia and the Pacific are mapped. While noting exceptions, a general trend is evident with a positive correlation between “human development” and gender equality.

14 For ease of reference the word “countries” is employed in this report in lieu of “ESCAP members and associate members”.

15 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data> (extracted 14 October 2014)

FIGURE 2
2013 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX AND GENDER INEQUALITY INDEX RANKINGS FOR COUNTRIES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC.



In addition to a general correlation between advancement towards gender equality and human development, at least according to the Human Development and Gender Inequality Index rankings, significant diversity exists between the countries of Asia and the Pacific in terms of gender equality related “progress”. As one indicator of varied “progress”, the Social Institutions and Gender Index¹⁶ which “captures and quantifies discriminatory social institutions”, ranks selected countries which are not members of the Organization for Cooperation and Development (OECD) on five indices: discriminatory family code, restricted physical integrity, son bias, restricted resources and

entitlements and restricted civil liberties. The 2014 SIGI categorization¹⁷ of the reviewed countries from (ESCAP-defined) Asia, from the global total of 108 countries, are shown in Table 1.

Given the variability that exists between the countries of Asia and the Pacific, when considering the identified achievements and challenges, as summarized in the following sections, it is important to remain cognisant of different “baselines” and of variance in the qualitative nature of the achievements and challenges.

16 <http://genderindex.org/>

17 Definitions of the SIGI 2014 categories are provided on this website - <http://genderindex.org/content/2014-categories>

TABLE 1
2014 SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND
GENDER INDEX CATEGORIZATION
OF COUNTRIES FROM ASIA

Country	SIGI 2014 Category	SIGI 2014 Value
Bangladesh	very high	0.3899
Nepal	high	0.3228
Afghanistan	high	0.3223
Pakistan	high	0.3012
Myanmar	high	0.2935
India	high	0.2650
Timor	high	0.2550
Armenia	high	0.2428
Azerbaijan	high	0.2403
Georgia	medium	0.2034
Sri Lanka	medium	0.1894
Viet Nam	medium	0.1864
Philippines	medium	0.1764
Kyrgyzstan	medium	0.1597
Indonesia	medium	0.1532
Uzbekistan	medium	0.1474
Lao PDR	medium	0.1445
Tajikistan	medium	0.1392
China	medium	0.1310
Kazakhstan	low	0.1196
Bhutan	low	0.1142
Thailand	low	0.1055
Turkey	low	0.1032
Cambodia	low	0.0477
Mongolia	very low	0.0344

2.1 ACHIEVEMENTS

With respect to achievements in implementation of the Platform for Action, countries in Asia and the Pacific identified common successes and documented particular areas in which gains have been made in some of the ESCAP subregions.

Three categories of achievement were identified by countries from all five of the ESCAP subregions: (a) strengthening gender equality in national governments and governance; (b) addressing violence against women and girls, and (c) promoting the leadership and political participation of women.

In terms of institutional frameworks for achieving gender equality, the Beijing+20 respondent countries highlighted (a) the adoption of gender equality-related policies, legislation, action plans and strategies,¹⁸ along with accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; (b) the establishment and/or strengthened status and mandates of national women's machineries;¹⁹ (c) the increase in awareness of and commitment to gender equality across government entities, and (d) the expansion of gender mainstreaming across the government sector, including the introduction of gender-responsive budgeting.

Concerning violence against women and girls,²⁰ the Beijing+20 respondent countries from the five ESCAP subregions highlighted the introduction of legislation; strengthened law enforcement capacity; establishment of government entities tasked to address the elimination of violence against women and girls; prevention programmes; awareness-raising and mobilization of communities; and implementation of targeted campaigns, addressing such issues as human trafficking and sorcery.

18 Information pertaining to public policies, legislation, action plans and strategies is provided in Section 4.1 of this report, as well as throughout the sections of Chapter 3.

19 Information pertaining to the national women's machineries—"institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women"—is provided in Section 3.8 of this report.

20 Information pertaining to violence against women and girls is provided in Section 3.4 of this report.

With respect to the third regionally-shared achievement – being greater political participation and leadership by women²¹ – the Beijing+20 respondent countries reported that women have occupied, and continue to occupy, senior government and non-government positions, from heads of government and Supreme Court judges to serving on national boards, special taskforces and peace negotiating bodies. The Beijing+20 respondent countries also noted the positive impacts of special temporary measures, such as quotas, in increasing the representation of women amongst political party candidates and parliamentarians.

At the subregional levels, 2014 Beijing+20 countries in the Pacific, in East and North-East Asia, in South-East Asia and in South and South-West Asia identified achievements in women's economic empowerment; achievements related to (a) the revision of legislation; (b) the introduction of flexible working arrangements; (c) the delineation of minimum wages, (d) the provision of childcare services, and (e) women's greater access to financial services, including credit.

Successes in the area of education were emphasized by Beijing+20 respondent countries from both South-East Asia and South and South-West Asia, with such observations as increased female literacy levels; improved school performance amongst girls; greater numbers of women continuing to tertiary education; gender parity in primary school enrolments and girls increasingly studying traditionally male-dominated subjects.

For some of the Beijing+20 countries located in the Pacific, in South-East Asia and in South and South-West Asia, achievements in relation to women's and girls' health, and particularly maternal health, were recorded; evidenced by, for example, the reduction in the maternal mortality ratio and the construction of maternity facilities in hospitals.

The women, peace and security agenda, or issues relating to “women and conflict”, were, in turn, highlighted by Beijing+20 respondent countries in the Pacific and in North and Central Asia.

2.2 CHALLENGES

Alongside identified successes in implementation of the Platform for Action, countries across Asia and the Pacific reported challenges to the achievement of gender equality.

As with the delineated achievements, countries from the five ESCAP subregions identified common challenges to realizing the strategic objectives of the Platform for Action, primarily related to institutional frameworks and capacity for achieving gender equality, and the associated issues of implementation and accountability.

In particular, the Beijing+20 respondent countries highlighted institutional-related obstacles pertaining to (a) policy, legislative and implementation “gaps”, (b) opposition to the adoption of gender equality-related policies and legislation, (c) inadequate communication, coordination and capacity impeding the mainstreaming of gender across the government sector, (d) insufficient technical, political and financial resources, especially for the national women's machineries, (e) lack of understanding of, and appreciation for, gender equality amongst politicians, policy-makers and public servants, and (f) the broadening and strengthening of application of gender-responsive budgeting.

The Beijing+20 respondent countries also noted challenges related to (a) the enforcement of existing legislation, (b) the implementation of strategies and action plans, and (c) the monitoring and evaluation of initiatives. Enforcement, implementation and monitoring challenges were, in turn, linked to the absence of, or limited, sex-disaggregated data, gender indicators, gender statistics, official knowledge management systems and processes for the exchange of data and information between government entities. Such limitations are perceived as impediments to economical, efficient, effective and equitable means of achieving, and being accountable for, gender equality.

Related to broad structural challenges, Beijing+20 respondent countries from the Pacific and from

21 Information pertaining to women's political participation and leadership is provided in Section 3.7 of this report.

South and South-West Asia identified a need to address patriarchy and, in particular, the associated discriminatory, prejudicial and confining norms, “mindsets”, attitudes, values, beliefs, perceptions. Implicating culture, religion and tradition, the Beijing+20 respondent countries observed that revision of norms and behaviours in favour of gender equality is a long-term, but critical, endeavour.

Addressing the obstacle of patriarchy is, moreover, connected to tackling multiple and related issues of gender inequality, including in relation to violence against women and girls and to women’s leadership and political participation. While both of these issues were listed under “achievements”, Beijing+20 respondent countries from the Pacific, South-East Asia, South and South-West Asia and North and Central Asia registered both violence against women and girls and women’s leadership and political participation as challenges to the realization of gender equality.

In relation to violence against women and girls, and noting high incidence and prevalence rates, Beijing+20 respondent countries referenced the challenge of realizing the due diligence standard of prevention, protection and prosecution (the “3 Ps”).²² In particular, the respondent countries noted the need for (a) more protective services, including shelters, (b) systematic enforcement of legislation, thereby eradicating a “culture of impunity”, (c) greater consideration to the safety, security and dignity of violence survivors and of judicial officers, (d) revision of court proceedings, including the establishment of specialised courts, (e) investment in legal literacy for women and girls, and (f) comprehensive valid and reliable data. Several of the Beijing+20 respondent countries from South and South-West Asia highlighted the

specific challenge of eradicating child, early and forced marriage.

Women’s leadership and political participation was, in turn, listed as a challenge by ESCAP members and associate members from the three aforementioned ESCAP subregions. The Beijing+20 respondent countries emphasized the under-representation (and in some instances absence) of women in decision-making positions, including national parliaments and subnational governance bodies. Reflections were also made as to women’s and men’s unequal participation in the public arena more broadly.

One area of public engagement is the work place. Countries from the Pacific, South-East Asia and South and South-West Asia subregions enumerated impediments to women’s economic empowerment. Surmounting poverty, addressing legislative “gaps”, eradicating horizontal and vertical occupational segregation, erasing the gender pay gap, increasing women’s labour force participation, realising “balance” between productive and reproductive responsibilities and valuing the unpaid care work done by women are examples of the challenges cited by the Beijing+20 respondent countries. Mention was also made of the negative impacts of the 2008 global financial crisis which, in some countries, was reportedly associated with, for women, job losses, reductions in wages, greater vulnerability in employment and a reduction in public services, with associated increase in demands on the “care economy” (on women’s unpaid domestic labour).

Linked to women’s economic status is their health. Countries from the same three ESCAP subregions identified health issues as a further challenge to achieving gender equality goals. The respondent countries expressed particular concern about (a) maternal morbidity and mortality, (b) high adolescent fertility rates, (c) malnutrition, and (d) the deleterious effects of non-communicable diseases.

Also impacting on women’s health and well-being are both conflict and environmental issues. With respect to conflict, Beijing+20 respondent countries

22 “Prevention, protection and prosecution” (or prevention, protection and access to justice) constitute what is known as the due diligence standard for addressing violence against women as articulated, for example, in the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm) and in the 2006 Commission on Human Rights report The Due Diligence Standard as a Tool for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/Source/PDF_UN_Sp_Rapp_report_due_diligence_standard.pdf

from the Pacific, South-East Asia and South and South-West Asia subregions made reference to the “women, peace and security” agenda, noting that armed conflict, insurgencies, coups, political uncertainty and instability have undermined peace and security of women and girls (and men and boys) and have weakened state accountability for gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Climate change, natural disasters from earthquakes to typhoons, and environmental degradation were, in turn, listed as undermining the (human) security and safety of women and girls. Environmental issues were linked, by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, to reductions in the paid employment of women, to destruction of women’s sources of income generation and to women’s impeded access to natural resources, including water.

One further challenge reported by the Beijing+20 respondent countries concerned equitable consideration and response to the needs and interests of the diversity of women. Disparities were noted, for example, between indigenous and non-indigenous women and between rural and urban women in relation to such issues as poverty, employment, violence and access to services, including health and education services.

With the Beijing+20 respondent countries enumerating a range of challenges, partial implementation of the Platform for Action was recorded, with full realization of all of the strategic objectives yet to be realized.

2.3

SUMMARY

Across the Asia and Pacific region, ESCAP members and associate members recorded gender equality-related achievements pertaining to normative and institutional frameworks, violence against women and girls, and women’s political participation and leadership. For several of the ESCAP subregions, gains were also identified in relation to women’s economic status, education and health, as well as in relation to peace and security.

Notwithstanding the documented “progress” towards gender equality and women’s empowerment, after 20 years of implementation of the Platform for Action, challenges remain; challenges related to (a) adopting and implementing comprehensive policies and legislation, supported by capable, equipped and committed government entities, (b) eliminating the pandemic that is violence against women and girls, (c) strengthening women’s engagement in the public arena, particularly in relation to governance and management, (d) empowering women economically, (e) improving women’s health and well-being, inclusive of preventative measures, (f) addressing the impacts of environmental issues, and (g) executing the women, peace and security agenda.

Reinforcement of achievements made and action on the identified challenges may reinforce the observed correlation between gender equality and human development.

Chapter 3

The 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action

The Platform for Action constitutes a global framework for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment across 12 critical areas of concern, with articulation of strategic objectives and actions, along with implementation “arrangements”.

This chapter provides an overview of the 2014 Beijing+20 respondent countries reported progress in implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern: poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights, media, environment and the girl child.

3.1

CRITICAL AREA OF CONCERN A:

Women and poverty

“Transformations in the world economy are profoundly changing the parameters of social development in all countries. One significant trend has been the increased poverty of women...”

Platform for Action, Critical Area A, paragraph 47

In relation to the critical area of concern A, “Women and Poverty”, this section of the report focuses on poverty data pertaining to women and girls and on macroeconomic policies and measures that address the needs and interests of women and girls living in poverty.²³

Poverty

In order to address the needs of women and girls living in poverty – whatever the definition of “poverty” – accurate and reliable data are essential. The Beijing+20 regional survey responses and national review reports revealed a dearth of sex-disaggregated poverty data. The absence of such data was attributed to information on poverty being collected at the household, not at the individual level, and to the failure to disaggregate data by sex.

Notwithstanding the few countries in the Asia-Pacific region for which the international poverty line of US\$ 1.25 per day is not deemed to be applicable, of the 39 countries that submitted the 2014 Beijing+20 regional survey, only five provided information pertaining to female populations living below this measure of poverty; with figures ranging from 0.4 to 43.3 per cent.

A greater number of countries – 20 – provided information on the percentage of the female population living below national poverty lines. Across the Asia-Pacific region, the reported proportion of

23 The discussion on poverty does not include descriptions of the circumstances and experiences of women and girls who live in (multidimensional) poverty, as well as the impacts of poverty on their development, opportunities and ability to exercise their fundamental human rights (nor the consequences for communities and countries).

female populations, at the national level, living in poverty ranged from a low of 1.7 per cent (Macao, China, 2012) and a high of 70 per cent (Timor-Leste, 2013). Such regional variability in poverty amongst women and girls is shown, at the subregional level in Figure 3.

While female poverty data were not provided by all countries, thereby circumscribing extrapolation across the ESCAP region, and across subregions, the figures shown in Figure 3 indicate that poverty amongst women and girls remains a critical area for action.

In their observations of poverty amongst women and girls, the 2014 Beijing+20 respondent countries noted the particular vulnerability of female-headed households and of single parent households, of which the majority are women.²⁴

“The number of welfare recipients comprising female heads of households who are divorced, widowed or left to fend for themselves when their husbands are incarcerated, showed an increasing trend over recent years. The effect of poverty have impacted women more than men, especially when these women are in the lower income group and have low educational attainment which limits their opportunities for securing greater financial resources to support themselves and their dependents.”

Brunei Darussalam, Beijing+20 national review report, p. 7

“Although the poverty rate is lower among female household heads than it is among male household heads, comparing with the period from 2002 to 2012, the level of poverty reduction was higher for male household heads than for female ones.”

Viet Nam, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 15

“Financial resources are often limited in these [female-headed] households.”

Kyrgyzstan, Beijing+20 national review report, p. 8

“Sole parent households are over-represented in poverty-related statistics and the majority of sole parents in New Zealand are mothers.”

New Zealand, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 17

The respondent countries further reported that greater proportions of women, than of men, fall within low income brackets or within “disadvantaged populations”. Labour force participation rates, access to income in old age, and the physical locations of women (with both urbanization and geographical remoteness linked to poverty) were also cited as factors contributing to poverty amongst female populations.

“The disadvantaged position of women in rural and remote areas who experience difficulties in access to knowledge, resources, information and decision making in general constrains them to remain in poverty.”

Bangladesh, Beijing+20 national review report, p. 17

“Since 2010, “an increase in poverty among older women is observed.”

Kyrgyzstan, Beijing+20 national review report, p. 10

“One of the reasons behind women’s poverty is their lower participation in labor force.”

Turkey, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report

Poverty amongst women and girls was not considered a critical “problem” by all reporting countries in Asia and the Pacific. For example, in its 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, the Islamic Republic of Iran stated that the “feminization of poverty is less of a problem [because] the housing, food, clothing, and health expenditures of the majority of Iranian women are usually paid by their husbands, except some limited groups of women who have lost their husbands for various reasons”.

24 The one exception was the Philippines, which reported higher average annual incomes for female-headed households, than for male-headed households (257,000, compared with 227,000, Philippine pesos), for 2012.

FIGURE 3
REPORTED RANGE OF PROPORTION OF FEMALE POPULATIONS LIVING BELOW NATIONAL POVERTY LINES, BY ESCAP SUBREGION



NOTE TO FIGURE 3: Of the 19 countries that provided poverty data for their national female populations, four countries were from the Pacific (Kiribati, Nauru, Palau and Tuvalu, with data from 2005 to 2012); four were from South-East Asia (Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Timor-Leste, with data from 2009 to 2012); four were from East and North-East Asia (China, Hong Kong, China, Macao, China and Mongolia, with data from 2012 to 2013); four countries were from North and Central Asia (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and the Russian Federation, with data from 2012 to 2014) and three countries were from South and South-West Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Turkey, with data from 2009 to 2013).

National macroeconomic policies and measures that address the needs of women and girls living in poverty

Gender-responsive macroeconomic policies are one means of addressing poverty amongst women and girls (and men and boys). As shown in Figure 4, 65.8 per cent (25 of 38) of the Beijing+20 respondent countries reported the existence of some modality of national macroeconomic policies that specifically address the needs of women and girls living in poverty. At the subregional level, the existence of national macroeconomic policies that address the needs of women and girls in poverty are more common in the Pacific (80.0 per cent) and in South-East Asia (80.0 per cent), than they are in North and Central Asia (50.0 per cent) and in East and North East Asia (40.0 per cent), with South and South-West Asia (62.5 per cent) occupying the middle position.²⁵

Of the Beijing+20 respondent countries that reported the existence of gender-responsive national macroeconomic policies, 54.1 per cent (20 of 37 countries) also reported the existence of a strategy and/or action plan for the implementation of their policies. All (five) reporting countries of East and North-East Asia noted the existence of such strategies and action plans, compared with approximately 50 per cent of reporting countries in the Pacific, in North and Central Asia and in South and South-West Asia.²⁶ Only one of four survey respondent countries for South-East Asia reported strategies and/or action plans for implementing national gender-responsive macroeconomic policies.

Similar variability applies to commencement of implementation of the national gender-responsive macroeconomic policies across Asia and the Pacific.

25 The number of countries that reported the existence of national macroeconomic policies that specifically address the needs of women and girls living in poverty, by subregion, were 12 (of 15) in the Pacific; four (of 5) in South-East Asia; two (of 5) in East and North East Asia; three of (6) in North and Central Asia, and five (of 8) in South and South-West Asia.

26 Seven of 15 countries in the Pacific (46.7 per cent), two of four countries in North and North East Asia (50.0 per cent), and four of eight countries in South and South-West Asia (50.0 per cent)

Nine countries reported policy implementation commencing in the 1970s, two in the 1980s, 12 in the 1990s, 19 in the 2000s and seven since 2010. The implementation of gender-responsive macroeconomic policies appears to have accelerated following the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995.

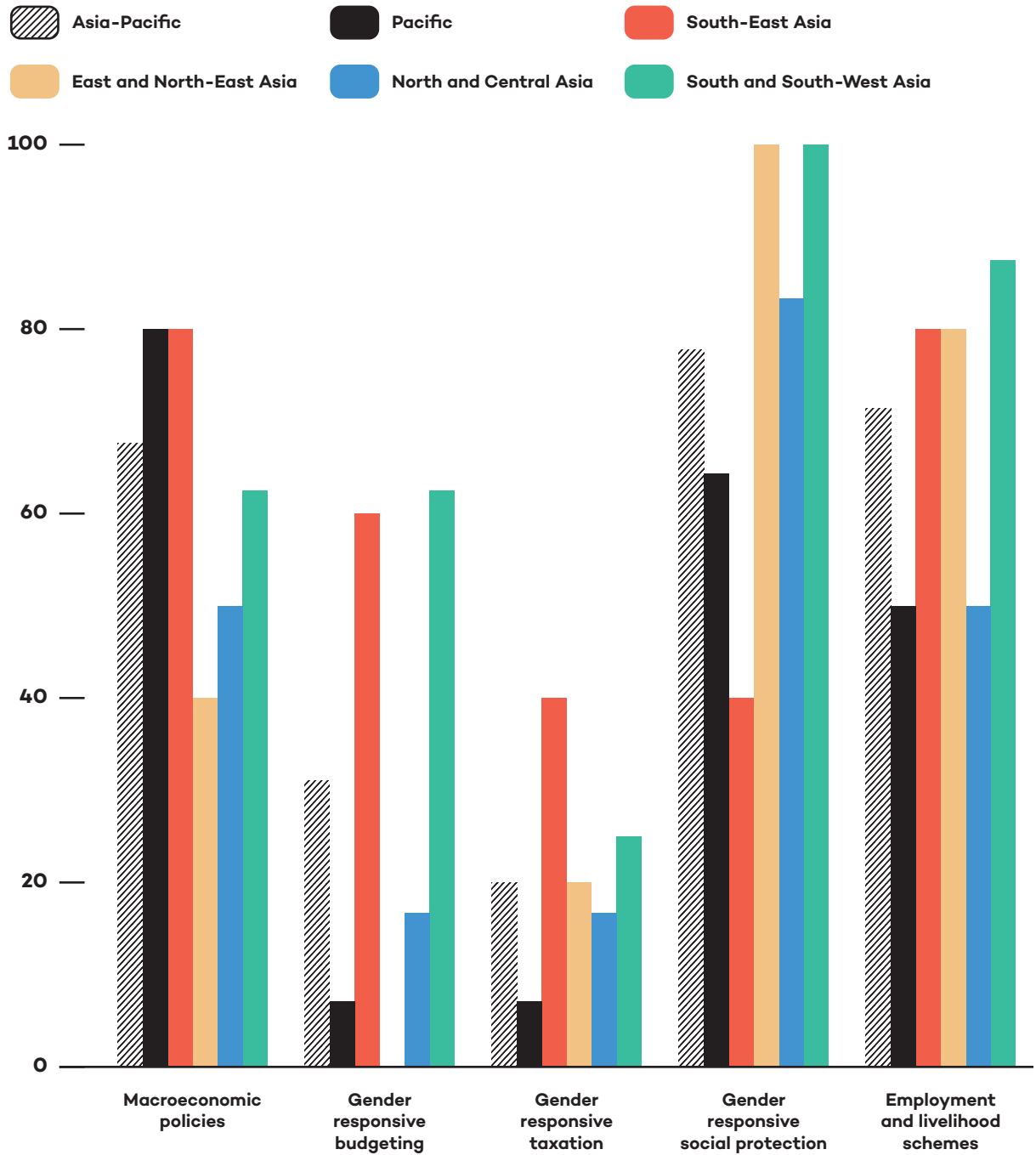
Across Asia and the Pacific, the government entities responsible for the implementation of macroeconomic policies and programmes that address the needs of women and girls living in poverty are diverse: ministries, departments, commissions and bureaus of social affairs, social development, civil affairs, community development, welfare, health, family, education, national planning, interior affairs, labour and employment, trade and industry, finance, economic affairs, rural development, agriculture and human resources, as well as the national women's machineries.

In terms of implementation, and as reported by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, gender-responsive social protection emerged as the most common fiscal measure (28 of 36 countries; 77.8 per cent), followed by employment and livelihood schemes (25 of 35 countries; 71.4 per cent), gender-responsive budgeting (11 of 26 countries; 31.0 per cent)²⁷ and then gender-responsive taxation (7 of 35 countries; 20.0 per cent). As shown in Figure 4, this regional pattern altered at the subregional level. A greater number of countries from South-East Asia reported the existence of employment and livelihood schemes (4 of 5 countries), than gender-responsive social protection measures (2 of 5 countries). In East and North East Asia, none of the reporting countries noted the existence of gender-responsive budgeting. In North and Central Asia, one of six reporting countries reported both gender-responsive budgeting and gender-responsive taxation.

In reporting gender-responsive social protection measures, countries in Asia and the Pacific variably noted the existence of income support schemes,

27 Some form of gender-responsive budgeting has been documented in countries that did not submit the Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey and/or national review reports, including Australia, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan.

FIGURE 4
PERCENTAGE OF 2014 BEIJING+20 RESPONDENT COUNTRIES THAT REPORTED NATIONAL MACROECONOMIC POLICIES AND MEASURES THAT ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS LIVING IN POVERTY, BY ESCAP SUBREGION



such as unemployment benefits, disability support benefits, age pensions, superannuation and conditional cash transfers, along with paid parental leave, child support allowances and maternal health schemes.

Employment and livelihood schemes similarly took multiple forms: job creation programmes, employment assistance, provision of micro-finance and business development programmes. Amongst the reporting countries, targeted assistance was noted, such as for women in rural areas, female-headed households and women engaged in the informal economy. The Beijing+20 respondent countries also noted that not all the livelihood and employment schemes were gender-targeted and, as concluded by the Philippines, a corresponding “need for a deeper assessment of their gender-responsiveness to allow for more purposive targeting and planning”.²⁸

As reported by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, gender-responsive budgeting manifested as, inter alia, gender analysis of national and local state budgets; gender budget statements, such as in India; gender audits; and stipulation of a budgetary percentage to gender-related programmes, such as the allocation of five per cent of government entity budgets to “gender and development” in the Philippines and one per cent of government entity budgets to “women, family and youth” in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Introduction of gender-responsive budgeting had been associated with implementation aids, in the form of toolkits and training for public servants and civil society, as well as with challenges related to, amongst other issues, coordination, capacity, and compliance.

Of the few countries that reported gender-responsive taxation, family tax benefits and the exemption of single mothers from paying income tax were noted.

Summary

The information provided by the 2014 Beijing+20 respondent countries, through both the Beijing+20 regional survey and the national review reports, indicates that poverty remains a critical area of concern in relation to the realization of gender equality and women’s empowerment, while also highlighting the need to address an apparent dearth of sex-disaggregated poverty data.

Countries in Asia and the Pacific reported the existence of macroeconomic policies and measures that address the needs of women and girls in poverty; policies and measures that are neither universal nor systematically gender-responsive across the region and within subregions.

There is an apparent need for further and enhanced investment in gender-responsive macroeconomic, fiscal and monetary policies, inclusive of taxation and budgeting, necessitating education and capacity-building of policy-makers and public servants.

28 Philippines, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 16.

Education and training of women

“Education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace.”

**Platform for Action, Critical Area B,
paragraph 69**

The Platform for Action critical area of concern B, “Education and Training for Women”, addresses equal access to education, to vocational training, to science and technology and to continuing education; the eradication of illiteracy; the institutionalization of non-discriminatory education and training; and the promotion of life-long education and training. This Section of the report focuses on women’s and girls’ (a) access to education, (b) participation and retention of women in education, and (c) literacy.²⁹

Equal access to education

With the exceptions of Kiribati and Tonga, all of the Beijing+20 respondent countries reported the existence of national policies that mandate equal access of women and men, girls and boys to education; examples include the 2010 National Education Policy of Bangladesh,³⁰ the 1992 revised National Policy on Education of India,³¹ the 1995 State Policy on Education of Mongolia, the New Zealand Education Act of 1989³² and the 2009 Gender Equity in Education Policy of Papua New

29 With the focus on access, participation, retention and literacy, this section of the report does not provide an overview of women’s and girls’ experiences of education, the quality of education to which they have access, and neither the sociocultural nor structural barriers encountered when seeking formal education and/or training. Additionally, while the existence of education and training related-policies, legislation, action plans and strategies is documented, analysis of the content of the documents is not provided.

30 http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Bangladesh/Bangladesh_National_Education_Policy_2010.pdf

31 www.ncert.nic.in/oth_anoun/npe86.pdf

32 www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0080/latest/DLM175959.html

Guinea.³³ Legislative and constitutional provisions for the equal access of women and men, girls and boys, to education were also noted by respondent countries, such as Article 44 of the Constitution of Afghanistan (2004) that requires that “[t]he state shall devise and implement effective programs to create and foster balanced education for women”;³⁴ Article 42 of the Constitution of Azerbaijan,³⁵ wherein “[e]very citizen has the right for education”; the Compulsory Education Act (2000) of Singapore which requires that “a child of compulsory school age... shall attend regularly as a pupil at a national primary school”,³⁶ and the Basic Law on National Education of the Republic of Turkey. In the Solomon Islands, the absence of reference to equal access to education in the Education Act of 1978 is reportedly compensated for by the Ministry of Education’s Gender Equity Policy.³⁷

Beijing+20 respondent countries – with the exception of Kiribati, Tonga and French Polynesia – reported that implementation of national policies, legislation and constitutional provisions is enabled through education strategies and action plans. Examples of such strategies and action plans are the Bangladesh Primary Education Development Programme III 2011–2016; the National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020) in China;³⁸ the Education Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012–2020;³⁹ the Education Master Plan 2006–2016 of the Republic of Palau;⁴⁰ the National Education Strategy Plan 2011–2030 for

Timor-Leste,⁴¹ and the Samoa Education Sector Plan 2013–2018.⁴²

In terms of coverage, and with a few exceptions, the Beijing+20 respondent countries reported that their national policies mandated equal access of women and men, girls and boys, to (a) primary education, (b) secondary education, (c) tertiary education, (d) vocational training, (e) education and training in science, mathematics, engineering and technology, and (f) non-formal education.

The exceptions were fivefold: Australia in relation to equal access to (a) vocational training, (b) education and training in science, mathematics, engineering and technology, and (c) non-formal education; the Federated States of Micronesia where national policy is inclusive of equal access to primary and secondary education; Nepal, with regard to national policy not encompassing non-formal education; Thailand in terms of non-specification of equal access to tertiary education, vocational training and education and training in science, mathematics, engineering and technology; and Vanuatu with respect to equal access to secondary education, tertiary education, and education and training in science, mathematics, engineering and technology.

In relation to access to education, the Beijing+20 respondent countries referenced free and compulsory education; commonly of 12 years’ duration. Access to vocational training is promoted through such measures as the construction and operation of centres for women. In the Philippines, for example, the Technical Education and Skills Development Agency Women’s Centre provides women with the opportunity to undertake training in the traditionally male domains of welding, consumer electronics servicing and automotive servicing, while in the Islamic Republic of Iran fee-free vocational training is offered to rural women in such fields as sewing, handicrafts, agriculture and information technology. There are, in turn, programmes targeted at non-formal education in

33 http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Papua%20New%20Guinea/Papua_New_Guinea_gender_equity_guidelines.pdf

34 www.afghanembassy.com.pl/afg/images/pliki/TheConstitution.pdf

35 <http://en.president.az/azerbajjan/constitution/>

36 <http://statutes.agc.gov.sg/aol/search/display/view.w3p;page=0;query=DocId%3A%2245ae5cd5-4eb4-41fd-a649-69cb72d46f55%22%20Status%3Ainforce%20Depth%3A0;rec=0>

37 www.paclii.org/sb/legis/consol_act/ea104/

38 www.aei.gov.au/news/newsarchive/2010/documents/china_education_reform_pdf.pdf

39 www.globalpartnership.org/content/education-development-strategy-kyrgyz-republic-2012-2020

40 www.palaumoe.net/phs/documents/Palau%20Education%20Master%20Plan%202006-2016.pdf

41 www.globalpartnership.org/content/timor-leste-national-education-strategic-plan-2011-2030

42 http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Samoa/Samoa_Education_Sector_Plan_2013-2018.pdf

some of the reporting countries, as undertaken, for example, in Nepal with government provision of basic literacy and income generation skills training through community learning centres.

Through various means and modalities, implementation of education policies, legislation, action plans and programmes are monitored in countries across Asia and the Pacific. Whether it is the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, the Central Council for Education in Japan, school boards in New Zealand, education monitoring outreach teams in the Federated States of Micronesia, the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education Gender Focal Point or the sub-national committees in Bangladesh, governments undertake annual collection of, often sex-disaggregated, educational data. Gathered data and information are contained in education management information systems and reflected in annual reports. Yet, as is evident from accessible education-related statistics, current and sex-disaggregated data are not readily available for all countries in Asia and the Pacific.

Participation and retention of women and girls in education

Equitable participation of girls and boys in primary and secondary education is suggested by net enrolment and attendance data.⁴³

Primary School

As shown in Figure 5, gender parity is evident in the net primary school enrolment rates for girls and boys (with the exception of one outlying country in South and South-West Asia).

43 Education data reported in this section of the report were obtained from (a) the Beijing+20 national review reports submitted by members and associate members to ESCAP, (b) the UNESCO database - www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/default.aspx, and (c) the UNICEF database - <http://data.unicef.org/education/overview>, with data extracted from the two web-based databases on 31 August 2014. The statistics are for the most recent year for which data are available, which is primarily between the years 2010 and 2012, but also date as early as 2002 in a minority of instances.

Of the 39 ESCAP members and associate members for which data could be obtained, 29 reported female primary school net enrolment rates of 90 per cent or higher, and a further eight countries of enrolment rates between 80 and 90 per cent. The two outlying countries, for which data are available, are Pakistan at 65 per cent female primary school net enrolment (compared with 79.0 per cent for males) and Nauru, at 76.8 per cent female primary school net enrolment (compared to 74.6 per cent for males).

Relative gender parity at the primary school level is also evident in net attendance figures, as reflected in Figure 6. Of the 34 ESCAP members and associate members for which data are available, 59 per cent (20) reported female primary school attendance in the ninetieth percentile, 27 per cent (9) in the eightieth percentile, 6 per cent (2) in both the seventieth and sixtieth percentiles, and three per cent (1) in the fortieth percentile.

Gender parity in net primary school attendance⁴⁴ is not evident in six of the 34 countries for which data are available, for which attendance is greater for girls in three of the countries (Bangladesh, Nauru and the Solomon Islands)⁴⁵ and greater for boys in three of the countries (Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan).⁴⁶

Secondary School

Gender parity in net enrolment rates is slightly less common at the secondary school level, than at the primary school level, across Asia and the Pacific. Sixteen⁴⁷ of the 38 ESCAP members and associate members, for which data could be obtained, have

44 Relative gender disparity is taken to exist where the difference in female and male net attendance rates is equal or less than four per cent.

45 The primary school net attendance rates for females and males are, respectively, 81.2 per cent and 77.2 per cent for Bangladesh, 93.5 per cent and 83.3 per cent for Nauru and 68.7 per cent and 62.5 per cent for the Solomon Islands.

46 The primary school net attendance rates for females and males are, respectively, 46.4 per cent and 62.9 per cent for Afghanistan, 91.4 per cent and 96.2 per cent for Nepal, and 62.3 per cent and 70 per cent for Pakistan.

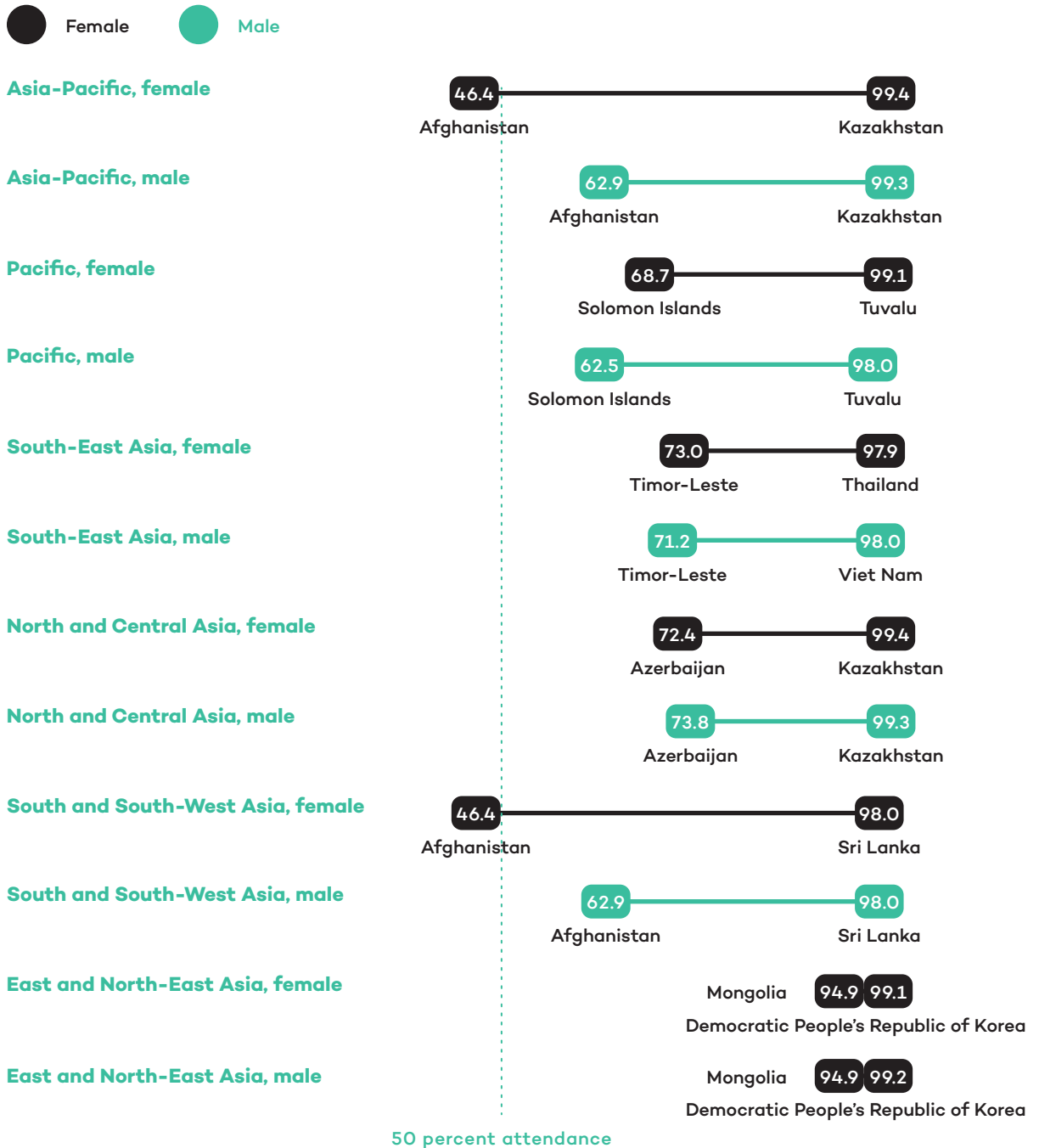
47 The 17 member States are Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Georgia, Kiribati, Malaysia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

FIGURE 5
RANGE OF FEMALE AND MALE PRIMARY SCHOOL NET ENROLMENT RATES (%), BY ESCAP SUBREGION



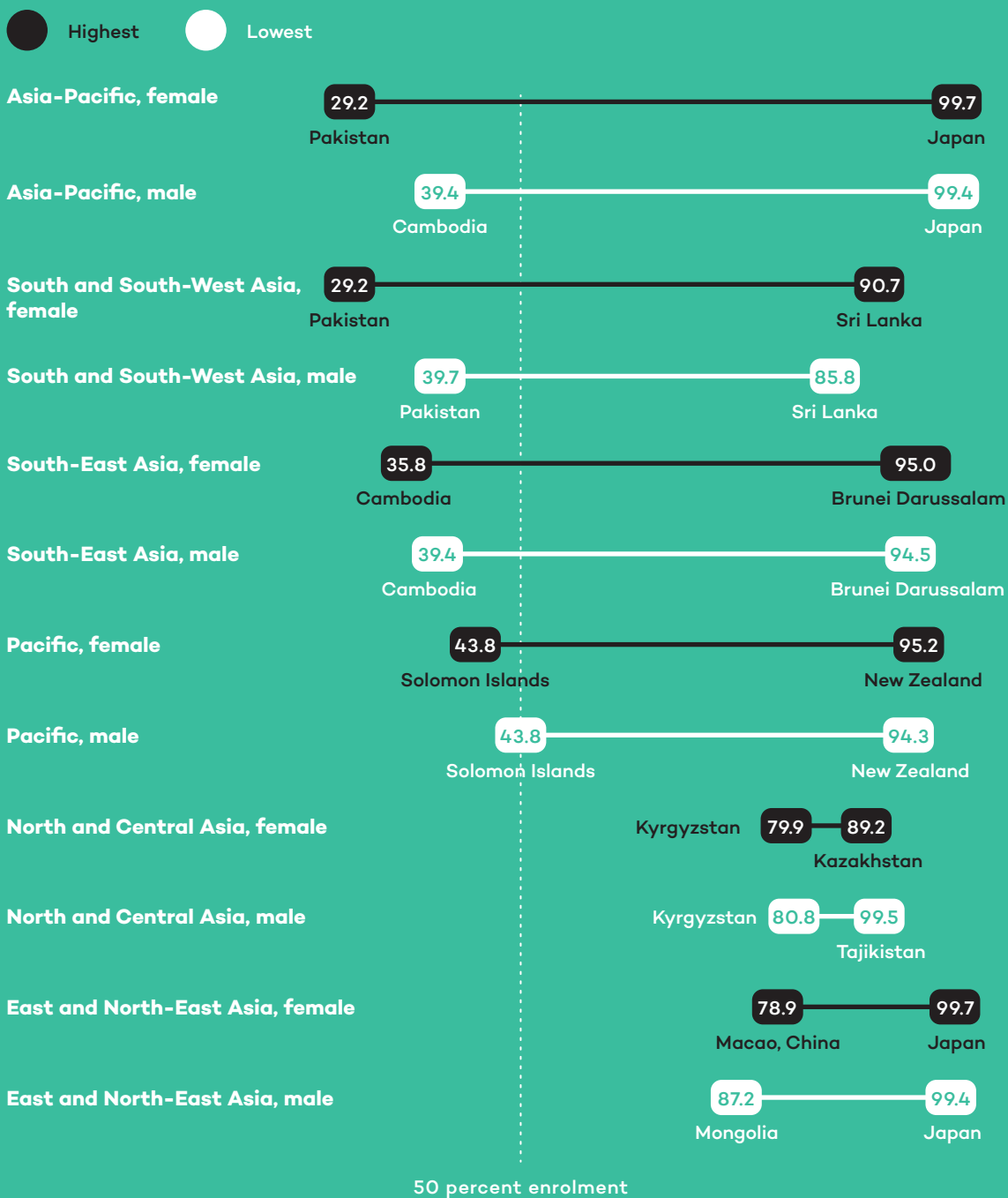
NOTE TO FIGURE 5: Net primary school enrolment rates were obtained for ten of the 21 Pacific ESCAP members and associate members, eight of the eleven South-East Asia member States, eight of the nine North and Central Asia members and associate members, ten of the ten South and South-West Asia member States and five of the seven East and North East Asia member States.

FIGURE 6
RANGE OF FEMALE AND MALE PRIMARY SCHOOL NET ATTENDANCE RATES, BY ESCAP SUBREGION



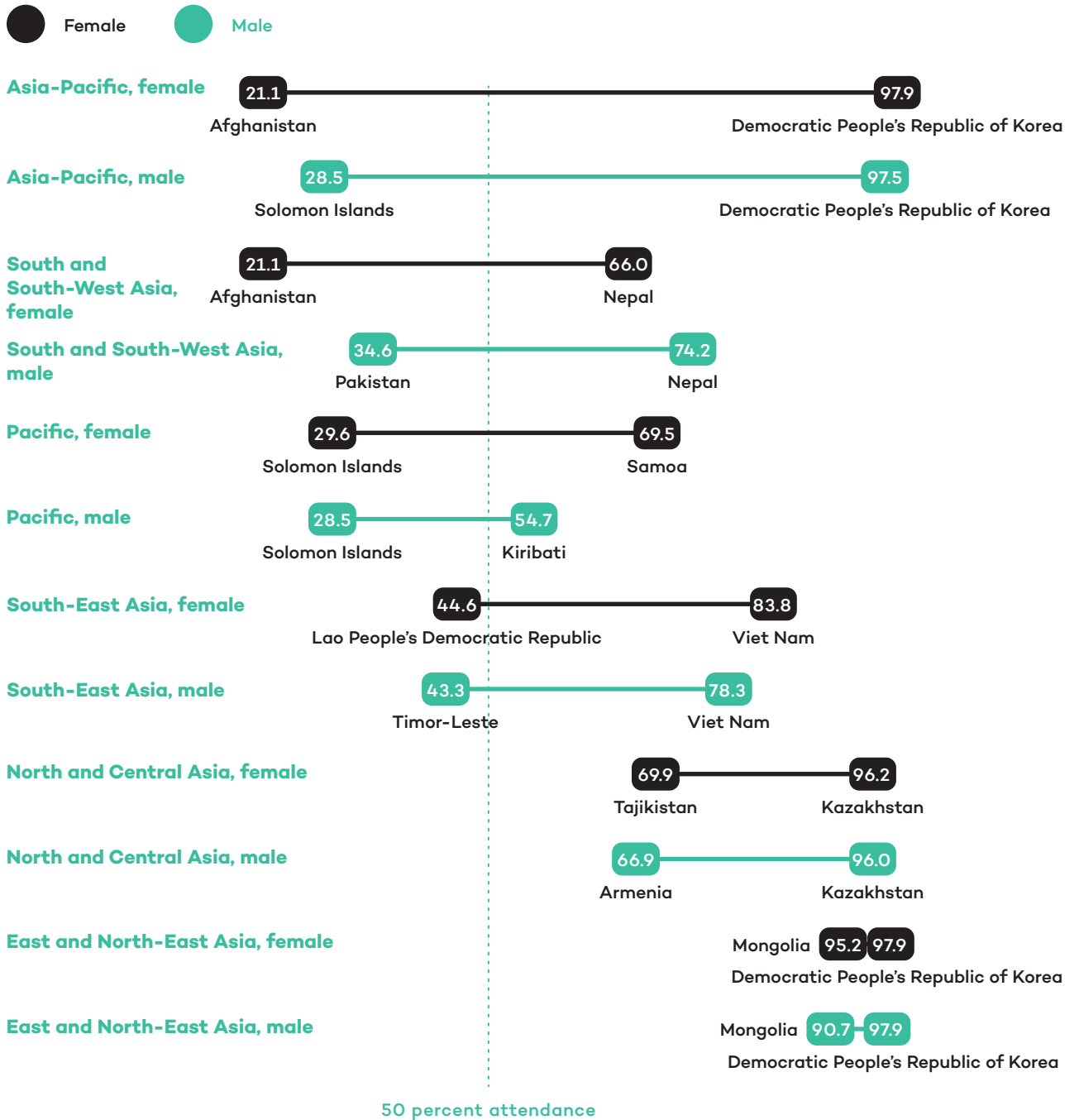
NOTE TO FIGURE 6: Net primary school attendance rates were obtained for five of the 21 Pacific ESCAP members and associate members, eight of the eleven South-East Asia member States, eight of the nine North and Central Asia member States, ten of the ten South and South-West Asia member States and two of the seven East and North East Asia members and associate members.

FIGURE 7
RANGE OF FEMALE AND MALE SECONDARY SCHOOL NET ENROLMENT
RATES (%), BY ESCAP SUBREGION



NOTE TO FIGURE 7: Net secondary school enrolment rates were obtained for six of the 21 Pacific ESCAP members and associate members, six of the eleven South-East Asia member States, eight of the nine North and Central Asia member States, eight of the ten South and South-West Asia member States and two of the seven East and North East Asia members and associate members.

FIGURE 8
RANGE OF FEMALE AND MALE SECONDARY SCHOOL NET ATTENDANCE RATES (%), BY ESCAP SUBREGION



NOTE TO FIGURE 8: Net secondary school attendance rates were obtained for 11 of the 21 Pacific ESCAP members and associate members, eight of the eleven South-East Asia member States, six of the nine North and Central Asia member States, seven of the ten South and South-West Asia member States and five of the seven East and North East Asia members and associate members.

differences in female and male secondary school net enrolment rates greater than four per cent. In 14 of those 16 members and associate members, the secondary school net enrolment rate for females is greater than that for males.⁴⁸ Additionally, less than 50 per cent of girls (and boys), of applicable age, in some countries in three of the five ESCAP subregions are enrolled in secondary school. The range of female and male secondary school enrolment rates, by subregion, is shown in Figure 7.

Similarly to net secondary school enrolment rates, and as can be seen in Figure 8, gender parity exists for slightly less than half of the countries for which data are available (15 of 32 ESCAP members and associate members). In 11 of the 17 members and associate members⁴⁹ for which gender parity does not exist, the net secondary school attendance rate is higher for girls, than it is for boys.⁵⁰

Tertiary (higher) education

The decline in gender parity in enrolment ratios, from the primary to secondary school levels, continues to tertiary education. The gender parity indices⁵¹ for tertiary education enrolments for countries in the Asia-Pacific region, as depicted in Figure 9, reveal that more women than men are enrolled in tertiary education institutions in some countries, while in other countries the enrolment rates are higher for men than for women.

48 The two ESCAP member States for which the male secondary school net enrolment rate is greater than the female secondary school net enrolment rate are Pakistan and Tajikistan.

49 Of the 17 ESCAP members and associate members for which gender parity does not exist in net secondary school attendance rates, four are from the Pacific, three from South-East Asia, one from East and North-East Asia, seven from South and South-West Asia and two from North and Central Asia.

50 The six ESCAP member States for which the net secondary school attendance rate is higher for boys than for girls are Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkey.

51 For the gender parity index, a value of one is indicative of gender parity in enrolment rates, with values greater than one indicating higher enrolment rates for women than for men and values less than one indicating higher enrolment rates for men than for women.

Promoting the participation and retention of women and girls in education

A range of programmes translate policies, legislation and strategies into practical measures that foster the participation and retention of women and girls in education. Of the (39) Beijing+20 respondent countries, all, with the exception of four countries from the Pacific and one country from East and North-East Asia, reported the existence of such national programmes. Amongst the 34 respondent countries with programmes targeting the participation and retention of women and girls in education, 30 (88.2 per cent) have programmes related to primary and secondary education;⁵² 28 (82.4 per cent) have programmes addressing equal opportunities for, and participation of, women in educational administration, policy-making and decision-making;⁵³ 31 (91.2 per cent) have programmes promoting access of women and girls with disabilities to education;⁵⁴ and 23 (67.7 per cent) have programmes promoting access to education for pregnant adolescents and young mothers.

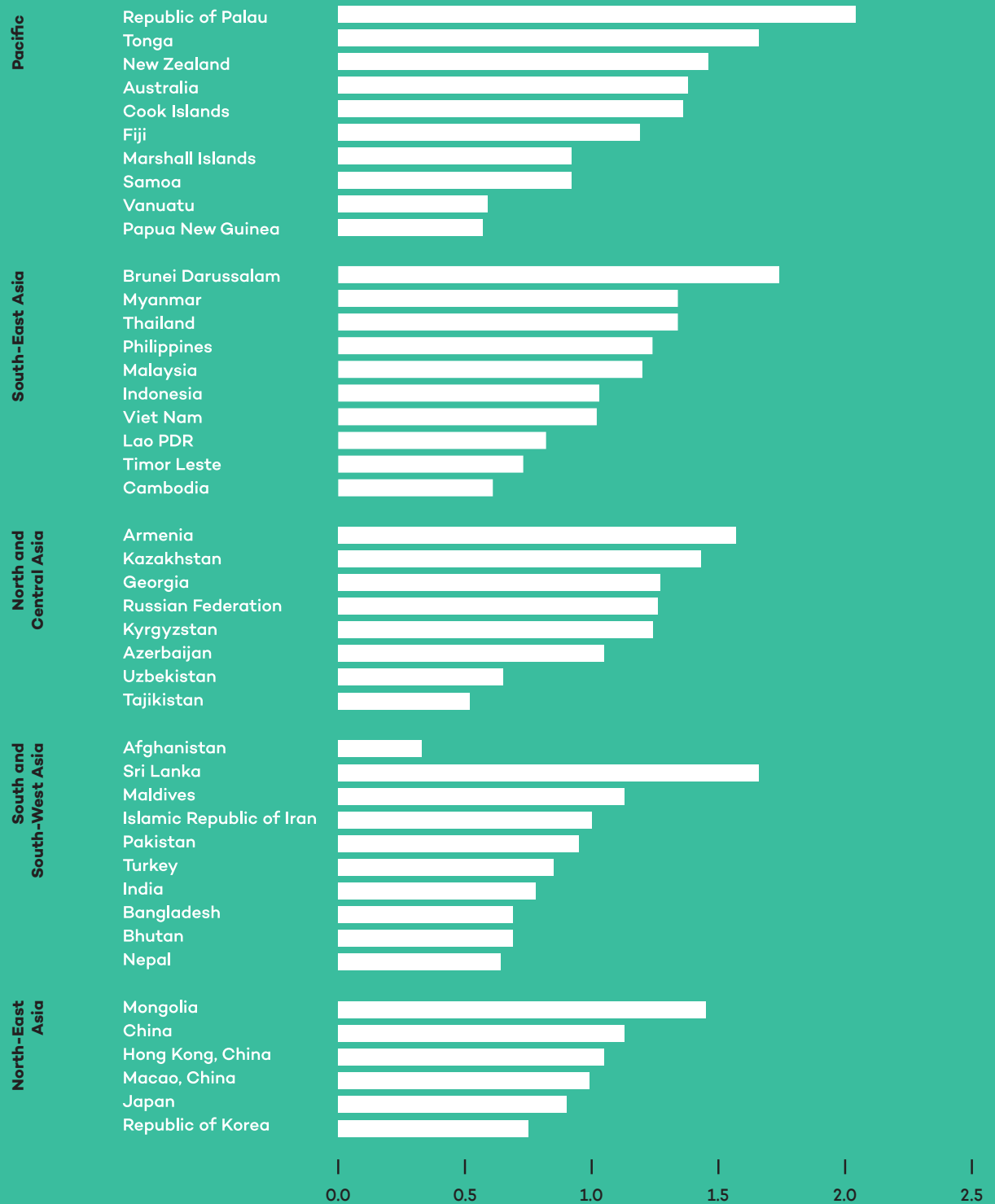
The programmes employed by countries in Asia and the Pacific to support the participation of women and girls in education are varied: financial penalties for parents who fail to ensure the attendance of their children at school, such as exists in Nauru and New Zealand; financial incentives, including conditional cash transfers, scholarships and provision of school supplies (e.g. text books), as employed in Nepal and Turkey; and investment in school infrastructure, inclusive of potable water and toilet facilities, like in Bangladesh and India. Programmes that target particular groups of women and girls, like young mothers, provide such services as childcare support and counselling, as occurs in the Republic of Palau

52 The four respondent countries that do not have programmes focussing on the retention of girls in primary and secondary education are from the Pacific, and related to the existence of compulsory education at these levels.

53 The six respondent countries that do not have programmes focussing on equal opportunities for, and participation of, women in educational administration, policy-making and decision-making are divided between the Pacific (4), South-East Asia (1) and East and North-East Asia (1).

54 Of the three respondent countries that do not have programmes targeting access of women and girls with disabilities to education, two are from the Pacific and one from East and North-East Asia.

FIGURE 9
GENDER PARITY INDEX FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION ENROLMENT,
BY ESCAP SUBREGION



NOTE TO FIGURE 9: Gender parity index ratings for tertiary education enrolment were obtained for 44 countries in the ESCAP region.

and the Russian Federation. For women and girls with disabilities, “inclusive education” measures have been adopted in some countries in Asia and the Pacific, enabling physical and pedagogical access to learning.

Literacy

Data⁵⁵ reveal similar literacy rates for female and male national populations aged 15 years and older in countries across Asia and the Pacific, as indicated in Figure 10. For 38 of 53 ESCAP member and associate members (71.7 per cent), the female literacy rates are greater than 90 per cent, with 39 of 53 member and associate members having male literacy rates also greater than 90 per cent.

For four ESCAP members and associate members (all from the South and South-West Asia subregion), less than half of the female population aged 15 years and older are literate, whereas only one ESCAP member has a male literacy rate of less than 50 per cent. The lower rates of female literacy evident in Figure 9 for South and South-West Asia are reflected in observations of ESCAP members in their Beijing+20 regional reports, such that by Afghanistan which stated that “in Afghanistan most women are illiterate or have a low level of literacy”.

Many of the reporting countries (24 of 39) described national programmes aimed at the eradication of illiteracy – such as in Australia, China, Hong Kong (China), India, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Republic of Palau, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and Turkey – some of which have broad coverage and others targeted at particular groups of women and girls, like those in rural and remote locations and older women. Only four of the reporting countries (all from the Pacific) stated that there are no policies, laws, strategies or programmes for promoting the literacy of women and girls.

55 Female and male literacy rates were obtained for female and male populations aged 15 years and older for all ESCAP member and associate members, except the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue and Tuvalu.

Issues and challenges

Countries in Asia and the Pacific described a range of issues and challenges that they are addressing, and/r which need addressing, in advancing the educational attainment of women and girls.

One reported challenge is the full and effective implementation of policies and legislation asserting the equal rights of women and girls, men and boys, to education, at all levels and in all areas. Effective programme delivery is linked, in part, to insufficient sex-disaggregated educational data. These issues were noted by, for example, Timor-Leste and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

“As in many policy areas, implementation of gender mainstreaming in education is proving challenging in practice.”

Timor-Leste, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey

There is a “lack of access to the precise statistics on those who need education”.

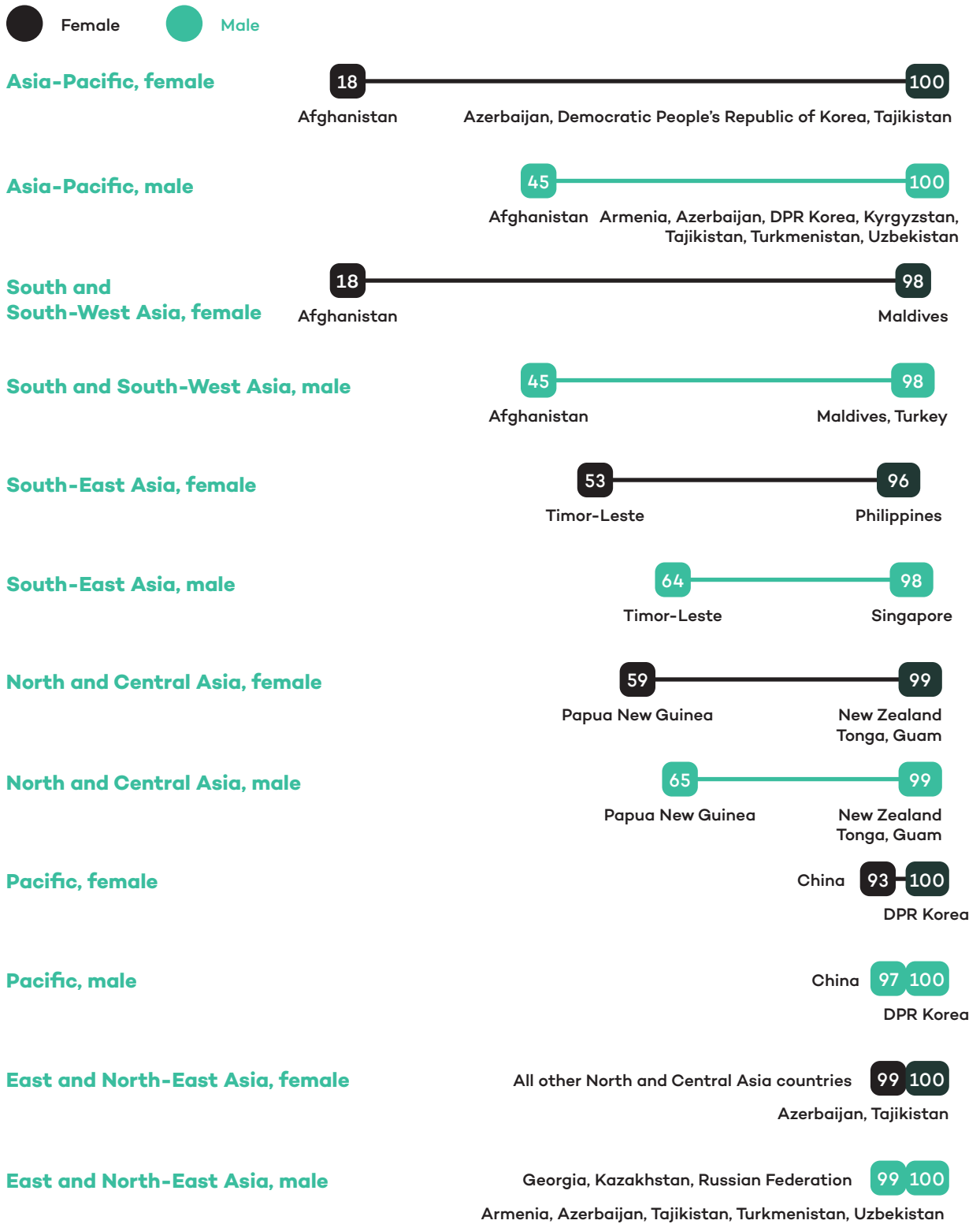
Islamic Republic of Iran, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 19

Observations were also made by countries in Asia and the Pacific as to the quality of education undertaken by women and girls. A lack of trained teachers and of trained female teachers was noted. In some countries, one-quarter to half of the teachers lack educational qualifications. Insufficient numbers of female teachers was reported as a barrier to the education of girls in some countries, including Afghanistan (where 31 per cent of teachers are reportedly female) and in Nepal.

Resource issues extend beyond teachers, to the physical infrastructure of schools and teaching materials. Respondent countries noted the importance of potable water, separate toilet facilities for females and males, and separate dormitories (for boarding students) as critical to school attendance by girls.

Transportation is a further factor facilitating or hindering the access of women and girls to education. Beijing+20 respondent countries highlighted the requirement that women and girls be able to

FIGURE 10
RANGE OF FEMALE AND MALE LITERACY RATES, BY ESCAP SUBREGION



travel safely to and from educational institutions; a requirement that is not universally met by all countries and at all times. In addition to safe access, countries noted the importance of women and girls being safe within the premises of educational institutions. In this respect, one challenge that is deemed to require attention by countries in the region is school-related gender-based violence. As noted by Papua New Guinea in its Beijing+20 national review report: “Due to the high risk of girls being subjected to sexual violence both whilst travelling to and from school and whilst at school, many families choose not to send their girls at all” (p. 15). The threat and occurrence of physical, sexual and emotional abuse of female students is not unique to Papua New Guinea, but reportedly shared by other countries in the region.

Certain “categories” of women and girls were listed as encountering challenges to obtaining formal educations, including women and girls in rural and remote areas, women and girls from indigenous communities and ethnic minorities, and young mothers (with pregnancy linked to girls dropping out of school).

Where women and girls successfully access educational institutions, the ability to choose courses of study may be circumscribed. Sex-based “subject streaming” was noted by many of the Beijing+20 respondent countries.

“The existing large segregation between men and women in fields of study in Vietnam is impeding women’s opportunities to education and employment in the future.”

Viet Nam, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 18

“Georgia still has a long way to go” to increase the number of women studying science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Georgia, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 22

“Despite equal access to education, at all levels females have tended to be clustered in traditional areas of study, with males more likely to be studying subjects related

to technology, science and engineering and females more likely to be studying arts subjects.”

Samoa, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey

“Science is stereotyped as a non-traditional female subject and the low numbers of girls may reflect intimidation on the girls’ part to study in a classroom of boys who are supposed to be more knowledgeable in science hence discouraging more girls to pursue science”

Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 20

From the Pacific, through South-East Asia and South and South-West Asia, to North and Central Asia, women and girls were reported as constituting the minority of students in traditionally “masculine” fields of science, engineering and construction. For example, in Kyrgyzstan women are reportedly concentrated in such fields as the humanities, arts, education, health and journalism. In New Zealand, the top three fields of study for women at the tertiary level in 2011 were education, language and literature, and human society studies. Women and girls pursuing vocational education and training in Afghanistan learn tailoring, embroidery, flower making, silk weaving and curtain making.

Sociocultural norms and practices that result in subject-streaming were also reported as limiting the education of women and girls in other ways. Where women and girls are assigned primary responsibility for domestic chores, are married early or become mothers at young ages, their engagement in formal education can reduce or cease. For instance, in the Philippines, 26 per cent of girls (compared with 1 per cent of boys) who “drop out” of school do so because they cannot manage both housework and study. Georgia and Kazakhstan both cited early marriage as a significant factor in girls dropping out of school in their countries. The formal education of girls also ceases where preference is given to sons, whether driven by financial considerations or the failure to value educating girls.

There is “lower access of women to education, due to refusal by their families or as a result of early marriage”.

Afghanistan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 36

“Social norms that prioritize boys over girls education is just one of the barriers to education for girls.”

Cambodia, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 14

“There are also traditional and structural reasons for the decrease in girls’ enrolment into higher education levels including the favouring of boys over girls by parents as boys are viewed to be a better investment by families than girls who will leave their families when they marry”.

Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 20

“Conservative, traditional attitudes tend to limit opportunities for young women to travel abroad to pursue a tertiary education”.

Timor-Leste, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 23

Summary

The responses to the Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey and national review reports indicated the existence of policies, legislation and programmes promoting the equal rights of women and men, girls and boys, to education, but that full and effective implementation has yet to be realised. Education enrolment and attendance statistics reveal progress in achieving gender parity at the primary, and increasingly secondary, levels, as well as variability within and between the five ESCAP subregions. The education data also reveal that, in some countries of Asia and the Pacific, more women and girls are enrolled in and/or attend educational institutions than do men and boys. Relative parity is also evident in relation to literacy, although increasing the literacy levels of females (and males) in South and South-West Asia in particular requires attention.

Given the issues and challenges listed by countries in Asia and the Pacific, areas for ongoing attention in advancing the education of women and girls include attending to the quality of education; promoting safe and supportive physical, social and emotional learning environments; ensuring access for all women and girls, including those from indigenous and minority groups, those who are pregnant, those who are mothers and those who reside in rural and remote areas; eliminating “subject streaming”; countering sociocultural norms and values that result in premature termination of education for girls, and equipping schools and other educational institutions with necessary facilities and resources.

Addressing such issues and challenges remains “critical” because education is one means through which prejudicial and discriminatory sociocultural norms and practices can be conserved or transformed. The significance of education for the empowerment of women and girls, and for achieving gender equality, was succinctly articulated by Moll and Renault (2014).

“Education plays a key role in the empowerment of girls and women, and the attainment of gender equality in households, communities, and wider society. Even before the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights made it official, education has long been recognised as an essential prerequisite to enable people to realise their true potential. Education in itself is a human right, but it also serves as a gateway that allows individuals to access and enjoy other human rights. Education broadens the perspectives of a girl about the roles that she can play; provides a key space (often the only space) for meeting peers, mentors, and role models; and opens new spaces for an empowered girl to act in, reach out to, and influence others. Unique to education is the fact that once you have gained it, it cannot be taken away.”⁵⁶

56 Moll, A. and L. Renault, (2014). “Rebirth, empowerment, and youth leading social change: non-formal education in Honduras”, *Gender and Development*, vol. 22, No. 1, p. 33.

Women and health

“Women have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The enjoyment of this right is vital to their life and well-being and their ability to participate in all areas of public and private life.”

Platform for Action, Critical Area of Concern C, paragraph. 89

In relation to the Platform for Action critical area of concern “Women and Health”, this section of the report focuses on the access of women and girls to (a) a range of health services, and (b) to sexual and reproductive health services in particular.⁵⁷

Health services for women and girls

Women, on average, live longer than do men. The average life expectancy for women in Asia and the Pacific is 75 years, compared to 70 years for men. At the subregional level, the average female life expectancy is 80 years in East and North-East Asia, 75 years in the Pacific and in South-East Asia, 74 years in North and Central Asia and 71 years in South and South-West Asia.⁵⁸

Throughout their increasingly longer lives, women and girls require access to a range of health services and health information. Of the 40 respondent countries to Section C of the Beijing+20 survey, all reported the existence of national policies that mandate universal access to quality health services for women and girls and all, except one, strategies and/or action plans for implementing their policies.

The policies and plans may solely address the health needs of women and girls, such as Australia’s

57 Data reported in this section of the report is derived from the Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 Regional Survey, the Beijing+20 national review reports, the World Bank online database (<http://data.worldbank.org/>), the UNICEF online database (www.unicef.org/statistics/) and the United Nations Gender Statistics website (<http://genderstats.org/>). The data primarily covers the period 2010 to 2012.

58 The comparable life expectancy for males is 74 years in East and North-East Asia, 69 years in the Pacific, 71 years in South-East Asia, 66 years in North and Central Asia and 69 years in South and South-West Asia.

FIGURE 11
PERCENTAGE OF THE 2014 ASIA-PACIFIC BEIJING+20 REGIONAL SURVEY RESPONDENT COUNTRIES THAT PROVIDE HEALTH CARE SERVICES TO WOMEN AND GIRLS, AT NO OR MINIMAL FINANCIAL COST, BY TYPE OF SERVICE

Primary health	100.0
Maternal health	100.0
Sexual and reproductive health	95.0
Mental health	90.0
Hiv and STIs	87.5
Disability	82.5
Food security and nutrition	77.5
Substance abuse	72.5
Geriatric health	70.0
Gender-Sensitization of Health-Care Workers	57.5

National Women's Health Policy 2010,⁵⁹ or apply to entire populations but contain objectives and measures related to the health of women and girls, like the Nepal Health Sector Programme – Implementation Plan II for 2010 to 2015.⁶⁰

As reported by Beijing+20 respondent countries, women and girls in Asia and the Pacific have access to a range of health care services. The range of health care services, and the percentage of Beijing+20 respondent countries that provide each kind of service to women and girls at no or minimal financial cost, are shown in Figure 11.

In addition to noting the existence of a range of health services for women and girls, the Beijing+20 respondent countries provided examples of the types of services offered. Several of the respondent countries reported that their primary health care services, delivered through hospitals, health centres, rural and urban clinics and community outreach, includes cancer prevention and treatment-related services, such as breast and cervical cancer screening.

Concerning the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and sexually-transmitted infections, countries enumerated initiatives that provide HIV testing, counselling and anti-retroviral therapy, inclusive of female sex workers and pregnant women. Some countries reported low rates of knowledge of both HIV and sexually transmitted infections.

Some of the Beijing+20 respondent countries highlighted particular health concerns in relation

59 www.health.gov.au/womenshealthpolicy

60 www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R090_MOHNepal_2010_NHSP-IP-II_Final_Apr2010.pdf

to women and girls, and the consequent need for targeted interventions. For instance, Australia reported higher rates of mental illness, including depression and anxiety disorders, amongst women, than amongst men (12.1 per cent and 6.8 per cent for women, compared with 7.1 per cent and 3.4 per cent for men, respectively).⁶¹ Bangladesh, by contrast, reflected that “malnutrition is a major concern”, given that 24 per cent of women have low body mass indexes (less than 18.5) and 43 per cent are reportedly anaemic. The Philippines, in turn, identified the need to address the “lack of gender sensitivity of health care providers”.

Maternal health

Reflecting on maternal health in particular, maternal mortality ratios for 45 countries in Asia and the Pacific reveal a significant reduction since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as marked intra-regional disparity in risks associated with pregnancy and childbirth, as shown in Figure 12.

As with the variability in ratios between subregions, differences exist between countries in a subregion. For example, the 2013 maternal mortality ratio for Afghanistan was 400 deaths for every 100,000 live births, compared to 29 per 100,000 in Sri Lanka. In South-East Asia, the maternal mortality rates vary from 200 per 100,000 in Myanmar to 6 in Singapore. Thus, while fewer women are dying due to pregnancy and childbirth-related reasons, maternal mortality remains a significant health issue for certain countries in Asia and the Pacific. Factors contributing to high maternal mortality ratios, according to respondent countries, include low female literacy rates, such as in Afghanistan, poverty, and limited access to both health professionals and health facilities.

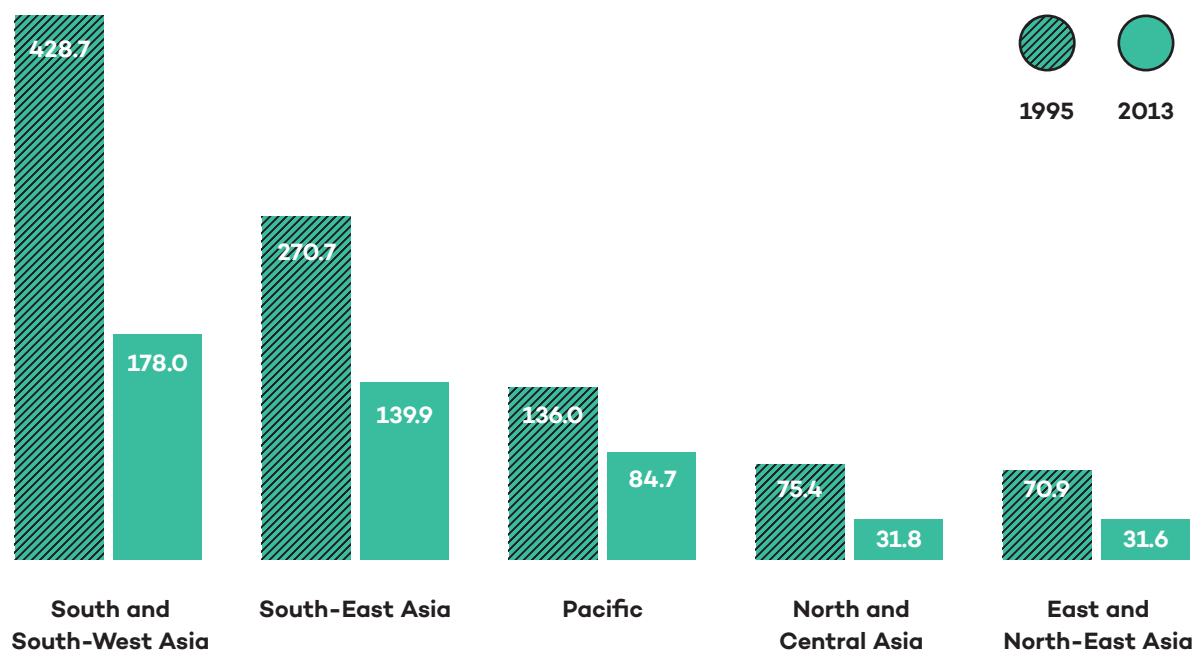
61 In the February 2015 edition of the Australian Bureau of Statistics “Gender Indicators”, 22.3 per cent of women, compared with 17.6 per cent of men, aged 16 to 85 years reported symptoms of a mental disorder in the 12 months preceding data collection. The corresponding figures for reporting high or very high levels of psychological distress were 12.8 per cent (females) and 8.8 per cent (males). Ref: www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4125.0main+features4Feb%202015

A key means of improving maternal health and well-being is through the provision of ante-natal care. As depicted in Figure 13, one ante-natal visit may not be succeeded by additional ante-natal care visits for many women in all five ESCAP subregions. Also indicated in Figure 13, is a decline in the probability of pregnant women receiving ante-natal care visits from the subregions of East and North-East Asia and North and Central Asia, to the Pacific, South-East Asia and South and South-West Asia. The probability of receiving ante-natal care visits negatively correlates with the maternal mortality ratios, as shown in Figures 12 and 13.

Another means of promoting the health and well-being of pregnant women, is through the presence of skilled birth attendants during childbirth. As indicated in Figure 14, and similar to ante-natal care visits, women in the ESCAP subregions of North and Central Asia and of East and North-East Asia, are more likely to give birth with the assistance of skilled birth attendants, than are women in the Pacific, South and South-West Asia, and South-East Asia.

Other examples of maternal health measures in countries in Asia and the Pacific—measures designed to prevent women from dying for pregnancy and childbirth related-reasons and to promote the overall health and well-being of pregnant women and mothers—reported by the Beijing+20 respondent countries were the Maternal Health Voucher Scheme in Bangladesh; the Expanded Food Voucher Rural Pregnant Mothers programme in Fiji; the conditional cash transfer programme for pregnant women, Janani Suraksha Yojana, in India; the National Maternal Mortality Surveillance System in the Islamic Republic of Iran; the National Strategy on Reproductive Health 2006–2015 in Kyrgyzstan and the Antenatal Incentive Programme in Nepal. Additionally, respondent countries in all five ESCAP subregions reported investing in both (a) the education and training of health care workers and (b) medical infrastructure and equipment, including in rural and remote locations (while also noting the challenge of limited, and insufficient, resources). While measures are in place in countries across the region, medical facilities and services are not accessible by all women and girls, and by all

FIGURE 12
2013 AVERAGE MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIOS, BY ESCAP SUBREGION



NOTE TO FIGURE 12: The subregion average maternal mortality ratios — being the number of maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births — were obtained from the ESCAP Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2014, www.unescap.org/resources/statistical-yearbook-asia-and-pacific-2014.

women and all girls at all times, as evidenced by the fact that women and girls continue to die during pregnancy and childbirth.

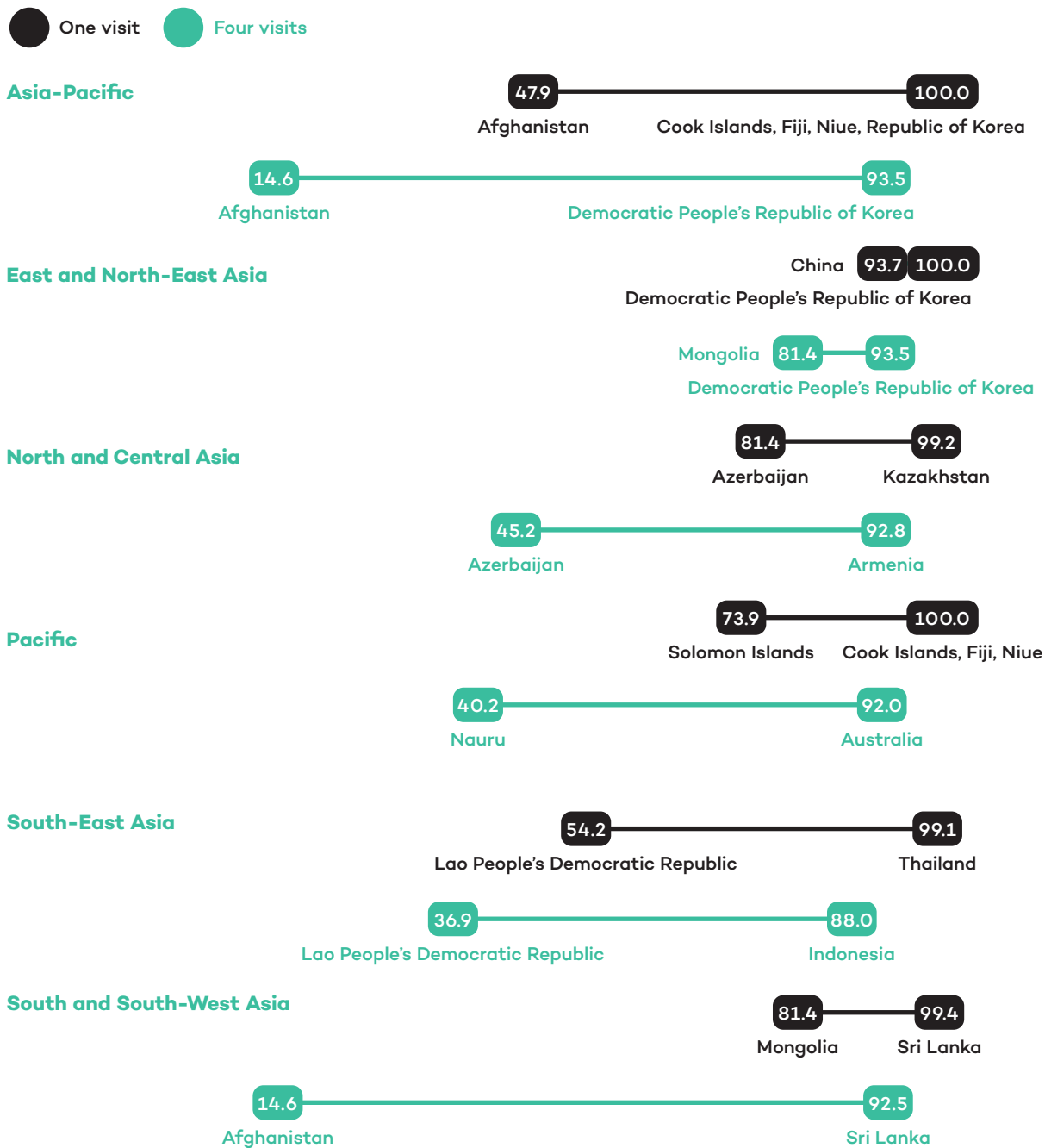
Sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls

Maternal health is one element of the broader area of sexual and reproductive health. In relation to the latter, of the 38 Beijing+20 survey respondent countries, all except one reported the existence of comprehensive national policies, programmes and/or strategies that address the sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights of women and

girls, including family planning.⁶² With few exceptions, the policies, programmes and/or strategies are inclusive of different categories of “women” and “girls”: married women, never married women, divorced women, widowed women, girls aged 15 to 18 years, women older than 65 years, women living

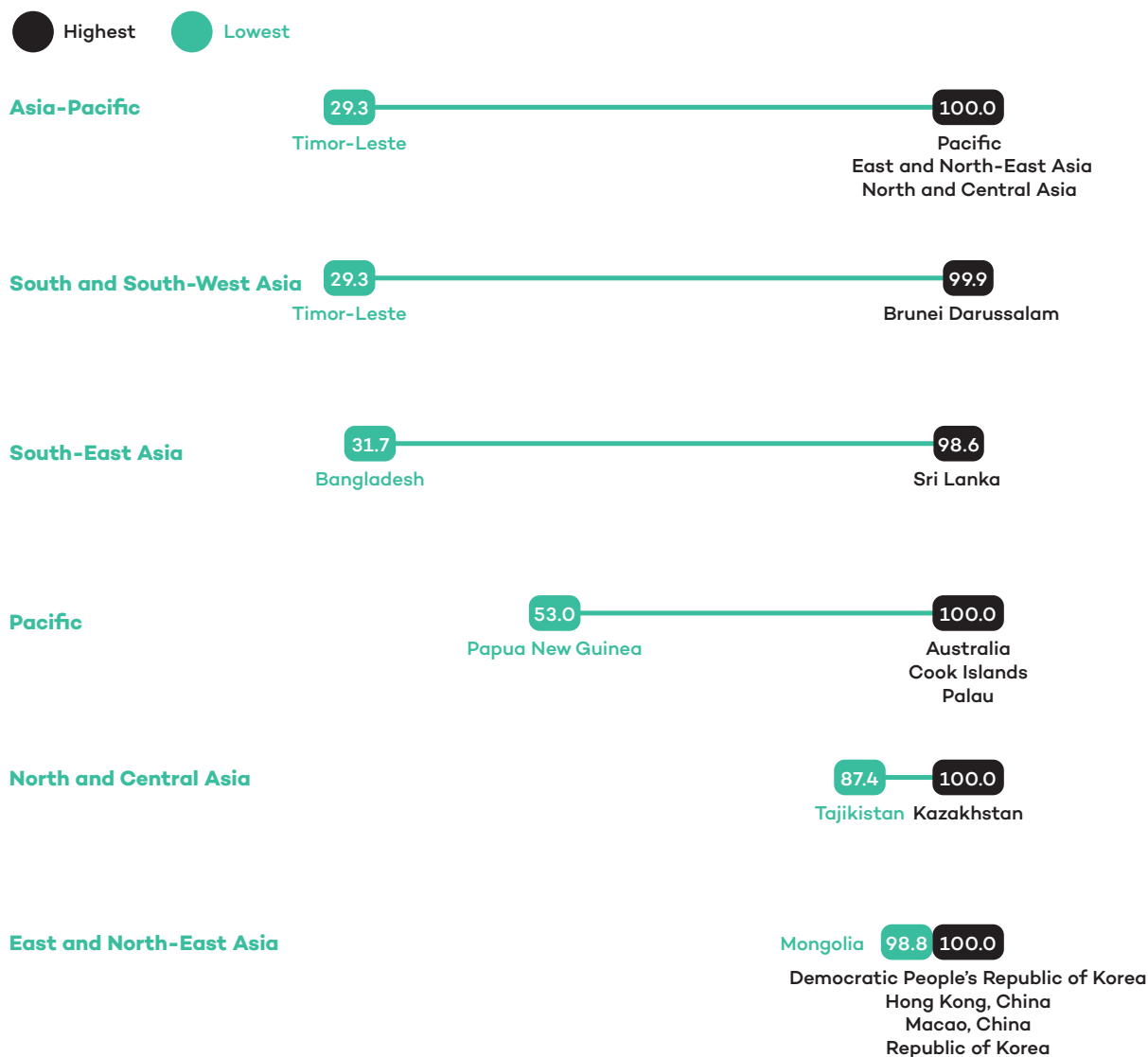
62 Examples include Australia's National Maternity Services Plan 2010–2015 and the Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy 2010–2015, Azerbaijan's National Reproductive Health Strategy 2008–2015, Mongolia's National Reproductive Health Programme, the Safe Motherhood Programme in Nepal, Papua New Guinea's 2014 Sexual Reproductive Policy and Family Planning Policy, the 2012 Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law of the Philippines, Timor-Leste's 2005 National Family Planning Policy 2005, and Turkey's Sexual and Reproductive Health National Strategic Action Plan for Health Sector 2005–2015.

FIGURE 13
PERCENTAGE RANGES OF PREGNANT WOMEN WHO RECEIVED
ONE AND FOUR ANTE-NATAL VISITS, BY ESCAP SUBREGION



NOTE TO FIGURE 13: The percentages of pregnant women receiving one ante-natal care visits were obtained for 15 of the 21 Pacific ESCAP members and associate members, ten of the eleven South-East Asia member States, eight of the nine North and Central Asia member States, ten of the ten South and South-West Asia member States and three of the seven East and North East Asia members and associate members. The percentages of pregnant women receiving four ante-natal care visits were obtained for nine of the 21 Pacific ESCAP members and associate members, eight of the eleven South-East Asia member States, six of the nine North and Central Asia member States, ten of the ten South and South-West Asia member States and two of the seven East and North East Asia members and associate members.

FIGURE 14
PERCENTAGE RANGES OF BIRTHS ATTENDED BY SKILLED BIRTH ATTENDANTS, BY ESCAP SUBREGION



with HIV, women at risk of contracting HIV, migrant women, indigenous women and women from ethnic minorities. A few of the reporting countries did, however, state that their sexual and reproductive health policies, programmes and/or strategies do not apply to one or more categories of women, most commonly indigenous women (7 countries) and women from ethnic minorities (8 countries), followed by migrant women (6 countries), women with disabilities (4 countries) and women in rural areas (4 countries).

The types of sexual and reproductive health services provided to women and girls, as reported by ESCAP members and associate members across the five subregions, include provision of information and education, medical screening, family planning counselling, provision of means of contraception, and in relation to gender-based violence. The Beijing+20 respondent countries further reported investment in the knowledge and skills of health care professionals, in medical infrastructure and in medical equipment.

The Beijing+20 respondent countries also affirmed that not all sexual and reproductive health services are available to women and girls or are available under restricted conditions; abortion being a prominent example. Moreover, the financial cost of some services and family planning measures mean that women and girls in some countries in Asia and the Pacific do not, practically, enjoy full and free choice as to their sexual and reproductive health.

An “area to be addressed and improved is increasing women’s accessibility to quality and affordable reproductive health services”.

Fiji, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 23

“Youth education on reproductive health issues has not been institutionalized; such interventions have sporadic character”.

Georgia, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 24

“[I]nadequate reproductive health care services, including family planning services and lack of access thereto, especially by poor women”.

Philippines, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p.19

“Free antenatal care is available to women throughout PNG but difficulties remain with accessing it, with many women only attending one or two sessions before giving birth”.

Papua New Guinea, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 21

Other reported barriers to women’s and girls’ unfettered access to sexual and reproductive health services and reproductive rights include cultural and religious values.

“[O]ften control over and decisions concerning their [women’s] reproductive behaviour are dependent on partners and the family. Women’s rights to determine their own sexuality free of coercion, discrimination and violence, is still to be understood and accepted and information and counselling on this is not available at health centres and hospitals”.

Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 23

The “strong influence of culture and religion is a key barrier as it makes it difficult to openly discuss sexual and reproductive health issues especially among young people”.

Marshall Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 11

The Beijing+20 respondent countries described health challenges for women and girls that go beyond their sexual and reproductive health.

Issues and challenges

Reported issues and challenges in relation to the health of women and girls included implementation of policies and programmes, availability of resources, access to services, including specialised services, and the gender-sensitivity of the medical establishment.

While noting that national health policies and legislation are not universally comprehensive and rights-based, even where such policies and legislation exist, implementation does not automatically follow their adoption. Factors impeding implementation of health policies in Asia and the Pacific reportedly include the lack of sufficient resources—of funding, of skilled medical personnel, of equipment and of health care facilities.

There is a “lack of continued health care during pregnancy as a result of lack of professional personnel, particularly female personnel in some parts of the country (30% of health centers lack female staffs)”.

Afghanistan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 35

There is a “lack of funding for maternal health”.

Kyrgyzstan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 20

Some countries, particularly those in the Pacific, reported reliance on donor funding for delivery of health services to women and girls. Absence of comprehensive data on the health and well-being

of women and girls was cited as a further obstacle to delivering targeted assistance.

Where health services are available, women and girls may not be able to access them. This is particularly so for women and girls in rural and remote areas, as well as poor women and girls. Access challenges for women and girls in rural and remote areas reportedly relate to the ratio of medical staff to the general population, the range of services provided and transportation.

“[D]ifficulty of access remains a problem, especially for women in rural areas and outer islands”.

Marshall Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 13

“The scarcity of health services in indigenous areas compounds the threat to the reproductive health of young mothers”.

Philippines, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 43

“Women’s access to health services is easier for those living in Honiara and the other provincial capitals in terms of the availability of nurses, doctors, drugs and inpatient services”.

Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 23

“The accessibility to reproductive health care services for women in rural and ethnic minority areas has been still limited”.

Viet Nam, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 20

There is thus, as stated by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, a consequent need to invest in the provision of health services for women and girls in rural and remote areas, as well as facilitate access by poor women and girls.

Inadequate availability of specialised skills and services, such as emergency obstetric care, as well as of female health professionals and of health professionals who are attuned to the different health-related needs and interests of women and girls, and of men and boys, were also cited by the

2014 Beijing+20 respondent countries as impediments to the health and well-being of women and girls.

Women’s and girls’ access to health services in Afghanistan is limited due to 24 per cent of doctors and 21 per cent of nurses being women “since cultural and traditional beliefs make it difficult for women to... be treated by male doctors”.

Afghanistan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 35

“There are few doctors that specialize in reproductive health at the district level and services for women’s health are weak throughout Timor-Leste”.

Timor-Leste, 2014, Beijing+20 national review report, p. 8

“Limited technical capacity to implement and for monitoring and evaluation of [health-related] programs”.

Vanuatu, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 8

Summary

Policies, plans and programmes addressing the health-related needs and interests of women and girls exist across Asia and the Pacific, with variation in comprehensiveness, coverage and implementation. While women, on average, live longer lives than men, they continue to die during childbirth, have unmet health-related needs and do not universally enjoy the ability to choose, or access, health services. There is an evident need to invest in the health and well-being of women and girls by, for example, addressing issues relating to resources, data, access, and range of services and options, within a rights-based framework.

Violence against women and girls

“Violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. Violence against women both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

Platform for Action, Critical Area of Concern D, paragraph. 112

Violence against women and girls occurs in every country in Asia and the Pacific. This section of the report provides an overview of the available data and the measures taken by governments to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls, as well as the challenges encountered.⁶³

Prevalence of violence against women and girls

When attempting to determine the prevalence of violence against women and girls, whether at the local or national levels, the Beijing+20 respondent countries concur that there is a lack of data and a lack of comparable data. The actual prevalence of violence against women and girls is deemed to be significantly higher than what is suggested by official statistics. The disparity in reported and “real” rates of violence against women and girls is attributed to both structural and sociocultural factors; from

63 With the focus of Section 3.4 on government initiatives to address violence against women and girls, the forms, causes, risk factors and consequences of such violence are not addressed. It is noted, however, that violence threaten lives, impairs health and well-being, violates fundamental and universal human rights, and is an impediment to equitable and inclusive sustainable development, to “state-building” and to peace and democracy. As succinctly stated by the former Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Yakin Ertürk, “[v]iolence against women is a continuum of acts that violate women’s basic human rights, resulting in devastating consequences for women who experience it, traumatic impact on those who witness it, de-legitimization of States that fail to prevent it and the impoverishment of entire societies that tolerate it.” (Ertürk Y 2003, Towards an Effective Implementation of International Norms to End Violence against Women, Commission on Human Rights, Sixtieth Session, E/CN.4/2004/66, paragraph 69.)

the lack of robust data collection and statistical systems to taboos that inhibit women and girls from speaking of violence, due to, for example, stigma, shame, fear, rejection, lack of available support and the belief in the “entitlement” or “right” of men to inflict violence on women, including marital rape.

“Due to stigma, the disclosure rate of sexual violence crimes remains low”.

Georgia, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 27

“There is also a general attitude that abuse is a normal part of marriage and other such relationships”.

Marshall Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 14

“There are no comprehensive baseline studies on the prevalence or severity of violence against women and children”.

Nauru, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 6.

“Many alcohol related crimes involve domestic violence but are not reported as such.”

Republic of Palau, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 22

“[D]omestic violence is a sensitive subject loaded with societal taboos. There is a perception that such violence is a private matter, which should not be discussed in public and it will take some time to change these social norms”.

Timor-Leste, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 29

The lack of data on violence against women and girls is, in part, related to the absence of regular national-level surveys. Twenty-five of the 39 (64.1 per cent) of the Beijing+20 respondent countries reported that they do not conduct national surveys on the prevalence of violence against women and girls on a regular basis, such as every two to four years.

Accordingly, the absence of comprehensive and reliable data should influence interpretation and understanding of the information that is available on the incidence and prevalence of violence against women and girls in Asia and the Pacific.

In the Pacific, for example, and as reported by Beijing+20 respondent countries, from one in four to one in two women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 years can reportedly expect to experience physical, sexual and/or psychological violence from an intimate partner in their lifetimes. While quantitative data are relatively scarce, Beijing+20 respondent countries from the Pacific observed that, in relation to gender-based violence, it is primarily men who inflict violence on women and girls.

“Victims of the most severe cases of family violence, including homicides, are predominantly women and children”.

New Zealand, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 24

In Samoa, and for 2007 to 2012, 79.5 per cent of the “victims” of reported domestic violence offences were female, while 85.2 per cent of the offenders were male. One in three Australian women reportedly experience physical violence and one in five women experience sexual violence, during their lifetimes.

High rates of violence against women and girls were also reported in South-East Asia. Intimate partner violence is reportedly frequent, constituting, for instance, 69 per cent of reported cases of violence against women in the Philippines in 2013, with 74 per cent of women surveyed in 2009 and 2010 having been subjected to physical violence by their husbands.

Intimate partner violence is also prevalent in both South and South-West Asia and North and Central Asia. For example, in Bangladesh, a 2011 study revealed that 50 per cent of the male respondents reported physically and emotionally abusing their female partners.⁶⁴ Rates of violence against women of 25 to 50 per cent have also been reported in countries of South and South-West Asia, including high

64 As reported in the Bangladesh 2014 national review report.

rates of sexual violence, from sexual harassment to rape. Violence is committed against women and girls by persons beyond intimate partners. In some countries of North and Central Asia, the reported number of violence against women crimes exceeds 170,000 in one Gregorian calendar year.

Trafficking in women and girls

A particular form of violence against women and girls that was recognized by countries in the Asia-Pacific region is trafficking in women and girls. The Beijing+20 respondent countries varyingly noted that women and girls constitute the majority of trafficked persons⁶⁵ being, for example, 94.8 per cent of persons trafficked in the Philippines in 2011. Respondent countries further noted that the sex and labour trafficking of women and girls is a persistent human rights violation and one for which conviction rates are lower than the incidence of reported crimes.

Beijing+20 respondent countries described a range of measures being undertaken to combat the trafficking in women and girls. Policies and legislation provide the normative frameworks for action in many (but not all) of the Beijing+20 respondent countries, in all five ESCAP subregions; examples include Azerbaijan's 2005 law "On Fight Against Human Trafficking";⁶⁶ Brunei Darussalam's Women and Girls Protection Act (1972)⁶⁷ and Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons Order (2004);⁶⁸ section 370 of India's Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013;⁶⁹ Myanmar's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law 2005;⁷⁰ Nepal's Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act 2064 (2007);⁷¹ the Republic of Palau's Anti-People Smuggling and Trafficking Act, and the Philippines' Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons

Act of 2012.⁷² Policies and legislation are associated with fines and incarceration for persons convicted of trafficking persons.

In addition, action plans, standard operating procedures and guidelines have been developed, and committees constituted, to address trafficking in women and girls. For example, Timor-Leste has standard operating procedures and guidelines to support its national police in combatting trafficking in persons. Nepal implements its 2012 National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Trafficking in Women and Children. In 2003, Kazakhstan formed the Interdepartmental Commission on Combatting the Unlawful Exporting, Importing and Trafficking of People. More recently, in 2013, Kyrgyzstan established a department within its Ministry of Internal Affairs to combat human trafficking. In February 2014, India launched an anti-trafficking web portal.⁷³ Operating in cities and municipalities across the Philippines are "Committees on Anti-Trafficking and Violence Against Women and Children". In Bangladesh there is a Trafficking in Human Beings Cell within its Criminal Investigation Department. In North and Central Asia, many of the countries made specific mention of rehabilitation programmes for women and girls who have been trafficked comprising, amongst other elements, safe accommodation, counselling, medical services and livelihood support.

To combat trafficking in women and girls, and other forms of gender-based violence, countries in the Asia-Pacific region reported a range of measures designed to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls.

65 This observation by ESCAP member States is corroborated in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2014 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons.

66 www.legislationline.org/documents/id/6437

67 www.niew.gov.my/contents/PDF/acts%20&%20regulations/Brunai/Women%20and%20girls%20protection%20act.pdf

68 www.hsph.harvard.edu/population/trafficking/brunei.traf.04.pdf

69 indiacode.nic.in/acts-in-pdf/132013.pdf

70 www.no-trafficking.org/resources_laws_myanmar.html

71 www.hsph.harvard.edu/population/trafficking/nepal.trafficking.07.pdf

72 cfo.gov.ph/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1951:republic-act-no-10364-or-the-expanded-anti-trafficking-in-persons-act-of-2012-published&catid=109:overseas-filipino-new&Itemid=840

73 www.stophumantrafficking-mha.nic.in/

Preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls

Countries in the Asia-Pacific region reported the existence of national integrated measures for preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls.⁷⁴

Policies and action plans

Beijing+20 respondent countries enumerated multiple policies and action plans that frame measures for preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls.

Many of the Pacific countries mentioned Family Protection Acts (e.g. Fiji, Palau, Vanuatu), Family Safety Acts (e.g. Samoa⁷⁵) and Domestic Violence Acts (e.g. the Marshall Islands, New Zealand⁷⁶). Similarly, in South-East Asia there are laws against domestic violence, such as apply in Timor-Leste (e.g. Law Against Domestic Violence 2010⁷⁷) and the Philippines (e.g. Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995,⁷⁸ Anti-Rape Law of 1997⁷⁹ and the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children or Intimate Partner Violence Law of 2004⁸⁰).

Legislation also prevail in South and South-West Asia: the 2002 Acid Crime Control Act and 2010 Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act⁸¹ in Bangladesh; the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005⁸² and the Prohibition

of Child Marriage Act 2006⁸³ in India; the Domestic Violence Act (3/2012) in the Maldives;⁸⁴ the 2008 Domestic Violence (Offence and Punishment) Act⁸⁵ and 2007 Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act⁸⁶ in Nepal, and Law No. 62⁸⁴ to Protect Family and Prevent Violence Against Women 2012⁸⁷ in Turkey. In 2009, Afghanistan introduced the Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.⁸⁸

In North and Central Asia, Criminal, Civil and Family Codes address violence against women and girls, as well as there being specific legislation, like the 2003 law “On Socio-Legal Protection Against Domestic Violence” in Kyrgyzstan and the 2006 law on the “Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence”⁸⁹ in Georgia.

To translate policy and legislation into practical measures, 32 of the 39 Beijing+20 survey respondent countries reported having multi-sector action plans for combatting violence against women and girls.⁹⁰ Australia has a National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children for 2010–2022.⁹¹ Armenia has a Strategic Action Plan

74 There were 39 responses to Section D of the Beijing+20 survey. Only one of 39 ESCAP member and associate members reported the absence of integrated measures for preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls.

75 www.parliament.gov.ws/images/ACTS/Acts_2013/Family_Safety_Act_2013_-_Eng.pdf

76 www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1995/0086/latest/DLM371926.html

77 www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/--ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_179323.pdf

78 www.hsph.harvard.edu/population/womenrights/philippines.women.95.pdf

79 www.chanrobles.com/repúblicaactno8353.htm#.VBjQPMsYVM

80 www.congress.gov.ph/download/ra_12/RA09262.pdf

81 [phrplanbd.org/attachments/article/42/DV%20Act_Engling%20Translation%20\(unofficial\).pdf](http://phrplanbd.org/attachments/article/42/DV%20Act_Engling%20Translation%20(unofficial).pdf)

82 www.lawyerscollective.org/files/protection_of_women_from_domestic_violence_act_2005.pdf

83 <http://wcd.nic.in/cma2006.pdf>

84 http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/filemanager/files/maldives/the_domestic_violence_act_2012_maldives_english_translation_unofficial.pdf

85 www.saathi.org.np/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=53&Itemid=99

86 www.hsph.harvard.edu/population/trafficking/nepal.trafficking.07.pdf

87 www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/--ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_235174.pdf

88 www.laoa.af/laws/law_on_elimination_of_violence_against_women.pdf

89 www.legislationline.org/documents/id/16680

90 Action plans on violence against women were cited for Armenia (Strategic Action Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence for 2011–2015), Australia (National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010–2022), Bangladesh (National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls 2013–2025), Cambodia (National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women 2014–2018), Kiribati (National Approach to Eliminating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence 2011–2021), Lao People’s Democratic Republic (National Plan of Action on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children 2014–2020), Timor-Leste (National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence), Turkey (National Action Plan on Combatting Domestic Violence Against Women 2012–2015) and Viet Nam (National Plan of Action on Domestic Violence 2014–2020).

91 www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children-2010-2022

to Combat Gender-Based Violence for 2011 to 2015.⁹² Bangladesh has a similarly titled action plan, the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children 2013–2025⁹³ Cambodia is implementing its second National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women, from 2014 to 2018. In Timor-Leste there is the National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence 2012–2014. Turkey has a focussed action plan, namely the National Action Plan on Combatting Domestic Violence Against Women 2012–2015. Viet Nam implements its National Plan of Action on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control.

Legislation and formal justice systems

Thirty-six of the 39 (92.3 per cent) countries in Asia and the Pacific that completed the Beijing+20 regional survey reported legislation that punishes perpetrators of violence against women and girls.

Variably covering physical, sexual, psychological, domestic and economic violence, across the region, legislation that criminalizes violence against women and girls reportedly contains provisions for protection orders, police safety orders, prison sentences and/or “corrective labour”.

As with general legislation on violence against women and girls, the majority of the Beijing+20 survey respondent countries (34 of 39; 87.1 per cent), reported legislation that addresses domestic

violence alone,⁹⁴ with further reference made to inclusion of marital rape as a crime,⁹⁵ such as in Fiji, Georgia, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Turkey.

Legislation criminalising all forms of violence against women and girls does not, however, exist in every country in Asia and the Pacific. Myanmar, for instance, reported the absence of legislation on gender-based violence, domestic violence, and harassment in the work place, as well as marital rape being a crime only where the wife is less than 14 years of age. Countries from the Pacific through to

94 Legislation that specifically addresses domestic violence was cited for Afghanistan (Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 2009), Australia (Family Law Legislation Amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Act, 2011), Bangladesh (Domestic Violence Protection Act, 2010), Bhutan (Domestic Violence Prevention Bill, 2012), Cambodia (Law on the Prevention of Violence and the Protection of Victims, 2005), Fiji (Domestic Violence Decree, 2009), India (Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005), Indonesia (Law No. 23/2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence), Japan (Act on the Prevention of Spousal Assault and Protection of Victims, 2001/2007), Kiribati (Family Peace Bill, 2014), the Republic of Korea (Act on the Prevention of Sexual Assault and Protection of Victims Thereof, 2010), Malaysia (Domestic Violence Act, 1994), the Maldives (Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, 2012), Marshall Islands (Domestic Violence, Prevention and Protection Act, 2011), Mongolia (Law to Combat Domestic Violence, 2005), Nepal (Domestic Violence (Offence and Punishment) Act 2066, 2009), New Zealand (Domestic Violence Act No. 86, 1995/2010), Pakistan (Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2012), Papua New Guinea (Family Protection Act, 2013), the Philippines (Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act, 2004), Samoa (The Family Safety Act, 2013), Singapore (Women's Charter, 1961/2009), the Solomon Islands (Family Protection Bill, 2014), Sri Lanka (Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, 2005), Thailand (Protection of Domestic Violence Victims Act B.E. 2550, 2007), Timor-Leste (Law Against Domestic Violence, 2010), Tonga (Family Protection Act, 2013), Tuvalu (Family Protection and Domestic Violence Bill, 2014), Vanuatu (Family Protection Act, 2008), and Viet Nam (Law on the Prevention of and Control over Domestic Violence, 2007). Such legislation was not cited for Brunei Darussalam, China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru and Palau. Both China and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, however, drafted anti-violence legislation in 2014.

95 Countries for which documentation could be obtained evidencing the criminalization of marital rape included Australia, Bhutan, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, the Marshall Islands, Nepal, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam. Evidence of the criminalization of marital rape was not cited for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kiribati, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, The Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Pakistan, Palau, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

92 www.un.org/res/Gender%20TG%20docs/national/2011-2015_GBVS_strategic_plan-Eng.pdf

93 www.mowca.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/English-National-Action-Plan-to-Prevent-Violence-Against-Women-and-Children-2013-2025.pdf

South and South-West Asia similarly reported a lack of legislative protection and prosecution measures.

There is a “Lack of formal legal and administrative support to victims of violence”.

Islamic Republic of Iran, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 29

“There is no specific Domestic Violence Legislation with a focus on violence against women and girls” and “there is not enough legal protection available for victims of domestic violence”.

Nauru, 2014 Beijing+20 regional survey and national review report, p. 5

In addition to the importance of legislation for preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls, is the need for gender-sensitive justice systems. Half of the Beijing+20 survey respondent countries (20) reported the existence of such justice systems in their countries, and a similar number the existence of budgetary allocations to support enforcement of legislation pertaining to violence against women and girls.

As reported by the respondent countries, two key elements of gender-sensitive justice systems are (a) family or family violence courts, or similar bodies, and (b) specialized entities within law enforcement bodies, primarily police forces, staffed by trained personnel. Family or family violence courts, or other specialized tribunals, exist in such varied countries as Australia, Bangladesh, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Samoa and Turkey. Police units specializing in gender-based violence, domestic violence or sexual violence, in turn, operate in the five ESCAP subregions, as evidenced in Fiji, Nepal, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu. In some instance, staff members of specialized police units are solely women.

Other measures to “gender-sensitize” justice systems include court victim advisors; closed court sessions; concealment of the identities of survivors; and “no-drop” policies whereby police are mandated to investigate cases of violence against women and girls. Awareness-raising, education and training initiatives for law enforcement and justice officials are also undertaken in the majority

of the Beijing+20 respondent countries (34 of 39; 87.2 per cent). Targeting police officers, prosecutors and judges, capacity-building initiatives variably manifest as modules in training curriculums, manuals, assessment tools and workshops.

Services for survivors

Women and girls who experience violence may be able to access health, legal, livelihood and accommodation services. As reported by countries in Asia and the Pacific, health and legal services are the most common form of assistance available to survivors of violence (existing in 92.3 per cent of respondent countries), followed by provision of shelters or safe houses (76.9 per cent of respondent countries), and then livelihood support (64.1 per cent of respondent countries).

In terms of health services, there is reported provision of information, counselling, emergency psychosocial assistance, medical treatment and referral to specialists, which may be provided through “one-stop” centres that are located in hospitals and other health centres. Legal services include “free” legal aid, legal representation in court and preparation of legal documents.

Beijing+20 respondent countries reported the existence of “shelters”, “refuges”, “crisis centres” and “residential care facilities” in their countries. The number of available shelters is reportedly low in some of the reporting countries, such as one shelter in some of the Pacific Island countries and two in a North and Central Asia country.

Approximately two-thirds of the reporting countries reported the provision of services targeting the prevention of violence against women with disabilities in particular (69.2 per cent; 26 of 39 countries), and a smaller proportion provide targeted services to women with disabilities who experience violence (35.9 per cent; 14 of 39 countries).

Education and training for service providers

As for law enforcement and justice personnel, countries in Asia and the Pacific have invested in developing the knowledge and skills of health care workers and of community and social workers. Approximately three-quarters (76.9 per cent; 30 of 39) of the Beijing+20 respondent countries reported providing training for health care workers, and approximately four-fifths (82.1 per cent; 32 of 39) training for community and social workers.

Examples of such training include modules on violence against women and girls in nursing and medicine undergraduate courses in Fiji; the “Training on the Role of Health Personnel in Combating Domestic Violence Against Women” that was delivered to 65,000 health personnel in Turkey since 2008; and the anti-bullying in schools initiative in the Republic of Palau.

Awareness-raising and education campaigns

Public awareness-raising campaigns are, reportedly, a common means of seeking the elimination of violence against women and girls: 37 of 39 (94.9 per cent) Beijing+20 respondent countries reported the existence of such campaigns.

Public awareness-raising campaigns, across Asia and the Pacific, engage national women’s machineries and line ministries, “male champions”, community leaders and community-based organisations, including sports clubs and faith-based groups. The police, women’s rights organisations, students and other advocates are engaged in raising-awareness and educating about the causes, consequences and actions that can be taken to eliminate violence against women and girls. Means of communication include billboards and other forms of advertising, the annual 16 days of activism against gender-based violence campaign, radio programmes, social media, round table discussions, seminars, lectures, conferences and training.

Examples of such campaigns include “Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao” in India focussed on protecting the girl child; SHED, Self Help Ending Violence,

initiative that encourages men in Nauru to “shed” violent behaviour; the Campaign for Action on Family Violence⁹⁶ in New Zealand, alongside the “Loves-Me-Not” programme that targets secondary school students; the MOVE, Men Opposed to Violence Against Women Everywhere,⁹⁷ campaign in the Philippines; and the We Can campaign⁹⁸ that focuses on eliminating domestic violence in Bangladesh.

Relative to general public campaigns on violence against women and girls, fewer countries implement campaigns targeting the elimination of harmful practices (22 of 39 Beijing+20 respondent countries; 56.4 per cent). This disparity in campaign coverage is, in part, related to harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation, not being addressed by national policies and legislation. Initiatives do, however, exist, such as the research conducted on “honour killings” in Turkey resulting in the Prime Ministerial Circular “Measures to be Taken to Prevent the Acts of Violence Against Women and Children and Custom and Honour Killings” (2006/17).

Prosecution of perpetrators of violence against women and girls

Existing normative frameworks, programmes and public campaigns to eliminate violence against women and girls are valuable but inadequate, given persistent high rates of violence against women and girls and apparent impunity for perpetrators of such violence.

The 2014 Beijing+20 regional review process revealed an overall lack of data on the prosecution of perpetrators of violence against women and girls, and a lack of comparable data. Of the Beijing+20 survey respondents, 34.2 per cent (13 of 39) were unable to provide such data and a further 23.7 per cent (9 of 38) provided information that does not allow for subregional and regional comparisons. Of

96 www.areyouok.org.nz/

97 www.pcw.gov.ph/unfpa/men-opposed-violence-against-women-everywhere

98 www.wecan-bd.org/

the 16 ESCAP members and associate members that provided information on the prosecution of perpetrators of violence against women and girls, rates ranged from a low of 5.7 per cent to a high of 98.2 per cent. For half of countries that provided data, prosecution rates were less than 50 per cent (for the most recent year for which data are available).

Data on enforcement of court orders pertaining to violence against women and girls was even less than that for prosecution of such cases, with nine of 38 Beijing+20 survey responses containing such information. As with prosecution, significant variability was noted, ranging from 3.6 to 90 per cent.

Challenges in prosecuting crimes of violence against women and girls through the formal justice system were highlighted by the Beijing+20 respondent countries across the ESCAP region, as highlighted by countries in the Pacific and in South-East Asia.

“[T]he majority of cases [of violence against women] reported to the police are withdrawn and only but a few get to have a day in court”.

Nauru, Beijing+20 national review report, p. 6

“[M]ost cases the victim dropped the case after three days and the victims rarely attend counselling”.

Palau, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 22

“Because social acceptance of GBV is common, cases are likely to go unreported.”

Timor-Leste, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 30

Countries in South and South-West Asia and in North and Central Asia, in turn, reported low reporting and conviction rates for crimes of violence against women and girls. In Nepal, for instance, four of 1,800 reported cases of domestic violence were taken to court in 2011. In Bangladesh, and based on a 2011 Bureau of Statistics survey, eight per cent of women upon who violence was inflicted by a non-partner reported the crime.

Issues and challenges

In addition to challenges related to the administration of justice for crimes of violence against women and girls, Beijing+20 respondent countries reported a range of impediments to eliminating this form of abuse and rights-violation of women and girls.

A key reported challenge in understanding and addressing violence against women is the lack of data, and associated inadequate data collection systems and capacity.⁹⁹ Associated with the lack of data is reported limited awareness and understanding of the breadth and severity of violence against women and girls, and the consequent need to inform and educate general populations and particular “stakeholders”, including members of the health and justice sectors, as well as parliamentarians and policy makers.

One objective of awareness-raising and education initiatives is to realize “mindset shifts”; changing beliefs and attitudes that condone and justify violence against women and girls.

“Social norms are still tolerant of VAW and both individuals and communities feel that it is justified in certain contexts”.

Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 29

There is a need to transform the “attitudes of public officials – inclusive of the Police, the Judiciary; faith-based and community leaders – to the issue of violence against women”.

Fiji, Beijing+20 national review report, p. 22

“A major concern is... acceptance by both women and men of partner violence as being justified depending on the circumstances” which include refusal to have sexual intercourse, neglect of children, arguing and burning food.

Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 29

⁹⁹ The issue of data and statistics is elaborated in Chapter 4 of this report.

“The imbalanced sex ratio at birth has been quite severe. Gender stereotypes and the male preference mindset coupled with easy access to technical services for early diagnosis of fetal sex, birth selection and abortion services have been the causes leading to the increasing sex imbalance.”

Viet Nam, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 21

Weaknesses in formal justice systems are, in turn, cited as hindering prosecution of crimes of violence against women and girls, and accordingly, the ability of women and girls to receive justice. Despite existing initiatives, further efforts are deemed to be required to promote gender-sensitivity amongst law enforcement and judicial officers. Provision of legal and para-legal services to women and girls is also perceived as being necessary, as is promoting awareness amongst women and girls as to their legal rights. A further obstacle to women and girls pursuing legal justice is lengthy legal proceedings, with associated financial costs and fear related to perceived risks of retaliation and stigma.

“[T]here are many constraints to women accessing justice in cases of VAW, through the judicial system. This system is lengthy (due to various legal fees, costs of lawyers and also due to the length of the process), and unfriendly to women. Although the number of women lawyers is increasing, the courts, judges, prosecutors and the procedures in general are intimidating, male biased, and very insensitive to the difficulties in dealing with personal and domestic violence issues”.

Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 44

“In the absence of good governance and rule of law, the GBV cases are not handled properly by law enforcement agencies”.

Nauru, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 11

“... so far Vietnam has not had any separate laws specifying and guiding the measures to sanction acts as well as behavioural manifestations of gender-based violence. The detailing on the specific manifestations of gender-based violence to clearly identify acts of violation is also limited...”

Viet Nam, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 23

Formal justice systems may also fail to serve a protective function, which women and girls who have survived violence require.

In addition to legal services, health, social and livelihood-related services, where they exist, can be insufficient relative to demand, as well as being of varying efficacy. The limited number of shelters or refuges in some of the Beijing+20 respondent countries is an example.

The aforementioned challenges to preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls are, in part, connected to insufficient resourcing.

Summary

While official statistics may be lacking, limited or present incomplete pictures, violence is present in the lives of women and girls in every country in Asia and the Pacific.

Policies and legislation have been adopted in many countries, with full and effective implementation to follow. There are also practical initiatives that seek to raise awareness, change prejudicial beliefs and behaviours, educate and train service providers, protect women and girls and deliver justice for survivors.

Comprehensive policies and legislation, along with programmes and actions that cover the breadth of this form of abuse, have however yet to be realized such that all women and girls can pursue lives free of both the fear and the act of violence.

Women and armed conflict

“Peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men and development.”

Platform for Action, Critical Area of Concern E, paragraph 131

Predating what has been heralded as the global policy document on women, peace and security, namely the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325,¹⁰⁰ the Platform for Action made specific reference to the need for action in the area of “Women and Armed Conflict”.

Under this critical area of concern, the Platform for Action outlines objectives relating to increasing women’s participation in conflict resolution and peace-building, reducing military expenditures, promoting non-violent forms of conflict resolution and protecting refugee and internally-displaced women.

Within this framework, this section of the report provides an overview of women, peace and security normative frameworks, the participation of women in conflict resolution, the delivery of gender-sensitising and conflict resolution training, the protection of women and girls during conflict,

100 In 2000, building upon Critical Area E of the Platform for Action and the campaigning of civil society actors, notably the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1325. Resolution 1325 was heralded as the international policy document on promoting women’s participation in conflict resolution and peace processes, and both protecting the human rights of women and girls and prosecuting those responsible for violations of those rights during armed conflict, as well as mainstreaming gender in peace-making, peacekeeping and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. Analysis of application of Resolution 1325 and the succeeding resolutions on women peace and security, notably 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013) and 2122 (2013) suggests, however, that there has been limited translation of the policy intent to the lives of women and girls in situations of armed conflict.

and the provision of services to women and girls in the aftermath of conflict.¹⁰¹

Women, peace and security normative frameworks

Several countries in the Asia-Pacific region have formulated women, peace and security national action plans. While 13 Beijing+20 respondent countries reported the existence of such national action plans, verification could be obtained for six of those countries.¹⁰² The Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security¹⁰³ is applicable to the 16 members of the Pacific Islands Forum. While also a member of the Pacific subregion and Pacific Islands Forum, Australia¹⁰⁴ has its own national action plan on women, peace and security. Also from the same subregion and belonging to the Pacific Islands Forum, both New Zealand and the Solomon Islands are in the process of finalizing and developing, respectively, national action plans on women, peace and security.

In the other ESCAP subregions, only one or two countries have national action plans on women, peace and security: Georgia¹⁰⁵ and Kyrgyzstan¹⁰⁶ in North and Central Asia; Nepal¹⁰⁷ in South and South-West Asia; the Philippines¹⁰⁸ in South-East

Asia and the Republic of Korea¹⁰⁹ in East and North East Asia, noting that Japan is currently formulating its national action plan on women, peace and security. Both Timor-Leste and Uzbekistan reported finalization and development, respectively, of national action plans, or comparable normative frameworks, on women, peace and security.

Thus, almost 20 years since the adoption of the Platform for Action and 15 years after the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, 24 (of 54 regional) ESCAP members and associate members have normative frameworks on women, peace and security¹¹⁰ (and noting that one action plan covers 16 members and associate members).

Reflecting the substance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325,¹¹¹ and subsequent “women, peace and security” resolutions, the national and regional action plans on women, peace and security address issues of prevention, participation, protection, prosecution and relief and recovery for women and girls, along with including monitoring and evaluation measures.

ESCAP members and associate members that have adopted national action plans on women, peace and security have, however, observed that implementation has yet to be fully realised; as noted by the Philippines in its 2014 Beijing+20 national review report where it stated that “measures towards achieving outcomes to this area of concern [women and armed conflict] are, so far, confined to the policy level” (p. 27). Awareness, capacity, resources and accountability measures are some of the issues requiring attention for there to be systematic inclusion of women in conflict resolution and peace-building processes and of the needs and interests of women and girls in peace agreements.

101 While the existence of normative frameworks, the presence of women in conflict-resolution and peace-building fora, the delivery of training and the provision of protection measures is documented, this section of the report does not elaborate on the content of the documents and the nature of women's and girls' experiences in conflict, conflict-resolution and peace-building.

102 For example, the website www.peacewomen.org/naps/list-of-naps lists WPS national action plans for Australia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea, as well as noting the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

103 www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/Pacific%20Regional%20Action%20Plan%20on%20Women%20Peace%20and%20Security%20Final%20and%20Approved.pdf

104 www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/aus_nap_on_women_2012_2018.pdf

105 www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/NationalActionPlans/georgia_napdec_27_2011.pdf

106 www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/kyrgyz_nap2013.pdf

107 www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/NationalActionPlans/nepal_2011.pdf

108 www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/NationalActionPlans/philippines_nap.pdf

109 www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/NationalActionPlans/republicofkorea_nap_2014.pdf

110 Several ESCAP members and associate members, including Bhutan, the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau and Singapore, stated that the critical area of concern “women in armed conflict” was “not applicable” or “not relevant” to their countries; while other members and associate members, such as China and Kiribati, did not complete the relevant section of the Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey.

111 www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?docid=3b00f4672e

Participation of women in conflict resolution and peace-building

Women assume a range of roles during conflict and in post-conflict settings – combat and non-combat roles, from pacifists advocating for peace to discharging weapons; providing ancillary services to military personnel or providing for families. In the Solomon Islands, for example, “Women for Peace” provided aid to military camps and advocated for peace, while in Timor-Leste approximately 14 per cent of the registered National Liberation Combatants were women. A significantly higher percentage of women “insurgents”, of approximately 40 per cent during the 1996 to 2006 conflict, has been estimated for Nepal.

Alongside active roles in conflict and conflict resolution, women and girls are reportedly subjected to abduction, forced labour, sexual exploitation, physical assault, displacement and mobility restrictions, such as has, variably, been documented in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Fiji, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

Women continue to assume a minority of decision-making positions in conflict and post-conflict settings. Twelve of the 40 Beijing+20 survey respondent countries, inclusive of the five ESCAP subregions, explicitly stated that no women occupy conflict resolution and/or peace-building decision-making positions in their countries. The Solomon Islands, in its Beijing+20 national review report, noted that despite “their role as peacemakers, women’s contributions were not acknowledged by the SIG [Solomon Islands Government], an example of which was their non-inclusion in the signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement by the government and the warring factions in October 2000” (p. 36).

Similarly in Indonesia, Shadia Marhaban was the only woman member of the Free Aceh Movement negotiating team during the 2005 peace negotiations held in Helsinki. Shadia Marhaban observed that “[th]e peace negotiations had focused on political and security arrangements only, without

considering the position and rights of women in the eventual agreement that was signed on August 15, 2005. This lack of inclusion and consideration of women’s roles and rights in the Aceh peace process is playing out today into denial of women’s rights and radicalization of religious views.”

In the Philippines, by contrast, several women (although still a minority) have and do assume decision-making positions within the peace processes: Teresita Quintos-Deles heads the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process; Professor Miriam Coronel Ferrer led the peace negotiations that resulted in the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (being the final peace agreement between the Philippine Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front that was signed in 2014); and four of the 15 members of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission that will draft the Bangsamoro Basic Law are women.

Beijing+20 respondent countries reflected that women are included in their deployments to United Nations peacekeeping operations. For instance, female police officers from New Zealand have worked with the Afghan National Police, while 22 per cent of police personnel deployed by Australia to international peacekeeping missions are women. An all-women police contingent from Bangladesh supported the peacekeeping mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in 2010; while noting that 3.18 per cent of police officers in Bangladesh are women.

At the national level, women serve in the military and police force. For example, in New Zealand, the Secretary of Defence, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Police are women. In Timor-Leste, 13 per cent of the national defence force personnel are women. Ten per cent of the military service personnel, covering internal affairs agencies, fire-fighting units and correctional institutions, in the Russian Federation are women, rising to 12 per cent in Kazakhstan (with restrictions on the roles that women can occupy in the army to such auxiliary functions as signallers, interpreters, lawyers, finance officers and medics).

In some countries in Asia and the Pacific, the participation of women in conflict resolution

and peace-building activities is underpinned by national policy. Of the 40 Beijing+20 survey respondents, 13 reported having national policies that mandate equal participation of women and men in conflict-resolution and peace-building activities at the national level. With the adoption of the Human Rights (Women in Armed Forces) Amendment Act,¹¹² women in New Zealand can choose to serve in active combat roles. As stipulated in the Magna Carta for Women, women in the Philippines should be included, at the decision-making level, in peace processes, while in Nepal “[i]t is mandatory that 33 per cent women must be included while constituting Local Peace Committees formed in every District, Municipality and Village Development Committee”.¹¹³ In the Russian Federation, women may join the military, in prescribed fields.

Beijing+20 respondent countries noted the challenges to equitable participation of women, and the negative consequences of the failure to include—in a substantive and quantitatively significant level—women in conflict resolution and peace-building processes.

“There are problems and challenges regarding women being attracted to join the security forces: negative customs and traditions, prejudices, and insecurity are cultural traditions ruling the Afghan society.”

Afghanistan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 32

“Women’s exclusion impacted negatively on the safety and security of women and girls. Male decision makers need to hear from women and to understand that women experience conflict differently to men and their views must be heard and addressed by governments during peace negotiations and post conflict reconstruction efforts.”

Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 37

112 www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2007/0016/latest/whole.html

113 Philippines 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

Education and training

Gender training for law enforcement officers, judicial officers and military personnel

Of the Beijing+20 survey respondents, 17 of 40 (42.5 per cent) reported that their countries conduct gender training for law enforcement officers, judicial officers and/or military personnel on violence against women in armed and other conflicts. Three of the 17 countries were able to provide statistics as to the participation of law enforcement officers, judicial officers and military personnel in such training.

The content of the training delivered to police, judicial and defence/armed forces personnel variably includes general gender awareness, sexual and gender-based violence, the role of women in conflict resolution and peace-building and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, as occurs, for example, in Australia, Fiji, Nepal, New Zealand, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Turkey.

Education and/or training on peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation

Fewer countries reported the provision of formal education and/or training on peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation for women and for men (13 of 40 countries; 32.5 per cent) and for girls and for boys (6 of 40 countries; 15.0 per cent). Where such education and training is provided it may manifest as instruction in mediation, restorative justice, peace education or community dialogue, delivered, for instance, through community centres, schools and youth camps.

Protection of, and assistance to, women and girls during and after armed conflict

Protection policies

In recognition that during and upon conclusion of armed conflict, women and girls may be subjected to abduction, forced labour, forced combat, physical assault, sexual abuse or enslavement, amongst other forms of exploitation and maltreatment, some countries in the Asia-Pacific region (14 of the 40 Beijing+20 respondent countries; 35.0 per cent) have policies in place for the protection of women and girls, including refugee and displaced women and girls, from violence during armed conflict (and notwithstanding the national action plans referenced in Section 3.5.1). Examples include New Zealand's Bill of Rights 1988 and Human Rights Act 1993,¹¹⁴ which are inclusive of refugee and displaced women and girls, and Australia's Humanitarian Action Policy (2011),¹¹⁵ which is complemented by the Implementation Plan (2012)¹¹⁶ and a Protection in Humanitarian Action Framework (2013).¹¹⁷

Assistance to women and girls who have experienced violence in conflict situations

Whether through assigned government ministries and departments, national women's machineries, the police or the defence forces, and augmented by women's organisations and other non-governmental entities, countries across Asia and the Pacific variably provide assistance to women and girls who have experienced violence in conflict situations. Of the 40 Beijing+20 respondent countries, 17 (42.5 per cent) reported the delivery of assistance to women and girls, inclusive of physical rehabilitation (17 of 40 countries; 42.5 per cent),

psychological rehabilitation (14 of 40 countries; 35.0 per cent), livelihoods support (12 of 40 countries; 30.0 per cent) and social reintegration (13 of 40 countries; 32.5 per cent).

In Georgia, there is government provision of housing and legal aid for internally-displaced persons. Similarly in the Russian Federation, temporary shelter and health services are provided to survivors of armed conflicts. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, refugees, such as those from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, may access financial and employment support. Since 2013, Turkey has implemented the "Humanitarian Assistance Programme for Combatting and Responding to Gender-Based Violence" for Syrian refugees. As Papua New Guinea reported in its 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, "[d]uring the armed conflict, women and girls were placed in 'care centres' to avoid casualties and to protect them from violence, abuse and in some cases, murder. This enabled authorities to ensure they were properly fed, clothed and had health services." (p. 27).

Summary

A minority of countries in the Asia-Pacific region have normative frameworks addressing women and armed conflict, with varying levels of implementation. Similarly, women continue to constitute a minority of participants in conflict resolution and peace-building processes. Initiatives are being undertaken to raise awareness, understanding and responsiveness to the needs and interests of women and girls during and after conflict.

Apart from a numerical increase in the number of countries in Asia and the Pacific that enact and pursue measures in alignment with the strategic objectives of critical area of concern E of the Platform for Action, consideration may be given to enhancing the systematic engagement of women and girls, and inclusion of their needs and interests, in conflict resolution and peace-building processes, along with the monitoring of such initiatives and the strengthening of the knowledge, skills and networks of women and their organizations.

114 www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1993/0082/latest/DLM304212.html

115 <http://aid.dfat.gov.au/Publications/Documents/ausaid-hap-dec-11.pdf>

116 <http://aid.dfat.gov.au/Publications/Pages/2011-humanitarian-action-policy-implementation-plan.aspx>

117 <http://aid.dfat.gov.au/makediff/humanitarian/Documents/framework-protection-humanitarian-action.pdf>

Women and the economy

“Although many women have advanced in economic structures, for the majority of women... continuing obstacles have hindered their ability to achieve economic autonomy and to ensure sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their dependents.”

Platform for Action, Critical Area of Concern F, paragraph 156

Under critical area of concern F, “Women and the Economy”, the Platform for Action outlines objectives pertaining to (a) equality of access for women and men to employment, decent working conditions and resources, (b) the elimination of discrimination in employment, (c) the provision of business services, training, information and technology to women, and (d) the harmonization of work and family responsibilities.

Within that spectrum of issues, this section of the report provides an overview of government policies, plans and programmes targeting equality of access, the elimination of employment-related discrimination and entrepreneurship, as well as providing a quantitative summary of the extent of the engagement of women in the economy.¹¹⁸

Equal access to employment

Equal Access Policies, Plans and Programmes

Most frequently enacted in the 1990s and the first decade of the twentieth century, the majority of the Beijing+20 respondent countries (32 of 38; 84.2 per cent) reported the existence of policies, supported by action plans and/or programmes, that mandate women’s and men’s equal access to employment, with 81.6 per cent of respondent countries (31 of 38) also having policies that mandate (a)

118 This section on “women and the economy” does not contain discussion of the qualitative nature of policies, plans and programmes and the extent of their implementation; of women’s and girls’(varied) experiences of generating livelihoods or of the implications of the failure to ensure women’s and men’s equitable access to employment and resources.

equal access to decent work, and (b) equal access to and control over economic resources.

Illustrative of such policies, plans and programmes in the Asia-Pacific region are the Workplace Gender Equality¹¹⁹ and Sex Discrimination Acts¹²⁰ in Australia; the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy in Fiji; the Labour Codes or Acts as in Armenia (2004),¹²¹ Azerbaijan (1999),¹²² Bangladesh (2006),¹²³ Georgia,¹²⁴ Mongolia (1999),¹²⁵ Nepal (2048)¹²⁶ and Timor-Leste (No. 4/2012);¹²⁷ the Employment Roadmap 2020 in Kazakhstan, the Labour and Employment Relations Act 2013 of Samoa,¹²⁸ complemented by the 2013–2016 Decent Country Work Programme,¹²⁹ and the Equality at Work Platform (2013) in Turkey.

Beijing+20 respondent countries also reported that, in some instances, policies, plans and programmes are not inclusive of all categories of workers or provisions apply conditionally. Additionally, for some countries, normative frameworks do not mandate equality of access.

“Deprivation of women from ownership of property and heritage continued.”

Afghanistan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 33

“There is a need to ensure compliance of labour laws by the private sector employers and women’s rights with regard to health, safety, security, maternity, child care, etc.”

Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 33

“Women’s economic empowerment remains a key challenge as women continue to face limited job opportunities, remain underrepresented in management positions and weak protection mechanisms and laws for women particularly in the private sector”.

Marshall Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 15

“The various pieces of legislation which cover employment in Solomon Islands do not provide anti-discrimination provisions on the grounds of sex, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation and HIV status with sanction. The legislation does not provide special measures for the advancement of women in employment. Employment protection legislation is very limited.”

Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 survey

Where policies, plans and programmes on equality of access of women and men to employment, decent work and economic resources exist, some countries in the Asia-Pacific region have measures in place to monitor their implementation; such as labour, work or workplace tribunals, commissions and inspectorates, ombudsman offices and surveys conducted by national statistical offices.

Promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination in employment and in the workplace

Beyond access, in countries in Asia and the Pacific various measures are in place for promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination in employment and in the workplace.

On average, approximately two-thirds of the Beijing+20 respondent countries have measures in place from promoting gender equality in the world

119 www.comlaw.gov.au/details/c2012c00899

120 www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2014C00002

121 www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/docs/961/Labour%20Code%20ENG.pdf

122 www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WEBTEXT/54131/65184/E99AZE01.htm

123 www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex_browse.details?p_lang=en&p_country=BGD&p_classification=01.02&p_origin=COUNTRY&p_sortby=SORTBY_COUNTRY

124 www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_113183.pdf

125 www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WEBTEXT/57592/65206/E99MNG01.htm

126 www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WEBTEXT/30019/64854/E92NPL01.htm

127 www.jornal.gov.tl/lawsTL/RDTL-Law/RDTL-Laws/Law%204-2012%20Labour%20Code.pdf

128 www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/--ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_201328.pdf

129 www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/program/dwcp/download/samoa1316.pdf

of work, increasing to 80 per cent in relation to some issues and dropping to below 50 per cent for other issues. The absence of employment measures promoting gender equality are not isolated to one ESCAP subregion, but include countries in all five subregions (although with slight favouring of the Pacific).

In terms of pay, 27 of 38 respondent countries (71.1 per cent) reported the existence of legislation that mandates equal pay for equal work or work of equal value. Further analysis of the 27 countries reveals that for half of the countries the legislation does not mandate equal pay for work of equal value.

With respect to pay, salaries and wages, Beijing+20 respondent countries reported the existence of a “gender wage gap”.¹³⁰ In New Zealand, the gender wage gap is estimated at 10.1 per cent, reducing to 4.2 per cent when only women employed full-time are included in the calculations. Turkey estimated the gender wage gap at between 10 and 19 per cent. In Kyrgyzstan Kazakhstan, the 2012 estimated gender wage gaps were 25.7 per cent and 30.1 per cent, respectively.

“Low average monthly wages of women compared to men in the Republic”.

Azerbaijan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 4

“More women than men (21.4 per cent versus 10.6 per cent) had weekly income less than 500 takas”, with the consequence that “[i]t is important to monitor measures in the formal labour market to... narrow and close the wage gap between women and men, and apply the principle of equal remuneration and equal opportunities at work in accordance with ILO conventions 100 and 111.”

Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 32 & p. 35

“Wage reform has led to a widening gap between the incomes of the top-level administration and ordinary staff, predominantly comprised of women”.

Kyrgyzstan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 12

“Women... are paid less [than men]”.

Timor-Leste, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 17

“The wage gap between men and women tends to be widened... Women’s average income wage is lower than men...”

Viet Nam, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 27

One factor contributing to the gender pay gap is sex-based occupational segregation. A minority of the Beijing+20 respondent countries (16 of 28; 42.1 per cent) have programmes in place for eliminating such segregation.

Approximately two-thirds of the Beijing+20 respondent countries reported anti-sex discrimination legislation (69.2 per cent; 27 of 39 countries) and legislation that mandates equal opportunity of women and men to organize and to collective bargaining (64.1 per cent; 25 of 39 countries). A marginally higher portion of respondent countries (69.2 per cent; 27 of 39 countries) have grievance mechanisms for women and men who experience sex discrimination.

With respect to employment-related opportunities, 30 of the 39 (76.9 per cent) Beijing+20 respondent countries attest to legislation that mandates equal opportunities of women and men to engage in all employment fields, while 27 of the 39 (69.2 per cent) respondent countries reported legislation that mandates equal access of women and men to training, retraining, counselling and placement services. Only half of the Beijing+20 respondent countries affirmed the existence of legislation that mandates equal access of women and men to employment-based migration opportunities.

Concerning economic resources, 25 of the 39 (64.1 per cent) Beijing+20 respondent countries reported

130 This observation is substantiated in the International Labour Organization’s Global Wage Report 2014/15, www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_324678.pdf

legislation mandating equal access of women and men to, and ownership and control of, land, property and other resources, while 27 of the 39 (69.2 per cent) respondent countries attested legislation that mandates equal access to and control of credit, and 26 of 39 (66.7 per cent) respondent countries of financial savings. A greater number of countries in Asia and the Pacific reported legislation that mandates equal access to social security (31 of 39; 79.5 per cent), while slightly more than half of the respondent countries (54.8 per cent: 21 of 39) attested to legislation that mandates equal rights of women and men (and girls and boys) to inheritance.

The lack of legislation addressing equality of access to, and ownership and control, of economic assets, as well as challenges in implementing legislation that does exist, was noted by Beijing+20 respondent countries.

“There remain discriminatory laws limiting women’s ownership, control and usage of land. Ownership and control over assets and land is still mainly by men.”

Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 17

“Male heirs are expected to inherit traditional [land] titles and ensuing responsibilities. Practices are such that women can only inherit the title if there is no male survivor”.

Fiji, Beijing+20 national review report, p. 28

“[T]he RMI is a matrilineal society where succession of and to land rights pass through women. However, the authority to exercise and control these rights is usually delegated to men”.

Marshall Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 9

In terms of protective measures for particular categories of women, slightly more than three-quarters of the Beijing+20 respondent countries reportedly have measures for protecting the interests and rights of pregnant women (79.5 per cent; 31 of 39 countries), breast-feeding women (79.5 per cent; 31 of 39 countries) and women on maternity leave (89.7 per cent; 35 of 39 countries).

Breast-feeding provisions include one or more breaks during the working day or reduced daily working hours and facilities within the workplace to allow for breast-feeding and expressing milk. Where the legislation exists, women may take maternity leave for the prescribed duration, which may or may not be paid, and may only apply to women employed in the public sector.

In approximately two-thirds of the Beijing+20 respondent countries (69.2 per cent; 27 of 39 countries), measures are reportedly in place to promote the harmonization of work and family responsibilities. Examples of such measures include government funding of childcare services, childcare allowances, flexible working hours and paid parental leave. Beijing+20 respondent countries did note, however, that service provision can be inadequate, as expressed by Kyrgyzstan in its 2014 Beijing+20 national review report: “Due to reduction in the number of preschool institutions (kindergartens and nurseries especially), women cannot go to work” (p. 11).

With respect to other categories, while protective measures for women with disabilities reportedly exist in 66.7 per cent of the Beijing+20 respondent countries (26 of 39 countries), protective measures for women migrant workers, indigenous women and women in the informal economy exist in approximately one-third of the respondent countries (35.9 per cent, 33.3 per cent and 30.8 per cent respectively).

(Quantitative) Engagement of women in the economy

Despite the existence of policies, legislation, programmes and measures promoting equality between women and men in the world of work, women and men are not present in the labour force in equal numbers in the five ESCAP subregions.¹³¹

131 The data reported in Section 3.6.3 was obtained from the online databases of the International Labour Organization (ILOSTAT, www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/home/statisticaldata?_afLoop=436570519890835), World Bank (<http://data.worldbank.org/>) and Gender Statistics (<http://genderstats.org/>). The data are for the most recent year for which information is available, primarily 2010 to 2013, but also dating from 2003 in some instances.

Female and male labour force participation rates

Labour force participation rates, as shown in Figure 15, reveal that the participation of females of working age is lower than that for males of the same age cohort across Asia and the Pacific. In the Pacific subregion, for six of the 15 countries for which data could be obtained, the female labour force participation rate is below 50 per cent. For five of the 11 countries that constitute the South-East Asia subregion, the female labour force participation rate is below 50 per cent. Lower rates of female labour force participation exist in both North and Central Asia and South and South-West Asia. For North and Central Asia, eight of the nine countries have labour force participation rates below 50 per cent; in five of those eight countries, the female labour force participation rates are between 24 and 40 per cent. In South and South-West Asia, four of the ten countries have female labour force participation rates below 22 per cent and a further three have rates between 29 and 36 per cent. By contrast, in East and North-East Asia, five of the seven countries of this subregion have female labour force participation rates between 50 and 70 per cent. The other two countries have female labour force participation rates of 48.2 per cent and 49.9 per cent.

Female and male employment-to-population ratios

Another indicator of the engagement of women and men in the economy is the employment-to-population ratio. As indicated in Figure 16, women are less likely than men (of working age) to be employed, in all ESCAP subregions. In both the Pacific and North and Central Asia subregions, the female employment-to-population ratio marginally increased between 1995 and 2012, while this ratio fell in East and North-East Asia and in South and South-West ratio.

Also evident in Figure 16 is the variable gap between female and male employment-to-population ratios across the ESCAP subregions. The largest gap, of 48.5 per cent, exists in South and South-West Asia, followed by South-East Asia at 22.3 per cent. In

North and Central Asia, the gap between female and male employment-to-population ratios is 14.6; being marginally lower, at 13.6 per cent in East and North East Asia. In the Pacific, 11.7 percentage points separates the female and male employment-to-population ratios.

Non-agricultural employment

Disparities between the engagement of women and men in the labour force are further evidenced in relation to non-agricultural employment. As reflected in Figure 17, while in some countries in Asia and the Pacific women constitute half of the persons employed in the non-agricultural sector (most notably for East and North-East Asia), in the vast majority of countries, women constitute the minority. For instance, in six of the eleven countries in the Pacific, for which data were obtained, women constitute approximately one-third of the non-agricultural sector workers. A similar proportion of women are in the non-agricultural sector in five of the eleven countries in South-East Asia; with the proportion of women in the non-agricultural sector falling within the fortieth percentile for five other countries from that subregion. In South and South-West Asia, women constitute between 12.6 and 23.6 of workers in the non-agricultural sector in seven of the 10 countries. In the other three countries, the proportional representation of women is between 31 and 41 per cent.

Vulnerable employment

While women are less likely to be employed overall and are less likely to be employed in the non-agricultural sector, than are men, in Asia and the Pacific, women are more likely than men to be engaged in vulnerable employment (with the exception of women in East and North-East Asia), as shown in Figure 18. In South and South-West Asia, for five of the seven countries for which data could be obtained, the majority of employed women are in engaged in vulnerable employment.

The Beijing+20 respondent countries noted that the more vulnerable and lower rates of employment of

women in the labour market reflect “labour force discrimination”.¹³² As articulated by Timor-Leste in its 2014 Beijing+20 national review report:

“The lower participation of women illustrates not only a statistical bias rising from the definition of labour force participation but also a combination of other household and economic factors such as women’s high fertility and heavy housework chores hindering their engagement in work outside the household, lack of income earning work opportunities for women in the economy, and women’s lack of appropriate education or skills demanded from jobs currently available”. (p. 16)

Occupational segregation

Another consequence of sex-based “labour force discrimination” is occupational segregation. Beijing+20 respondent countries reported both vertical and horizontal occupational segregation. In terms of vertical segregation, the glass ceiling remains in place, and particularly so for women from indigenous and ethnic minority communities, with the under-representation of women in leadership and decision-making positions. The 2014 Beijing+20 respondent countries also reported the predominance of women in low paid, low status and low skilled work, as well as in types of employment that reflect traditional gender roles; what has been labelled the 5Cs of caring, cashiering, cleaning, catering and clerical work. Low participation rates of women, such as less than 15 per cent, in such traditionally-male fields as mining, construction and transportation were also noted.

“[T]he majority of women employed in the formal sector worked in the low-paying fields of agriculture, education, healthcare, and light industry”.

Georgia, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 15

“The Employment Act 1978 still contains provisions that are discriminatory, such as prohibiting women from working in

certain positions at night and from working underground, or in jobs that involve heavy labour. Such provisions result in women being excluded from much of the mining industry, irrespective of the actual physical nature of the work.”

Papua New Guinea, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 29

“[W]omen’s participation in the rural economy is very much restricted to their role as producers and as bulk-buyers and retailers at markets. Women make up 90 per cent of the market vendors and are also responsible for about 90 percent of fresh fruit and vegetable marketing”.

Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 39

Contributing family workers and the unpaid care economy

A further area of (numerical) inequality between women and men workers, and also reflective of traditional gender roles, is labour undertaken for family businesses and income generation purposes. The proportions of employed women and men who are contributing family workers are shown in Figure 19, for the five ESCAP subregions. As is indicated in Figure 19, and notwithstanding average rate reductions of between one-third and one-half since 1995, women are more likely to be contributing family workers, than are men, across Asia and the Pacific. This is particularly so in South and South-West Asia and in East and North-East Asia where women are 3.5 and 3.2 times, respectively, more likely to be contributing family workers, than are men.

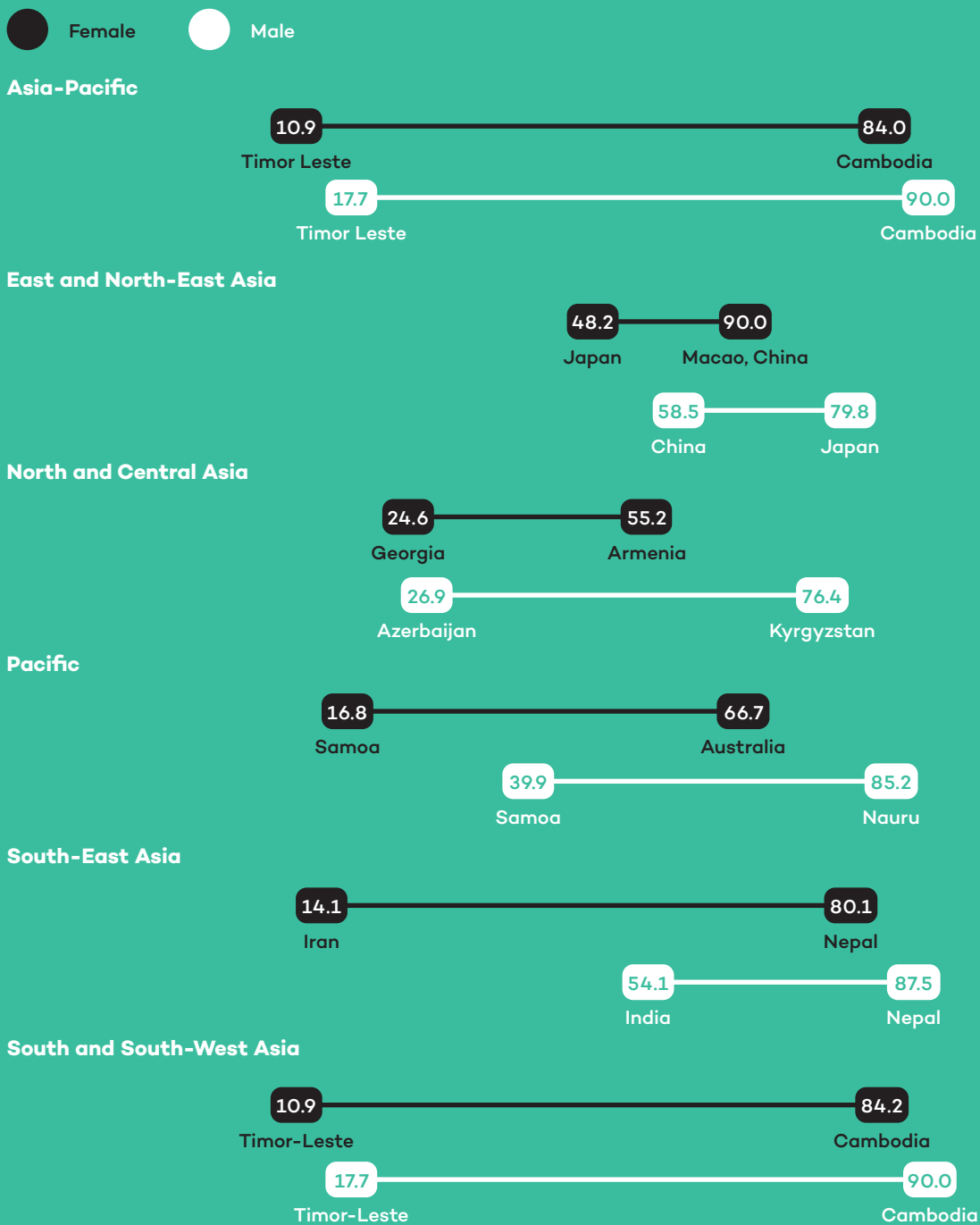
With respect to labour within the domestic sphere, Beijing+20 respondent countries highlighted that the majority of unpaid domestic and care work is done by women.

“[U]nusually high loads of responsibility on women compared with men in keeping the household, caring for children and the elderly is caused by the significant influence of traditional gender stereotypes”.

Kyrgyzstan, 2014 Beijing+29 national review report, p. 8

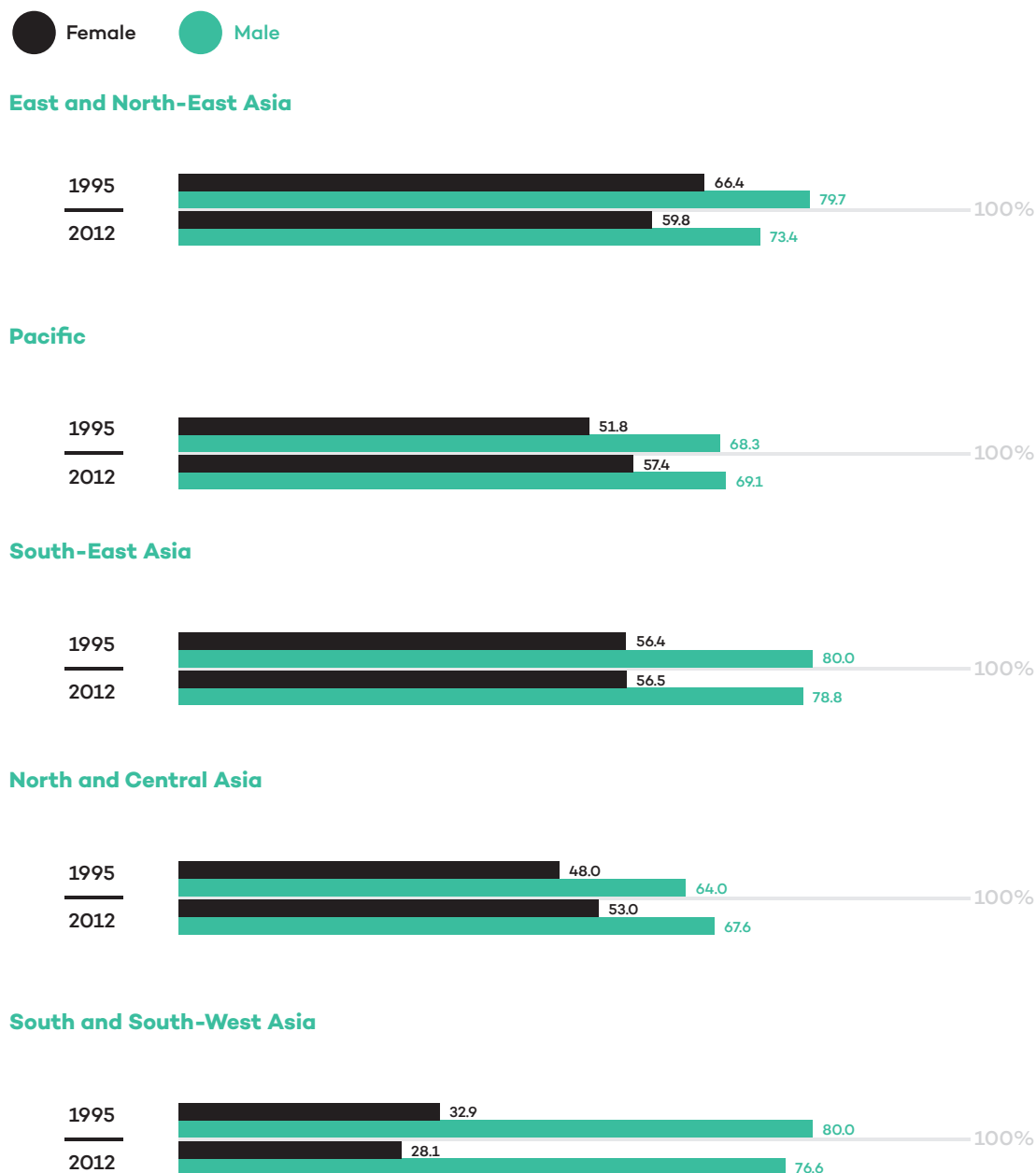
132 Fiji, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 12.

FIGURE 15
THE RANGE OF FEMALE AND MALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES
IN ASIA-PACIFIC AND IN THE FIVE ESCAP SUBREGIONS



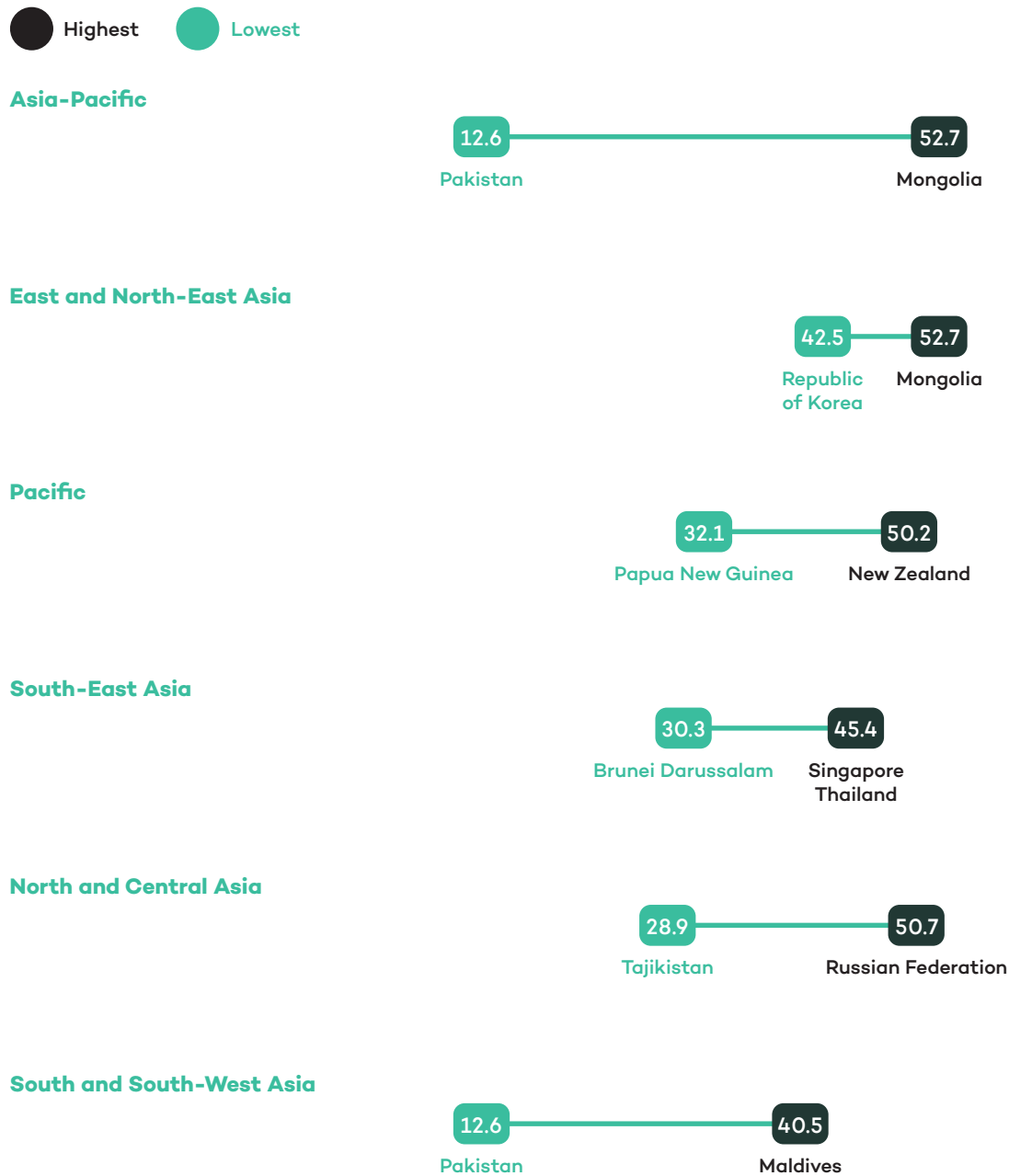
NOTE FOR FIGURE 15: Labour force participation rates were obtained for 15 of the 21 Pacific ESCAP members and associate members, ten of the eleven South-East Asia member States, nine of the nine North and Central Asia member States, ten of the ten South and South-West Asia member States and seven of the seven East and North East Asia members and associate members.

FIGURE 16
**FEMALE AND MALE EMPLOYMENT-TO-POPULATION RATIOS,
 BY ESCAP SUBREGION**



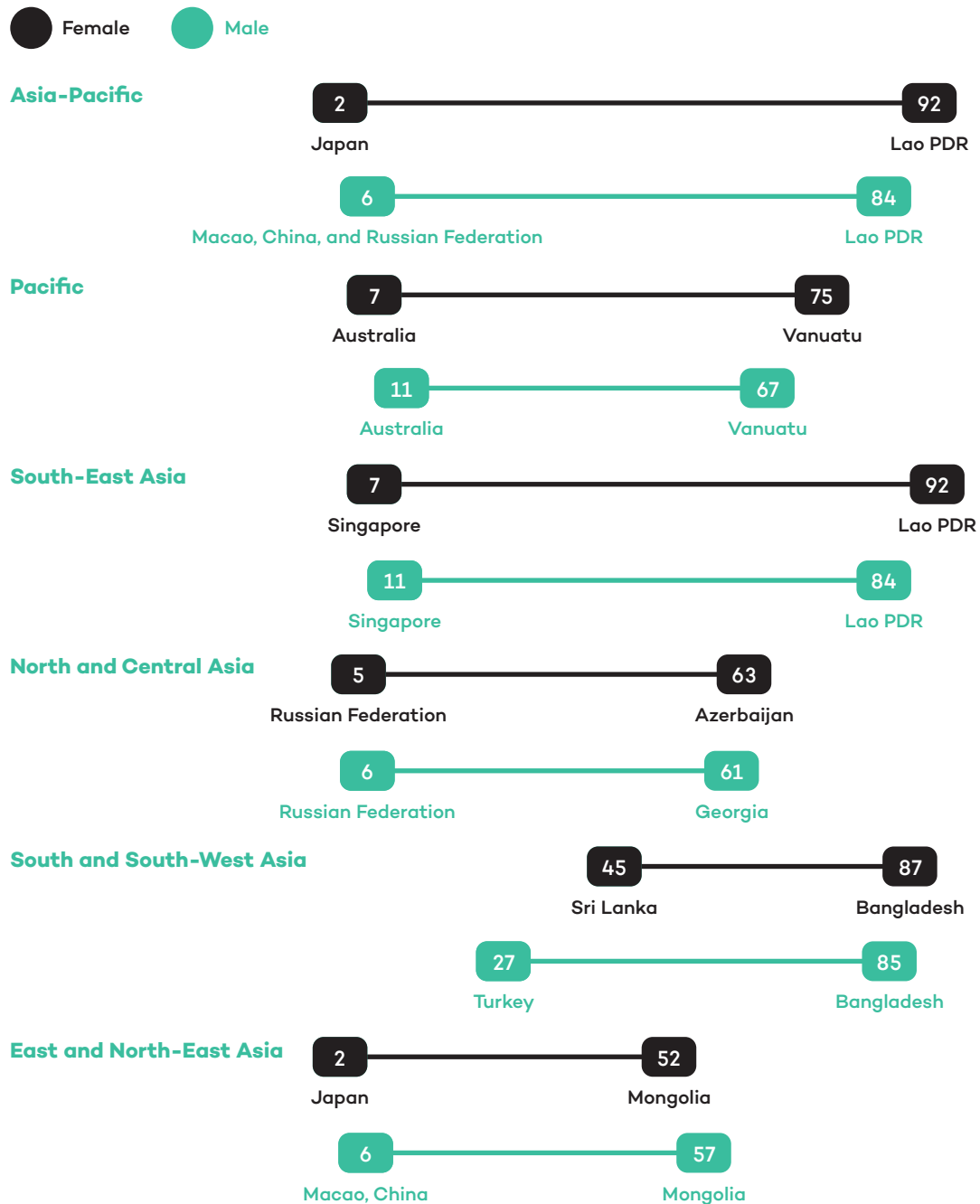
NOTE FOR FIGURE 16: Subregional employment-to-population ratios were from the ESCAP Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2014, www.unescap.org/resources/statistical-yearbook-asia-and-pacific-2014.

FIGURE 17
PERCENTAGE RANGE OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN THE NON-AGRICULTURAL SECTOR WHO ARE WOMEN, BY ESCAP SUBREGION



NOTE FOR FIGURE 17: Percentages of non-agricultural sector employees who are women were obtained for 11 of the 21 Pacific ESCAP members and associate members, ten of the eleven South-East Asia member States, nine of the nine North and Central Asia member States, ten of the ten South and South-West Asia member States and five of the seven East and North East Asia members and associate members.

FIGURE 18
PERCENTAGE (RANGE) OF WOMEN AND MEN ENGAGED IN VULNERABLE EMPLOYMENT, OF TOTAL EMPLOYED POPULATIONS, BY ESCAP SUBREGION.



NOTE FOR FIGURE 18: Data on vulnerable employment were obtained for six of the 21 Pacific ESCAP members and associate members, nine of the eleven South-East Asia member States, six of the nine North and Central Asia member States, seven of the ten South and South-West Asia member States and five of the seven East and North East Asia members and associate members.

“Women are primarily responsible for work in the home and for childcare. These multiple responsibilities are not fully acknowledged or supported through government policy and this makes it more difficult for women than men to devote the time required to high level posts”.

Nauru, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 6

“In the Philippines, women provide 84 per cent of the total household time allocated to child care”.

Philippines, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 46

In developed countries, inequalities in reproductive work also exist. For example, women in Australia spend approximately 8.33 hours per day in caring for children, compared with 3.55 for men.¹³³

Women’s entrepreneurship

A significant proportion of women in Asia and the Pacific generate incomes through self-employment. The proportion of women engaged in self-employment, of all employed women for a given country, varies within and across the ESCAP subregions, as evidenced in Figure 20.¹³⁴

Countries in East and North-East Asia, for instance, have higher proportional rates of self-employment for men, than for women. Similarly in North and Central Asia, there are higher rates of male self-employment, than female self-employment, in four of the seven countries. Yet in six of the eight countries in South-East Asia, for which data could be obtained, women are more likely to be in self-employment than are men. The predominance of women in self-employment, relative to men, is also evident in South and South-West Asia. In seven of nine countries in South and South-West Asia,

women are more likely to be self-employed than they are to be engaged in waged employment.

In terms of scale, Beijing+20 respondent countries reported that women tend to own and manage micro and small enterprises, such as exists in the Russian Federation and Timor-Leste, across a range of sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, retail and tourism.

Of the 37 Beijing+20 respondent countries, 32 (86.5 per cent) reported that they have measures in place to promote women’s entrepreneurship. Approximately two-thirds of the governments of the respondent countries (24 of 37; 64.9 per cent) seek to integrate the needs of women into entrepreneurship-related policies, programmes and budgets, as well as provide resources to institutions that support women’s entrepreneurship. Women are engaged in the formulation and review of entrepreneurship policies and programmes in 26 of the 37 (70.3 per cent) respondent countries. Timor-Leste has the National Strategy and Action Plan for Gender and Private Sector, while the 2005 Policy Strategies for Small and Medium Enterprises Development in Bangladesh¹³⁵ give preference to women entrepreneurs and aim to “accelerate the retention and promotion of women entrepreneurs”.¹³⁶

Alongside integrating gender into relevant policies, governments in slightly more than half of the Beijing+20 respondent countries (22 of 37; 59.5 per cent) have removed, or are removing, policy and regulatory obstacles to women establishing their own businesses. For example, in Samoa, the Companies Act of 2008 improved the efficiency of the company registration process.

While the majority of the Beijing+20 respondent countries have measures in place to promote equitable market access for women and men entrepreneurs and to increase women’s access to financial services (26 of 37; 70.3 per cent), only slightly more than half of the respondent countries have measures that (a) facilitate the transition of women entrepreneurs from the informal market to the formal market (20

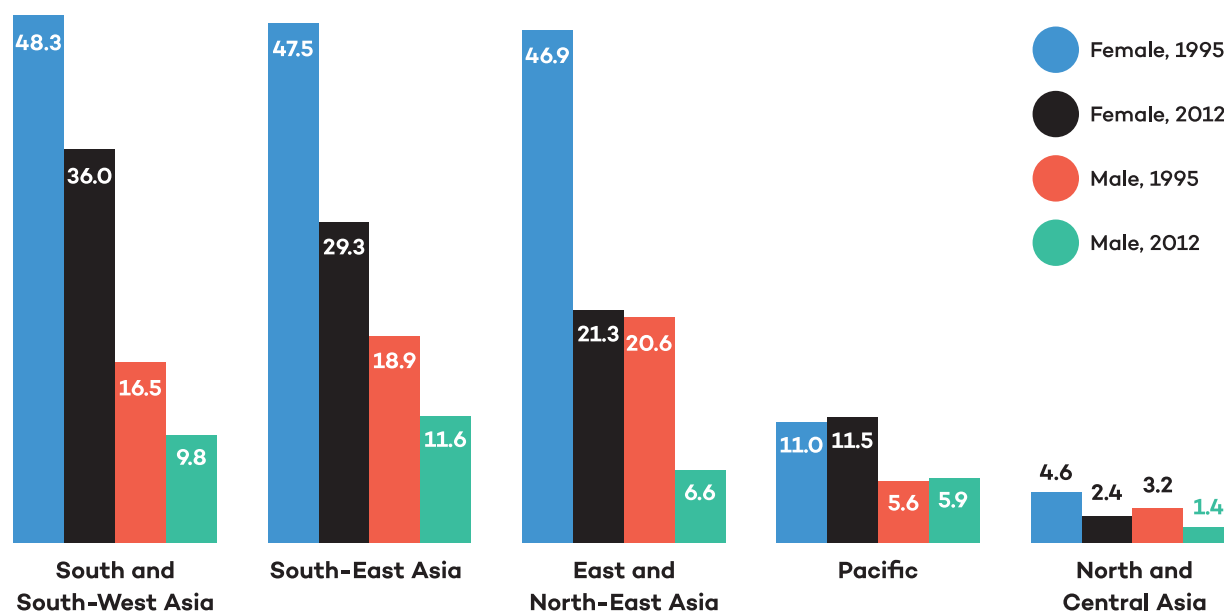
133 www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4125.0main+features4Feb%202015

134 Not reflected in Figure 20 is information as to the scale of the businesses owned and managed by women; that they tend to be concentrated within the micro and small enterprises, rather than amongst medium and large enterprises.

135 <http://business.org.bd/SME%20Policy%202005.pdf>

136 Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report p. 34

FIGURE 19
AVERAGE PERCENTAGES OF EMPLOYED FEMALES AND MALES WHO ARE CONTRIBUTING FAMILY WORKERS, BY ESCAP SUBREGION



NOTE FOR FIGURE 19: Data on contributing family workers were from the ESCAP Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2014, www.unescap.org/resources/statistical-yearbook-asia-and-pacific-2014.

of 37; 54.1 per cent), (b) provide services to women entrepreneurs, such as childcare, training and investment funds (21 of 37; 56.8 per cent), and (c) provide social protection to women working in the informal economy (19 of 37; 51.4 per cent).

Examples of the various measures include the “Markets for Change” project in the Solomon Islands that seeks to connect women vendors with market authorities and thus engage women at the decision-making level. Governments of other Pacific Island countries cooperate with large financial institutions, notably banks like the Westpac Banking Corporation and the National Development Bank of Palau, in providing financial training and microfinance to women entrepreneurs. In Bangladesh, financial institutions have “been instructed to reserve 15 percent of total SME [small and medium-enterprise] funds exclusively

for women entrepreneurs”.¹³⁷ In the Philippines, the Gender Responsive Economic Actions for the Transformation of Women (GREAT Women) project targeted women micro-entrepreneurs, which included provision of financial support. In order to “to link the informal sector and the formal sector”, cooperatives were established in Nepal.¹³⁸

As well as outlining measures that support women’s entrepreneurial activities, Beijing+20 respondent countries highlighted a range of challenges; from challenges of ensuring equality of rights decreed in policy and legislation to access to and control of resources, and the enduring “double-day”.

137 Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 34

138 Nepal, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 34

“Many women are deprived of most of their economic rights as that they do not have financial resources for their economic activities”.

Afghanistan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 34

“[T]he development of women’s entrepreneurship is faced with economic, political, legal, and sociocultural barriers. For example, women have limited access to strategic resources for business development: nearly 70 percent of microcredit recipients are women, but there are almost no women among the recipients of large business loans”.

Kyrgyzstan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 14

“There are... no banks on the island and very few financial services for women who wish to become entrepreneurs”.

Nauru, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 6

“Women are held back by a male dominated culture, a double time burden as they combine their businesses with social and domestic responsibilities”.

Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 17

Summary

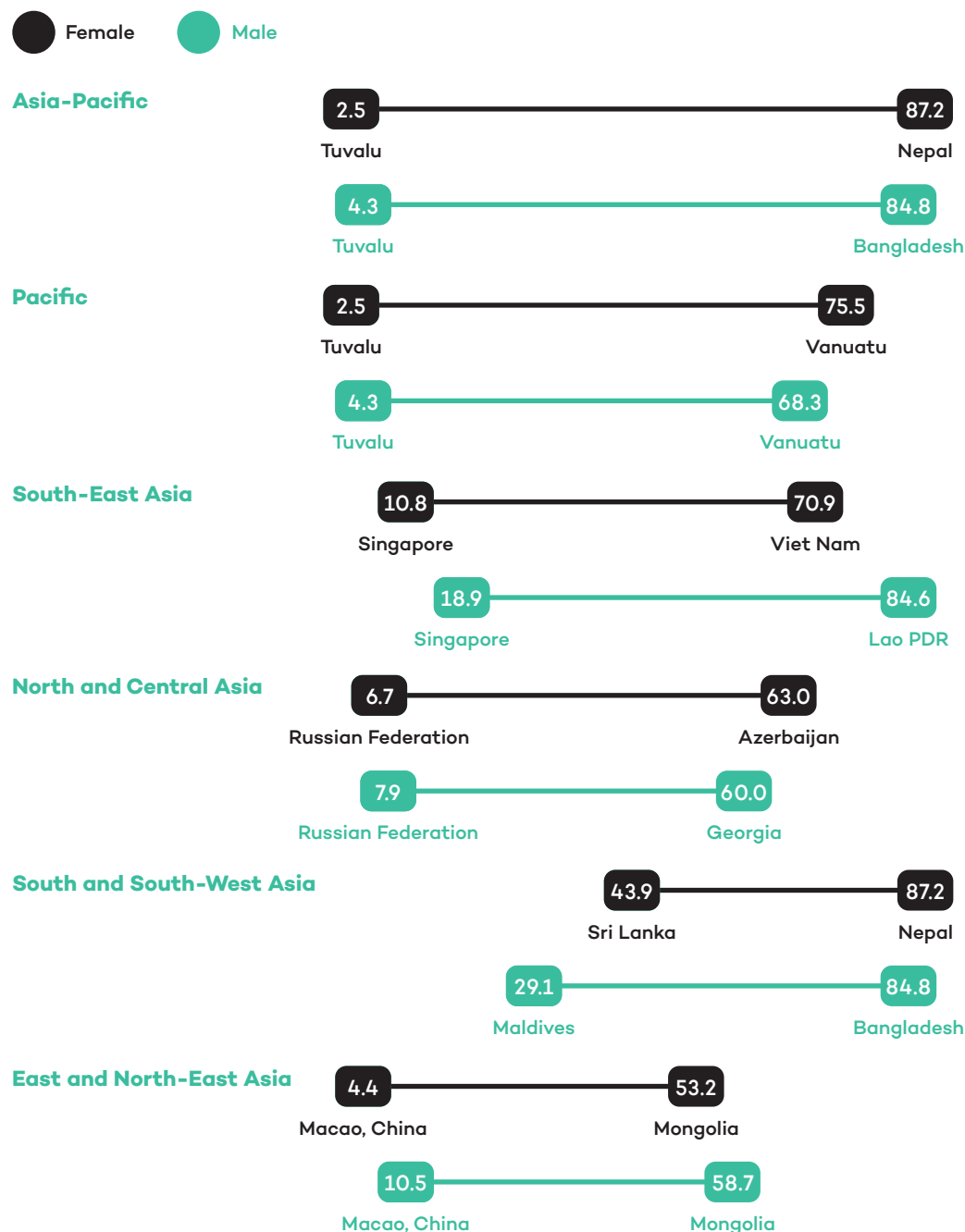
Policies, plans and programmes for women’s economic empowerment, both through waged labour and self-employment, are in place in countries across Asia and the Pacific. Where they exist, policies and legislation are not, however, comprehensive (such as systematically translating the International Labour Organization Conventions to national contexts) and do not apply to all categories of workers, domestic workers being a notable example.

Similarly, while the majority of the Beijing+20 respondent countries attest to practical measures designed to protect women workers and to promote their entrepreneurship, for example, the measures are not universally comprehensive and inclusive.

Thus, the gender parity that is increasingly evident in relation to education, has not transferred to the economy, where women are, relative to men, less likely to be employed, are more likely to be in engaged in vulnerable employment and are more likely to be contributing family workers. While rates of female and male self-employment vary between the ESCAP subregions, self-employment is the most common form of employment for many women in South and South-West Asia.

As noted by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, and in order to realize the objectives of this critical area of concern of the Platform for Action, there is a need for (a) the revision, adoption and enforcement of legislation that mandates equality of socioeconomic rights and opportunities for women and men; (b) an increase in the allocation of resources for women’s economic empowerment and decent work; (c) implementation of measures that encourage “balance” between working life and family life; (d) targeted consideration of, and action on, the needs and interests of particular groups of women workers, such as domestic workers, migrant workers, informal sector workers, and rural workers, and (e) investment in time use studies that increase understanding of women’s and men’s productive and reproductive labour and can inform decision-making.

FIGURE 20
PERCENTAGES (RANGE) OF EMPLOYED WOMEN WHO ARE ENGAGED IN SELF-EMPLOYMENT, BY ESCAP SUBREGION



NOTE FOR FIGURE 20: Data on rates of self-employment amongst employed women were obtained for seven of the 21 Pacific ESCAP members and associate members, eight of the eleven South-East Asia member States, seven of the nine North and Central Asia member States, nine of the ten South and South-West Asia member States and five of the seven East and North East Asia members and associate members.

Women in power and decision-making

“The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women’s social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration and sustainable development in all areas of life... Women’s equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women’s interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women’s perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.”

Platform for Action, Critical Area of Concern G, paragraph 181

The Platform for Action critical area of concern G, “Women in Power and Decision-Making”, focuses on women’s access to and participation in power structures and decision-making, and their leadership. Accordingly, this section of the report provides an overview of the quantitative presence of women in national civil services and in elected positions, as

well as of electoral reforms that have been undertaken to increase the representation of women in such positions.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ This section on “women in power and decision-making” does not contain discussion of the nature of women’s leadership and decision-making authority, or of women’s experience of attaining and assuming leadership and decision-making positions.

Representation of women in elected and leadership positions

Numerically equitable representation of women and men does not exist in national and subnational elected bodies, as well as within civil services, across Asia and the Pacific.¹⁴⁰

National women parliamentarians

In 17 of the 50 (34.0 per cent) countries and territories in Asia and the Pacific, for which data are available, less than 10 per cent of national parliamentarians (in single and lower houses) are women and in a further 15 (30.0 per cent) countries women constitute between 10 and 20 per cent of the national parliamentarians.

The quantitative ranges of the representation of women in single and lower houses of parliament in the five ESCAP subregions are shown in Figure 21. If Australia and New Zealand are excluded, in the Pacific subregion women constitute less than 12 per cent of the national parliamentarians in the 11 countries for which data could be obtained; and less than five per cent in seven of those countries. In South and South-West Asia, women are less than 20 per cent of the national parliamentarians in eight of the ten countries, with women reaching the 20th percentile in the other two countries. Similar situations apply in East and North East Asia (where the representation of women ranges between 8 and 17 per cent in five of the seven countries) and in North and Central Asia (with women constituting less than 20 per cent of national parliamentarians in eight of the nine countries). In South-East Asia, and with the exception of Timor-Leste, between one in five and one in four national parliamentarians (in lower and single houses) are women.

National women ministers

Similar proportional representation of women applies at the ministerial level in national parliaments across Asia and the Pacific. As reflected in Figure 22, the range of representation extends from zero to approximately one in three ministers. In 18 of the 35 countries and territories for which data could be obtained, however, women constitute less than 10 per cent of the national ministers, and less than 20 per cent in a further 11 countries. Thus in 82.8 per cent of the 35 countries and territories for which data are available, one in five, or fewer, national ministers are women. At the subregional level, this proportional representation (of less than 20 per cent) applies in both East and North-East Asia and in North and Central Asia. In five of eleven countries in the Pacific, fewer than two per cent of ministers are women, while in four of the eight countries of South and South-West Asia, less than one per cent of ministers are women.

Women in sub national elected positions

The under-representation of women in national parliaments is, in turn, reflected at the subnational level in countries across Asia and the Pacific.

Countries in the Pacific reported women constituting less than 20 per cent of village, state and local government representatives. For example, in the Republic of Palau, 19 per cent of the State Governors are women. In the villages of Samoa, 11 per cent of women hold the “matai” (leader/chief) title. In its Beijing+20 national review report, Australia, in turn, reflected that “women are under-represented in management and elected positions in local government. Women represent less than 30 per cent of councillors and elected local government members, women represent only 20 per cent of senior executives in local councils, and women represent only seven per cent of council CEOs”.

Similarly in South-East Asia, women are a minority of subnational decision-makers and leaders. In Timor-Leste, and given that “women’s lower levels of education and literacy, and a male-dominated culture, have limited their ability to contribute to

140 The sources of data reported in Section 3.7.1 are the Asia-Pacific 2014 Beijing+20 regional survey, the World Bank’s online database (<http://data.worldbank.org/>) and the website of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (www.ipu.org/english/home.htm). The data for national parliamentarians are applicable for 2014.

local governance”,¹⁴¹ two per cent of the *suco*¹⁴² and *aldeia*¹⁴³ chiefs are men; women are, however, 28 per cent of the village council members.

The average of one-in-four representation exists in the Philippines where women occupy 22.5 per cent of gubernatorial positions; in Kazakhstan, where 24.6 per cent of local authority representatives are women; and in Azerbaijan, where 26.5 per cent of municipality members are women.

Lower rates of representation of women exist in North and Central Asia. For instance, 11 per cent of local government representatives in Georgia are women, with women holding two of the 62 chairs of the *sakrebulo* (local representative bodies) and where men are the mayors of all five self-governing cities. In Kyrgyzstan, as of 2012, 16 per cent of the deputy mayors of local councils were women.

In South and South-West Asia, women also constitute a minority of public decision-makers. In Nepal, 20 per cent of the representatives on Village Development Committees must be women. Significantly lower rates of representation were reported for Turkey; for 2009, women constituted 1.2 per cent of local government representatives, 4.2 per cent of municipal council members, 3.2 per cent of provincial general council members, 2.5 per cent of city mayors and 1.3 per cent (6 of 458) vice-governors.

Women judges

While acknowledging a general lack of quantitative data, and with few exceptions, women are under-represented in senior level positions in the judicial sector. For some countries in the Pacific, less than five per cent of judges are women; a figure that does, however, increase to 25 and 30 per cent for other countries. Similar variability exists in South and South-West Asia, where less than ten per cent of judges in countries such as Nepal, the Maldives and the Islamic Republic of Iran are women, but in

other countries, like Turkey in relation to judicial courts, the number of women judges increases to one quarter and one-third of all judges. One in four to one in three judges are women in some of the countries of South-East Asia, including the Philippines and Thailand. In a few countries in East and North-East Asia and in North and Central Asia women constitute the majority of judges. For example in Kyrgyzstan, as of 2014, 60 per cent of the Supreme Court judges were women.

Beijing+20 respondent countries did, however, observe that, notwithstanding a few prominent women in senior positions – such as the Presiding Judge of the Supreme Court in New Zealand and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in the Philippines – the positions held by women in the judiciary are rarely at the senior levels.

Women private company chief executive officers and executive directors

The majority of the Beijing+20 respondent countries were unable to provide quantitative data as to the number and proportion of private company chief executive officers and executive directors who are women.

Of the countries that did report women’s engagement at senior levels within the private sector, there was unanimity in the under-representation of women. Bangladesh, in its 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, stated, for example, that “1% of firms have women as top managers” (p. 31). Of the 109 companies listed on the New Zealand Stock Exchange in 2013, 12 per cent had women directors. Across the Tasman Sea, in Australia, women constitute 15.4 per cent of members of Australian Stock Exchange 200 public companies, and a reduced 3.5 per cent of Chief Executive Officers.¹⁴⁴ In Singapore, 8.3 per cent of company board directors are reportedly women, while 57 per cent of the boards of Singapore Stock Exchange listed companies are comprised only of men as of 2013. In Turkey, six per cent of the Chief Executive Officers of public companies are

141 Timor-Leste, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 41.

142 In Timor-Leste, *suco* equates to village.

143 In Timor-Leste, *aldeia* equates to hamlet.

144 Reference: www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4125.0main+features4Feb%202015

women. In the Russian Federation, 11 per cent of the members of the executive boards of companies are women.

There are, however, countries in Asia and the Pacific with higher rates of women in senior management positions of private sector companies. In the Philippines, for example, women reportedly occupy 40 per cent of senior roles in private companies.

Representation of women and men in civil service positions

Within the regional variability that is evident in Asia and the Pacific, women, overall, continue to constitute a minority of senior level civil servants. While women in such countries as New Zealand occupy slightly less than half of senior government positions, women continue to be concentrated in the lower ranks of the civil service, and in sectors that reflect traditional gender roles (such as health and education), as noted by the Beijing+20 respondent countries.

There is a “marginalized presence of women in some institutions; in most institutions women have no major role in decision making”.

Afghanistan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 33

“While the numbers of women occupying board positions has increased both within the government and private sectors over the last decade, the number of women in these and other senior management positions remains substantially lower than for men.”

Australia, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 50

“[W]omen in executive positions within the Public Service is still less than 10%” and “the majority of them [women] are at the lower rung, which includes nursing, teaching and clerical work”.

Fiji, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 30 and p. 29

“While women are represented in the public service, the majority are concentrated in lower level positions”.

Nauru, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 6

“[T]he increased representation of women in Civil Service is limited to lower positions. There is a huge gender gap at the policy and decision making levels.”

Nepal, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 7

“Women are still a minority in top level positions in such agencies as public works, national defense and law enforcement”.

Philippines, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 31

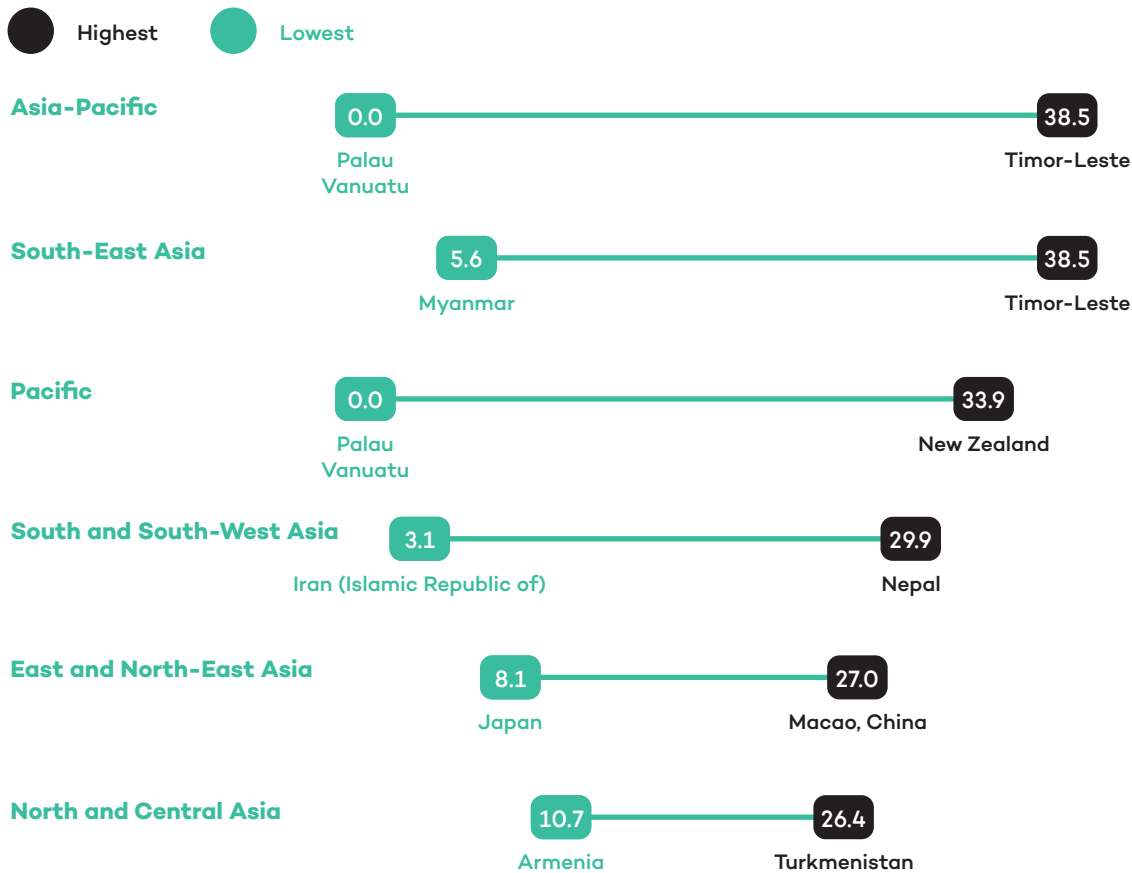
In Bangladesh, and despite the “gazetting” of 10 per cent of civil service positions for women, 3.9 per cent of secretaries are women. In its 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, Turkey reported that, in 2014, 90.9 per cent of its senior public executives are men. In Azerbaijan, women constitute 9.1 per cent of the State Customs Committee employees and 18 per cent of the Ministry of Justice staff, increasing to 79.5 per cent of staff in the Ministry of Health.

With the goal of gender parity in civil service staffing, in all sectors and at all levels, yet to be achieved, 23 of 38 (60.5 per cent) Beijing+20 respondent countries reportedly have national policies for achieving equal representation of women and men in all civil service positions. Nepal introduced affirmative action through its 2007 Civil Service Act, with one-third of public positions reserved for women. In 2012, Papua New Guinea introduced the National Public Service Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Policy which, amongst other issues, includes a commitment to “increasing the representation of women in the public sector by 15 percent and an increase of women in leadership and decision-making roles.”¹⁴⁵

Accompanying policies to achieve the equal representation of women and men in civil service positions are practical measures. Australia has the “Women in Public Service” initiative, designed to

145 Papua New Guinea, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 34

FIGURE 21
THE PROPORTION (RANGE) OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARIANS, IN SINGLE AND LOWER HOUSES, WHO ARE WOMEN, BY ESCAP SUB REGION



NOTE FOR FIGURE 21: Data on the proportion of national parliamentarians who are women were obtained for 13 of the 21 Pacific ESCAP members and associate members, eleven of the eleven South-East Asia member States, nine of the nine North and Central Asia member States, ten of the ten South and South-West Asia member States and seven of the seven East and North East Asia members and associate members.

support women in the acquisition of leadership skills. In its response to the Beijing+20 regional survey, Bhutan highlighted flexible working hours and provision of parental leave. In other countries, including Armenia, gender sensitisation training has been delivered to civil servants.

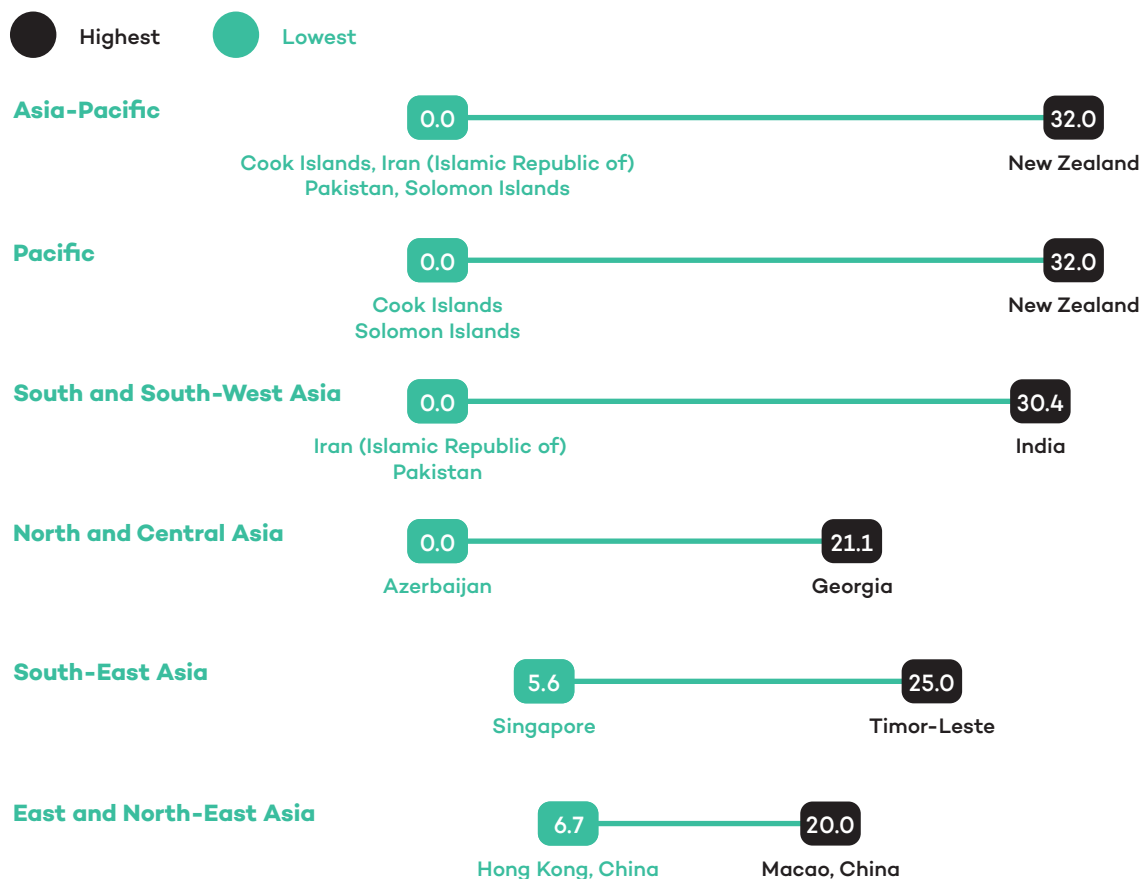
Increasing the representation of women in elected bodies

In order to redress inequalities in the representation of women and men in elected bodies, countries across Asia and the Pacific have sought to remove

obstacles to, and introduce enabling measures for, women's participation.

Slightly less than half of the Beijing+20 respondent countries (18 of the 39; 46.2 per cent) reported removing obstacles to women's participation in elected bodies, highlighting constitutional and legislative provisions for the equal rights of women and men to stand for election. Less than half of the Beijing+20 respondent countries (17 of 39; 43.6 per cent) affirmed the existence of "special temporary measures". Several countries in Asia and the Pacific reported the application of quota systems to (a) elected positions (such as seats in national

FIGURE 22
PROPORTION (RANGE) OF NATIONAL MINISTERS WHO ARE WOMEN, BY ESCAP SUBREGION



NOTE FOR FIGURE 22: Data on the proportion of national ministers who are women were obtained for 11 of the 21 Pacific ESCAP members and associate members, five of the eleven South-East Asia member States, six of the nine North and Central Asia member States, eight of the ten South and South-West Asia member States and five of the seven East and North East Asia members and associate members.

parliaments or local governments), and/or (b) political party candidate lists.

Under the Constitutional Amendment Act 2013,¹⁴⁶ 10 per cent of the Legislative Assembly members in Samoa should be women. At the local government level in Papua New Guinea, two seats are reserved for women, while three seats (8 per cent) are reserved for women within the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. Also in the Pacific, a 2009 amendment

to the Municipalities Amendment Act in Vanuatu¹⁴⁷ introduced the reservation of 30 to 34 per cent of seats in municipal councils for women. One-third of seats in the local governments – the Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad, City Corporation – of Bangladesh are reserved for women. Since 2007, a 32 per cent quota for the representation of women has applied to the Constituent Assembly of Nepal. The 74th amendment to the Constitution of India

146 www.parliament.gov.ws/images/ACTS/Constitution_Amendment_Act_2013_-_Eng.pdf

147 [www.pacwip.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/Vanuatu%20MUNICIPALITIES%20\(AMENDMENT\)%20ACT%20NO.%2011%20OF%202013.pdf](http://www.pacwip.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/Vanuatu%20MUNICIPALITIES%20(AMENDMENT)%20ACT%20NO.%2011%20OF%202013.pdf)

provides for the reservation of one-third of seats for women at the local government (municipal) level.¹⁴⁸

The Solomon Islands Political Parties Integrity Act 2014¹⁴⁹ provides for ten per cent of election candidates being women. In French Polynesia, under the 2000 Law on Equality, the electoral lists of political parties must have equal numbers of female and male candidates and political parties are required to alternate the listing of candidates by sex.

Under the People's Ordinance 2013 (Third Amendment), political parties in Bangladesh must reserve one-third of all committee positions for women. In Timor-Leste, one in every three candidates on a political party list must be a woman. North, in Mongolia, the Law on the Election of the Parliament requires that 20 per cent of candidates on the electoral lists of political parties be women. A similar quota applies in Armenia, where "the number of representatives of each gender must not exceed the 80 per cent integer group of five candidates".¹⁵⁰ A slightly higher quota applies in Kyrgyzstan, where women or men must not constitute more than 70 per cent of the candidates on an electoral list, and where no more than three women or men can be listed consecutively.

In some countries, unsuccessful attempts were made to introduce enabling measures for women's political participation. While the Equality and Participation Act was passed by the Parliament of Papua New Guinea in 2012, providing reserved seats for women, "the required enabling legislation to change the Constitution was defeated in a subsequent vote".¹⁵¹ The Parliament of Georgia rejected Presidential Decree 511 (1999) requesting consideration of the introduction of temporary special measures, including quotas, to increase women's political representation. In the Russian Federation, "the goal of increasing the number of women in decision-making positions in the public

sector remains a challenge. Attempts to initiate legislation in order to introduce temporary special measures to improve the representation of women in decision-making process have failed to find understanding and support both in society and by the members of parliament."¹⁵²

Even where "quota systems", "reserved seats" or "temporary special measures" are introduced, equality in the political participation and representation of women and men does not automatically follow.

"Reservation of seats has not brought about a perceptual [sic] change about women in electoral politics because the electoral field is still dominated by male politicians".

Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 37

"[T]he introduction of special measures did not effectively impact the overall situation and gender representation in the executive and legislative branches of government".¹⁵³

Kyrgyzstan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 33

Accordingly, other measures have been introduced in countries in Asia and the Pacific to increase the representation of women in elected office. In the Pacific, there is the Pacific Leadership Programme, the 50:50 Vision – Councils for Gender Equity¹⁵⁴ initiative in Australia and the introduction of separate polling booths for women and men in Papua New Guinea. Countries, such as the Philippines and Georgia, are promoting the participation of women through financial incentives, such as provision of 10 per cent funding to parties where 20 per cent or more of election candidates are women. Branches of political parties, and entire political parties, for women are active in other countries, including in Turkey and in the Russian Federation. A further manifestation of measures for increasing

148 <http://indiacode.nic.in/coiweb/amend/amend74.htm>

149 www.parliament.gov.sb/files/legislation/9th%20Parliament/Acts/2014/Political%20Parties%20Integrity%20Act%202014.pdf

150 Armenia, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 28.

151 Papua New Guinea, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 31

152 Russian Federation, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey

153 In 2008, women constituted 25.6 per cent of members of the legislative branch of government, decreasing to 20.8 per cent in 2011.

154 www.5050vision.com.au

the number of women political representatives is leadership training, as exists in Nepal and in Kazakhstan.

Issues and challenges

As suggested by the data presented in Section 3.7.1, despite the existence of policies and practical measures, women continue to be under-represented in elected bodies and in leadership positions. The 2014 Beijing+20 respondent countries cited sociocultural values and beliefs, adoption and enforcement of enabling policies and legislation, resources and capacity as persistent challenges to the achievement of the equitable representation of women and men in decision-making fora.

In terms of sociocultural values, beliefs and practices, the Beijing+20 respondent countries implicated both women and men in hampering change towards greater equality. For instance, in Samoa, the “brother-sister covenant” effectively proscribes women from serving on village councils to which their brothers are members.

“Women politicians rarely hold leadership positions in the central executive committees. These positions are traditionally considered to be the men’s domain. Women usually are given positions in committees those are traditionally considered to be women’s area, such as, education, health, women and children committees and are less likely seen to sit on economics, budget, and foreign affairs committees”.

Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 38

“Cultural obstacles, weak self-confidence and a lack of interest among many women for presence in the positions of power and decision-making”.

Islamic Republic of Iran, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 41

“[I]mportant decision-making structures, including the religious, private and judicial spheres are male dominated. Customary norms,

stereotypes of women’s roles, and the lack of public awareness about election processes limit women’s opportunities to be appointed to leadership positions at the national level”.

Marshall Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 5

“[M]any [women] still hesitate to take on leadership positions due to reproductive roles, conservative mindsets and a belief that politics and leadership are not women’s world”.

Philippines, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 31

“[F]actors hindering women from getting elected into parliament include traditional beliefs that only men are legible to be MPs... the lack of confidence by women to contest against men in an area which society views to be for ‘men only’”.

Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 43

The absence of enabling measures was noted by Beijing+20 respondent countries, as was the need to introduce and monitor the application of measures to address the structural barriers to the equal representation of women and men in elected bodies and in senior management positions. There was also a reported need for supportive familial and community environments, as well as networks of peers.

“The barriers that women face to participating as leaders in the community include broken work patterns due to pregnancy or caring responsibilities; inadequate family friendly or flexible work conditions; and discrimination or exclusion.”

Australia, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report

“[P]rovisions aimed at the promotion of women’s full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of public, political and professional life need to be monitored and enforced by Government”.

Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 39

“There are no temporary special measures to accelerate equality between men and women in Fiji”.

Fiji, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 8

“[N]o particular measure that benefiting women’s political participation such as quotas is formulated currently.”

(Macao, China, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey)

“Need for affirmative action to ensure representation of women at the provincial and national levels in the future.”

Vanuatu, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 11

“The burden of housework and the prejudices on management capacity of women have contributed to causing obstacles to women’s participation in the political field.”

Viet Nam, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 30

A further reported challenge to the equal representation of women and men in decision-making positions is adequate resources, encompassing both financial resources and human capacity. Improved access, by women, to greater financial resources and to opportunities to deepen their knowledge and skills in such areas as strategic planning, leadership, communication and conflict resolution, are two means that could reportedly increase the presence of women in elected bodies and in senior levels in the public and private sectors.

“Elected women representatives to public office need institutional support and resources so that they can function effectively”.

Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 39

“Limited access to financial resources for women to use in their electoral campaigns and unfair access to resources and opportunities”.

Islamic Republic of Iran, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 41

“[F]actors hindering women from getting elected into parliament include traditional beliefs that only men are legible to be MPs, the \$2000 contesting fee for the national elections and \$1000 for provincial elections; the lack of funds to meet election costs and the lack of confidence by women to contest against men in an area which society views to be for ‘men only’”.

Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 43

Summary

Across Asia and the Pacific, the equal representation of women and men in positions of “power and decision-making” has yet to be achieved. A “less than 20 per cent” phenomenon is apparent in the national parliaments of the majority of countries across the region. Available data also suggest that women hold a minority of senior management level positions in the civil services, even where they constitute half or more of the total staff.

Approximately half of the countries in the Asia and Pacific region have instituted measures to create more “enabling environments” for the participation and representation of women in elected bodies. Yet further efforts that address the identified structural and sociocultural impediments to the equal representation of women are needed; measures that may include the introduction and/or revision of policies and legislation that provide the normative framework for equality between women and men in leadership and decision-making; awareness-raising and dialogue that results in the revision of discriminatory beliefs and attitudes in favour of the enhanced engagement of women in the public domain; increased allocation of resources to implement measures that support women’s political participation; application of well-designed special temporary measures, and investment in broadening and deepening the competencies of women for leadership.

Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

“National machineries [for the advancement of women] are diverse in form and uneven in their effectiveness, and in some cases have declined. Often marginalized in national government structures, these mechanisms are frequently hampered by unclear mandates, lack of adequate staff, training, data and sufficient resources, and insufficient support from national political leadership.”

Platform for Action, Critical Area of Concern H, paragraph 196

Under critical area of concern H, “Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women”, of the Platform for Action, this section of the report focuses on the (a) status, (b) successes and challenges, and (c) means of strengthening the national machineries for the advancement of women.

Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women: overview

Across Asia and the Pacific, the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women vary in relation to their forms, degrees of authority and resources.

Institutional forms

Information pertaining to the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women was obtained for 52 of the 53 ESCAP members and nine associate members. With their establishment in the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century¹⁵⁵ (and noting some evolution in form), the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women in Asia and the Pacific range from ministries, departments and divisions, to committees, councils and offices; as listed in Table 2. In almost half of the ESCAP members and associate members (23 of 52; 44.2 per cent), “women” or “gender” are combined with issues of social affairs, community, health, youth,

¹⁵⁵ Nine of the Beijing+20 respondent countries reported the establishment of their national machineries for the advancement of women in the 1970s and the 1980s.

family and children. In approximately one-third of instances (19 of 52; 36.5 per cent), women are merged with children and/or family.

Mandates

In the context of the overarching goal of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, or advancing the status of women, the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women in Asia and the Pacific perform a range of functions, including:

- a formulating policies, legislation, strategies and action plans;
- b implementing programmes and projects;
- c raising awareness, disseminating information and building capacity;
- d delivering services;
- e promulgating gender mainstreaming across government;
- f providing advice to public sector entities;
- g liaising with, and coordinating, government and civil society stakeholders;
- h conducting needs assessments and research; and
- i monitoring and evaluating initiatives and compliance with national and international gender equality commitments.

Reflective of differences in institutional form, the breadth of functions varies across the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women in Asia and the Pacific.

Resources

In order to act on their mandates, the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women in Asia

and the Pacific have varying quantities of human and financial resources.

With respect to the latter, 27 of the 40 Beijing+20 respondent countries provided data as to the amount of government funding they receive in terms of a monetary figure and/or a percentage of the national budget.

Recognising the variability in economic wealth of the countries of Asia and the Pacific, annual funding for the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women ranges from 17 thousand to 67 million United States dollars. Thirteen of the 23 Beijing+20 respondent countries receive less than one million United States dollars in annual funding.

In terms of percentage allocation of national budgets, across 17 countries in Asia and the Pacific, annual funding for the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women ranges from 0.003 per cent to 3.12 per cent. In 15 of the 17 countries, however, the national budget allocation for the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women is less than one per cent. For some of the Beijing+20 respondent countries, government funding is for staffing and operations costs, with additional resources needing to be mobilised for programme and service delivery.

Despite the low national budget allocations, 20 of the 28 (71.4 per cent) Beijing+20 respondent countries that provided information reported that the funding of their institutional mechanism for the advancement of women has increased from previous years; with three reporting a decrease and five no change.

With respect to human resources – and again noting variability between countries in Asia and the Pacific region in terms of population, geographic and economic wealth – the number of full time staff employed in the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (for the 29 Beijing+20 respondent countries) ranges from one to just under 500. In 16 of the 29 (55.2 per cent) Beijing+20 respondent countries, the number of full-time staff is less than ten. A further 10 countries have between 10 and 100 full-time employees.

Successes, Challenges and Strengthening the Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

The (40) Beijing+20 respondent countries reported both successes and challenges in realizing their mandates, along with means of strengthening their institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women.

Successes, challenges and strengthening the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

As reported by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, successes common to the five ESCAP subregions were (a) strengthening of the normative frameworks, (b) fortifying the government's gender architecture, and (c) addressing violence against women and girls.

With respect to normative frameworks, the Beijing+20 respondent countries listed the formulation and enactment of policies; the introduction of new, and revision of existing, legislation; and the adoption of multi-year action plans and strategies for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.¹⁵⁶

In terms of the gender architecture of the state, the Beijing+20 respondent countries reported the establishment of their national women's machineries and other government bodies; the creation of senior government positions for advancing gender equality; and the appointment and capacity-building of gender focal points, and their

networks, in government offices at the national, district and local levels, as well as collaboration with non-state actors.¹⁵⁷

The Beijing+20 respondent countries also highlighted successes in relation to the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls, inclusive of the (a) passing of legislation,¹⁵⁸ (b) adoption of action plans,¹⁵⁹ (c) education and training of professionals in the health, community, law enforcement and judicial sectors, (d) provision of services to violence survivors, including accommodation, and (e) public awareness-raising campaigns.

Women's economic empowerment was highlighted by Beijing+20 respondent countries in South-East Asia, in East and North-East Asia, in South and South-West Asia and in the Pacific. The respondent countries referenced (a) the introduction of gender-responsive budgeting, (b) the creation of jobs for women, (c) the reduction in barriers to women's wage employment, (d) support to women in the informal economies, (e) provision of social security for "marginalized women", and (f) income generation capacity development initiatives.

Another recognised achievement, for countries in the Pacific and in South-East Asia, related to women and leadership. Beijing+20 respondent countries reported the introduction (and achievement) of

156 Examples include the national policies on gender equality and women's development adopted in the Solomon Islands in 2010, in Tonga in 2014, in Vanuatu and in the Cook Islands for 2011 to 2016; the Women's EDGE (Empowerment, Development and Gender Equality) Plan for 2013 to 2015 in the Philippines; adoption of the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (2013- 2022) in Myanmar and of the Programme for the Women's Development (2011-2020) in China; Japan's 2010 Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality; both the Gender Equality National Action Plan 2014-2016 and the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012-2015 in Georgia; the National Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for Achieving Gender Equality up to 2020 and the 2006 law on "Provision of Gender Equality" of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

157 Examples include the creation of the Ministry for Women, Youth and Social Affairs in Kiribati in 2013 and of the Setting up Ministry of Women and Child Development in India; the establishment of the Observatory on the Condition of Women in New Zealand in 2006, of women's networks from the village to national levels in Sri Lanka and of the Grand National Assembly Committee on Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men in Turkey; and the appointments of, in 2011, an Ambassador for Women and Girls in Australia and, in 2012, the Minister in Charge of Support for Women's Empowerment and Child Development in Japan.

158 Examples include the Family Safety and Family Protection Acts in countries of the Pacific; amendment to the Family Law in Thailand; the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 and the Sexual Harassment of Women in the Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redress) Act 2013 in India, the Domestic Violence Act 2012 of Maldives.

159 Examples include Timor-Leste's National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence 2012-2014; the 2007 National Program on Combating Domestic Violence in Mongolia and Bangladesh's National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violence Against Women.

TABLE 2
THE INSTITUTIONAL FORMS OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S MACHINERIES,
AND THEIR PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION, IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Form	Number	Percentage
Ministry	4	7.7
one component of a Ministry	1	2.0
Commission	3	5.8
one component of a Commission	3	5.8
Committee	4	7.7
one component of a Committee	3	5.8
Council	3	5.8
Directorate	1	1.9
Department	4	7.7
one component of a Department	2	3.8
Division	3	5.8
Office	4	7.7
one component of an Office	2	3.8
Bureau	1	1.9
other	3	5.8
Total	52	100

NOTES FOR TABLE 2:

Ministry - Afghanistan (Ministry of Women's Affairs), Cambodia (Ministry of Women's Affairs), French Polynesia (Ministry of Women's Rights), New Zealand (Ministry of Women's Affairs)

one component of a Ministry - Bangladesh (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs), Fiji (Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation), India (Ministry of Women and Child Development), Indonesia (Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection), Kiribati (Ministry of Women, Youth and Social Affairs), Malaysia (Ministry of Women, Family and Community), Maldives (Ministry of Health and Gender), Nepal (Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare), Republic of Korea (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family), Samoa (Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development), Solomon Islands (Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs), Sri Lanka (Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs)

Commission - Macao, China (Women's Commission), Pakistan (National Commission on the Status of Women), Philippines (Philippine Commission on Women)

one component of a Commission - Bhutan (National Commission for Women and Children), Kazakhstan (National Commission for Women, Family and Demographic Policy), Kyrgyzstan (State Commission on Family, Women and Youth)

Committee—Brunei Darussalam (Special Committee on Family Institution and Women), Mongolia (National Committee on Gender Equality), Myanmar (Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs), Uzbekistan (Women's Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan)

one component of a Committee - Azerbaijan (State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs), China (National Working Committee on Children and Women), Tajikistan (Committee on Women and Family Affairs)

Council - Georgia (Gender Equality Council), Japan (Council for Gender Equality), Russian Federation (Coordination Council on Gender Issues)

Directorate—Turkey (General Directorate on the Status and Problems of Woman)

Department - Nauru (Women's Affairs Department), Tuvalu (Gender Affairs Department), Vanuatu (Department of Women's Affairs), Viet Nam (Department of Gender Equality)

one component of a Department—Armenia (Department of Family, Women and Children Issues), Niue (Department of Community Affairs)

Division—Cook Islands (Gender and Development Division), Palau (Gender Division), Tonga (Women's Affairs Division)

Office - Australia (Australian Government Office for Women), Marshall Islands (Gender and Development Office), Papua New Guinea (Office of the Development of Women), Singapore (Office for Women's Development)

one component of an Office - Federated States of Micronesia (Gender Development and Human Rights Office), Thailand (Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development)

Bureau - Guam (Bureau of Women's Affairs)

Other - New Caledonia (Authorities Responsible for the Condition of Women), Timor-Leste (Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality), Islamic Republic of Iran (Vice-Presidency for Women and Family Affairs)

numerical targets for political parties,¹⁶⁰ the public service¹⁶¹ and parliaments.¹⁶²

Beijing+20 respondent countries in South-East Asia, South and South-West Asia and in North and Central Asia, in turn, reported achievements in relation to data and statistics, along with monitoring and evaluation systems. Myanmar launched “Gender Statistics in Myanmar”, while the Philippines introduced the Gender Mainstreaming Monitoring System to support review of the gender plans and budgets of government agencies. Another example is from the Russian Federation, which reported the creation of a statistical database that contains “data on the situation of men and women in all aspects of life”, which is used to inform policy development.

Implementation and monitoring of programmes were also cited as successes by a few of the respondent countries. In this respect, national translation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including reporting, was highlighted, as was delivery of sector-specific initiatives, such as pertaining to the natural environment, education and information and communication technology.

Challenges

Challenges reported by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, from the five ESCAP subregions, were of two kinds: obstacles to the realization of gender equality and women’s empowerment and difficulties encountered by the national women’s machineries in delivering on their mandates.

Across the five ESCAP subregions, the Beijing+20 respondent countries reported three key challenges to the realization of gender equality and women’s empowerment. According to the respondent countries there:

160 Examples include the Solomon Islands 2014 Political Parties Integrity Bill.

161 For example, in Australia, the target of women occupying 40 per cent of positions on Commonwealth government board and bodies was met. (Ref: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4125.0main+features4Feb%202015>)

162 For example, amendment to the Municipality Act in Vanuatu established a 30–34 per cent quota for women’s representation.

a is a lack of political will and accountability for gender equality and women’s empowerment, which is an impediment to the full and effective implementation of policies, legislation, strategies and action plans;

“[T]here is a low level of taking responsibility at leadership level in some ministries” for implementation of the NAPWA [National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan]”.

Afghanistan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 36

“A number of legislations have been enacted and policies framed in order to facilitate advancement of women to achieving gender equality. There is a need to ensure that all such legislations and policies are effectively implemented.”

India, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

There is a “lack of political commitment”.

Maldives, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

There is a “Lack of accountability across government on gender mainstreaming and implementation of key decisions made by leaders on gender equality”.

Marshall Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 6

b is a lack of awareness of, understanding of and appreciation for gender equality (and of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women), including among community, religious and political leaders, among women as to their human rights and available services, and among the “public” generally, with the consequent endurance of discriminatory “traditional and cultural practices” and “stereotypes on gender equality”;

“Gender stereotypes - women are still the main family caregivers.”

Macao, China, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

“People’s understanding of gender and women issues is not satisfactory; Traditional cultural values and patriarchal behaviour; Still existing strong gender stereotype”.

Mongolia, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

“Societal norms and values guided by patriarchy.”

Nepal, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

“Attitudes and beliefs ingrained in society about the role of women perpetuated through institutions such as churches, chiefs, and political parties through their doctrines, principles and structures that discriminate against women”.

Vanuatu, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

c are the impacts of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, which negatively impacted on women’s engagement in the labour force and their access to services, as well as reinforced traditional gender roles whereby women occupy the private domain and men the public domain.

“The economic crisis has led to a tightening of budgets, questions over the very existence of the Commission on Family and the Status of Women, as well as a reduction in the finance available for carrying out its tasks.”

French Polynesia, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

The Beijing+20 respondent countries also highlighted three main sectoral challenges; namely (a) increasing women’s leadership, given the under-representation of women in both the public and private sectors; (b) empowering women economically with the barriers to obtaining jobs, accessing financial services, the persistent gender pay gap and both vertical and horizontal segregation, and (c) preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls, given its prevalence and severity, as well as inadequate legislative provisions and services. In relation to the latter observation, Australia, in its 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional

survey submission, remarked that “domestic and family violence and sexual assault perpetrated against women costs the nation an estimated \$13.6 billion each year (2009) and the figure is likely to rise to \$15.6 billion by 2021”.

The Beijing+20 respondent countries also recounted challenges to the existence and operation of their national women’s machineries; challenges that hinder fulfilment of their mandates. The challenges listed by the respondent countries included:

a limited authority or “low status” within the government sector;

“The Gender Equality Advisory Council lacks resources and political authority”.

Georgia, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

“Inadequate legal, financial and administrative mechanisms”.

Islamic Republic of Iran, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 45

The national women’s machinery “is not strategically located within the central government structure to influence [gender] mainstreaming across the policy, programming and resource allocation”.

Marshall Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 6

b insufficient human and financial resources, associated with limitations in terms of technical capacity and infrastructure;

“...gaps and challenges remain. These include the need for capacity building, gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, and in the monitoring and evaluation of these strategies.”

Brunei Darussalam, Beijing+20 national review report, p. 11

“The State management apparatus on gender equality has been newly established thus is

still limited in personnel and resources for implementation of activities.”

Viet Nam, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 8

“The WAD [Women’s Affairs Department] for gender equality and women’s empowerment is undermined by the lack of capacity and resources to effectively implement gender work plans”.

Nauru, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 8

“The existing institutional mechanisms suffer from limited infrastructure, development programs and budget allocation, and the organization structure is inadequate”.

Nepal, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 11

“[S]ince its inception [2008], the ODW [Office of the Development of Women] has suffered from budgetary constraints and divisions within the organisation and these have had the effect of limiting its effectiveness.”

Papua New Guinea, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 33

“[T]he NWM [National Women’s Machinery] is still significantly marginalized in terms of resources and technical capacity”

Samoa, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 8

“Limited staff numbers and lack of technical capacity to implement activities for the promotion of gender equality and the use of gender mainstreaming strategy.”

Vanuatu, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 13

- c** lack of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics, linked to weak monitoring and evaluation systems;
- d** poor communication and coordination between government entities, with associated constraints to mainstreaming gender, to ensuring the delivery

of gender-responsive services and to effectively and efficiently implementing programmes.

“Low level of cooperation with MOWA [Ministry of Women’s Affairs] as monitoring and supervising body in implementation of NAPWA [National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan]”.

Afghanistan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 36

“MoWCA’s [Ministry of Women and Children Affairs] role of working as a catalyst is not always acknowledged. Other ministries need to take on more responsibilities in the implementation of the NWDP [National Women’s Development Policy] and National Action Plan”.

(Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 41)

“Cross-branch coordination mechanism needs further improvements.”

China, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

“Insufficient coordination and cooperation among different sectors concerning women’s affairs”.

Islamic Republic of Iran, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 45

“Being based only at the national level, the PCW [Philippine Commission on Women] has staff limitations especially in reaching out and providing technical assistance to local governments and in monitoring their compliance to the GAD [gender and development] budget policy”.

Philippines, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 35

“Coordination and information sharing is lacking within and between sectors, making it difficult to monitor progress and build on lessons learned. Efforts to achieve gender equality require ongoing investment, collaboration and more effective production and use of data and research.”

Timor-Leste, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

“Coordination of the planning and implementation of national gender policies and program activities remains a challenge.”

Vanuatu, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 13

Strengthening institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

With recognition of both successes and challenges, the Beijing+20 respondent countries identified means of strengthening their institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women.

Key strategies include ensuring that their national women’s machineries are “standalone entities” within government structures, which are endowed with the status and authority to achieve substantive progress towards de jure and de facto equality. Related to the positioning of the national women’s machineries is the reported need to strengthen intra-governmental collaboration and coordination in advancing gender equality, including the formulation, adoption, implementation and monitoring of policies and legislation that mandate equality of rights for women and men, as well as respond to their specific needs and interests.

The development, implementation and monitoring of policies, legislation, action plans and strategies is, in turn, contingent on access to adequate human and financial resources. In this respect, the Beijing+20 respondent countries expressed the need for “institutional strengthening”, through increased funding, greater staffing levels and development of staff capacity. The respondent countries also reflected that gender statistics, gender analysis and the collection, analysis and dissemination of

sex-disaggregated data are important elements in strengthening the work of their national women’s machineries.

With an emphasis on communication and collaboration, the Beijing+20 respondent countries further noted the importance of awareness-raising and education initiatives that target particular groups of women, public servants and political leaders, and both men and boys.

Summary

Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women have been established and exist in the countries of Asia and the Pacific. The mechanisms differ, however, in relation to their institutional form, political authority, resources and whether they focus on meeting practical needs and/or strategic interests.

While differences exist, the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women share successes in relation to (a) the drafting and adoption of policies and legislation that mandate gender equality and support the empowerment of women, (b) strengthening their state gender architecture, and (c) addressing sectoral issues, such as pertaining to violence against women and girls, women’s economic empowerment and women’s leadership.

Challenges are also shared; challenges related to political will and power, discriminatory sociocultural norms and values, resources, stakeholder coordination, data and statistics, and appreciation for the importance of gender equality, as an human rights issue and as fundamental to equitable and inclusive sustainable development.

Human rights of women

“The full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women and girls is a priority for Governments and the United Nations and is essential for the advancement of women.”

Platform for Action, Critical Area of Concern I, paragraph 213

This section of the report on the “human rights of women”, which corresponds to critical area of concern I of the Platform for Action, addresses issues relating to institutional human rights frameworks, notably the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child; national mechanisms for the investigation and prosecution of human rights violations and women’s legal literacy.¹⁶³

Institutional human rights frameworks

The primary, international “institutional human rights framework” is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.¹⁶⁴ At the national level, the human rights of woman and girls (and of men and boys) are espoused in constitutions and legislation.

International Framework: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

All countries of Asia and the Pacific—with the exception of Tonga, the Republic of Palau and the Islamic Republic of Iran—have ratified CEDAW¹⁶⁵ Eighteen of the countries in Asia and the Pacific that have ratified CEDAW have, however, stipulated

163 The section on the “human rights of women” does not address the types, breadth, frequency or experiences of human rights violations by women; nor does it provide an analysis of the content and implementation of constitutions, policies and legislation pertaining to human rights and gender equality or of the effectiveness of national human rights bodies (e.g. commissions, ombudsman offices).

164 www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm

165 The Republic of Palau is, however, a signatory to the CEDAW.

reservations,¹⁶⁶ primarily in relation to Articles 2 (eliminating discrimination), 9 (nationality), 11 (employment), 16 (marriage and family relations) and 29 (dispute resolution). The number of countries in Asia and the Pacific that have ratified the Optional Protocol to CEDAW¹⁶⁷ reduces from almost all to 28,¹⁶⁸ with two of those countries placing reservations on articles 8¹⁶⁹ and 9.¹⁷⁰

Excluding the three countries in the Asia-Pacific region that have not ratified CEDAW, 34 of 38 Beijing+20 respondent countries reported the existence of a national strategy and/or action plan for implementing the provisions of CEDAW, with examples of national policies and action plans on gender equality and/or the advancement of women cited.¹⁷¹ Yet, as noted by the Marshall Islands in its 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, the strategies and plans are not inherently comprehensive and sufficient: “there is an absence of gender equality and anti-discrimination legislation and no gender mainstreaming policy in place” (p. 17).

National Frameworks: Constitutions and Legislation

National constitutions in countries from across the ESCAP region guarantee equality before the law, including such countries as such Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu, to Timor-Leste, Thailand, Singapore and Viet Nam, north to Japan and China, and west

to Nepal, India and Pakistan, and to Armenia, the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan.

“Any kind of discrimination and distinction between citizens of Afghanistan shall be forbidden. The citizens of Afghanistan, man and woman, have equal rights and duties before the law.”

Article 22, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan¹⁷²

“Women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the State and of public life.”

Article 28, Constitution of Bangladesh¹⁷³

“Everyone is free by birth and is equal before the law regardless of... sex”

Article 14, Constitution of Georgia¹⁷⁴

“Every person shall be equal under the law and shall be entitled to equal protection. The government shall take no action to discriminate against any person on the basis of sex”

Article IV, Section 5, Constitution of the Republic of Palau¹⁷⁵

“All persons are equal before the law and entitled to the equal protection of the law.”

Article 12, Part IV, Constitution of the Republic of Singapore¹⁷⁶

“Women and men shall have the same rights and duties in all areas of family, political, economic, social and cultural life”

Article 17, Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste¹⁷⁷

166 https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en

167 www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/protocol/text.htm

168 https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-8-b&chapter=4&lang=en

169 Article 8: “Establishes an inquiry procedure that allows the Committee to initiate a confidential investigation by one or more of its members where it has received reliable information of grave or systematic violations by a State Party of rights established in the Convention. Where warranted and with the consent of the State Party, the Committee may visit the territory of the State Party. Any findings, comments or recommendations will be transmitted to the State Party concerned, to which it may respond within six months.”

170 Article 9: “Establishes a follow-up procedure for the Committee. After the six-month period referred to in article 8, the State Party may be invited to provide the Committee with details of any remedial efforts taken following an inquiry. Details may also be provided in the State Party report to the Committee under article 18 of the Convention.”

171 Examples of national gender equality policies, strategies and action plans are provided in Section 4.1 of this report.

172 www.afghanembassy.com.pl/afg/images/pliki/TheConstitution.pdf

173 www1.umn.edu/humanrts/research/bangladesh-constitution.pdf

174 www.parliament.ge/files/68_1944_951190_CONSTIT_27_12.06.pdf

175 www.palauembassy.com/Documents/ConstitutionE.pdf

176 <http://statutes.agc.gov.sg/aol/search/display/view.w3p;page=0;query=DocId%3A%22cf2412ff-fca5-4a64-a8ef-b95b8987728e%22%20Status%3Ainforce%20Depth%3A0;rec=0>

177 http://timor-leste.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Constitution_RDTL_ENG.pdf

“Men and women have equal rights and the State is liable for ensuring this equality in practice”

Article 10, Constitution of Republic of Turkey¹⁷⁸

“all persons are entitled to the following fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual without discrimination on the grounds of... sex”

Article 5, Constitution of Vanuatu¹⁷⁹

Not all countries provide for constitutional equality. For example, despite New Zealand and Australia being the first two countries in the world where women obtained suffrage,¹⁸⁰ the constitutions of those two countries do not guarantee equality before the law. In New Zealand there is, however, both the Bill of Rights Act of 1990¹⁸¹ and the Human Rights Act of 1993,¹⁸² while in Australia there is the Sex Discrimination Act 1984¹⁸³ and the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012.¹⁸⁴

Other countries throughout Asia and the Pacific also have legislative underpinnings for gender equality. Examples include the 2009 Magna Carta of Women¹⁸⁵ in the Philippines which serves as the national translation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and “is a comprehensive women’s human rights law that seeks to eliminate discrimination through the recognition, protection, fulfilment and promotion of the rights of women, especially those in the marginalized sectors of society across social, cultural, economic and political spheres”.¹⁸⁶

Azerbaijan,¹⁸⁷ Kazakhstan¹⁸⁸ and Kyrgyzstan¹⁸⁹ have laws on the equal rights and equal opportunities of women and men, while there is the Decree of the President of Georgia About the Measures on Strengthening the Protection of Human Rights of Women in Georgia.¹⁹⁰ Not all countries in Asia and the Pacific have, however, adopted legislation mandating equality of rights between women and men; as exemplified by in the Russian Federation where “there has been no success to date in adopting a law on the equal rights and opportunities for men and women in the Russian Federation”, with the second reading of draft legislation postponed “indefinitely”.¹⁹¹

Protecting and promoting the human rights of women and girls

Given the documentation in the preceding sections of this report, the human rights of women and girls are violated in all countries of Asia and the Pacific. Common and recognized violations of human rights, and as reiterated by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, include the various forms of violence against women and girls, notably trafficking, abduction, forced prostitution, murder, rape, battery, assault, harassment and domestic violence. To address the violations, there are independent national human rights institutions, along with the law enforcement bodies and judiciary.

Of the 40 Beijing+20 respondent countries, 29 reported having independent national institutions whose mandates include the protection and promotion of the human rights of women and girls. These

178 http://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf

179 <http://parliament.gov.vu/Constitution.html>

180 While “women” obtained suffrage in Australia in 1902, “women” was not inclusive of “indigenous women”.

181 www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1990/0109/latest/DLM224792.html

182 www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1993/0082/latest/DLM304212.html

183 www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2014C00002

184 www.comlaw.gov.au/details/c2012c00899

185 http://pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/files/documents/laws/republic_act_9710.pdf

186 Philippines, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 10.

187 www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_127414.pdf

188 <http://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=29912>

189 <http://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=23962>

190 www.wprc.org.ge/legaldocuments/decreed.pdf

191 Russian Federation, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report (unofficial translation)

national institutions manifest as commissions,¹⁹² tribunals,¹⁹³ institutes¹⁹⁴ and offices of ombudsmen.¹⁹⁵

Other Beijing+20 respondent countries noted the absence of independent human rights institutions, including the Marshall Islands and the Solomon Islands.

“[T]here is no established body looking at the promotion and protection of women’s human rights”

Marshall Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 16

“Currently there is no national mechanism specifically established to attend to human rights violations except for the courts which are not only too intimidating for women to access but many women’s human rights abuses are not legislated for in domestic legislation, e.g. domestic violence abuses are charged under common assault or assault causing bodily harm”.

Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 49

Where they exist, the mandates of the national human rights institutions variably include (a) formulating policy recommendations; (b) investigating and/or prosecuting breaches of applicable legislation; (c) researching and reviewing factors that prevent women and men, girls and boys, from full and freely exercising their human rights; (d) providing technical advice to government and non-government stakeholders in upholding human rights; (e) monitoring and reporting on human rights issues; (f) raising awareness on human rights issues, and (g) implementing targeted initiatives, such as relating to trafficking in persons. In relation to these activities, 28 of the 40 Beijing+20

respondent countries reported the existence of measures dedicated to investigating and prosecuting human rights violations of women and girls.¹⁹⁶

The enactment of legislation and the establishment of institutions have not, however, resulted in the elimination of human rights violations of women and girls in Asia and the Pacific. As reported by the countries that responded to the Beijing+20 survey, “challenges” and “barriers” to women’s and girls’ full and free enjoyment of human rights remain, as does the need to strengthen institutional capacity. One reported “challenge” relates to access to justice; access that is restricted by the “reach” of the judicial system and less than optimal legal literacy amongst women and girls.

There is a “[l]ack of women’s access to justice completely”, with the “non implementation of laws properly”.

Afghanistan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 33

“[T]here are many challenges to the referral pathway to access justice for women. For instance, victims find it hard to come forward due to fear, the police does not have the resources to apprehend the suspects, or there is a long back log of cases from the public solicitor’s which can take year’s and victims give up their quest for justice.”

Papua New Guinea, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

“Limited resources and a heavy backlog of cases hamper it [criminal and civil justice systems]. Barriers to accessing justice, especially for women, include the limited outreach of police, the low number and long distances to courts, coexistence of customary and formal justice systems, language and literacy (both legal and general literacy) and

192 Examples include the Human Rights Commissions in Australia, Bangladesh, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines, Sri Lanka and the Russian Federation.

193 Examples include the New Zealand Human Rights Review Tribunal.

194 Examples include the National Human Rights Institute in Samoa and the Human Rights Institute of Turkey

195 Examples include the Ombudsmen Offices in the Cook Islands, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Samoa and Turkey.

196 Scant information was provided by the Beijing+20 respondent countries as to the nature of the human rights violations experienced by women and girls and the effectiveness of the prosecution of such violations.

insufficient resources translating into long delays in the legal process”.

Timor-Leste, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 28

“[D]ata collection and monitoring system on human rights violations should be scaled-up and disaggregated by sex and age”.

Philippines, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 37

Legal literacy of women and girls

Recognising that legal literacy is important to the ability of women and girls to exercise their human rights, 27 of 40 Beijing+20 respondent countries reported having measures in place for promoting the legal literacy of women and girls. The types of measures in countries in Asia and the Pacific include (a) awareness-raising and education, such as in schools, community centres and of service providers; (b) advocacy with policy-makers and leaders, and (c) provision of (free) legal aid and counselling, along with the training of women legal and para-legal professionals.

Examples of awareness-raising and education initiatives include the Commonwealth Human Rights Education Programme in Australia; legal education programmes undertaken by the All-China Women’s Federation; provision of training to members of the judiciary and the “information campaigns on MCW [Magna Carta of Women]” in the Philippines; human rights education for secondary school students in the Russian Federation; the legal literacy awareness programmes run by the Samoa Law Reform Commission and the translation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol into Tetum in Timor-Leste. Yet, as indicated by the Solomon Islands, not all women and girls in Asia and the Pacific are cognisant of their human rights: “Human Rights is a word that does not mean much or is never heard of by the majority of women in the rural areas of Solomon Islands”.¹⁹⁷

Summary

Normative frameworks and institutional structures for promoting and protecting the human rights of women and girls exist across Asia and the Pacific. While there is near universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, many countries have recorded reservations and many have not ratified the Optional Protocol. At the national level, constitutions and legislation uphold the equal rights of women and men, girls and boys, but are not universally comprehensive or in place in all countries.

National institutions and measures for promoting and protecting, and addressing violations of, human rights are also in place in some countries in Asia and the Pacific. Given that women and girls continue, however, to experience violations of their human rights, and as reported by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, further measures are required, such as pertaining to the enforcement of legislation, legal literacy campaigns, women and girls’ unfettered access to justice and accountability within the law enforcement and judicial sectors.

197 Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 48

Women and the media

“Everywhere the potential exists for the media to make a far greater contribution to the advancement of women.”

Platform for Action, Critical Area of Concern J, paragraph 234

Critical area of concern J of the Platform for Action, “Women and the Media”, stipulates objectives for (a) increasing the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and information and communication technologies (ICT), and (b) promoting balanced and non-stereotypical portrayals of women in the media. Accordingly, this section of the report provides an overview of aspects of women’s and girls’ participation in the media and ICT, along with measures undertaken to both (a) increase women’s participation and (b) promote balanced and non-stereotypical portrayals of women and girls in the media.¹⁹⁸

The media

In relation to the media, two areas of concern are the engagement of women and girls with the media and the portrayal of women and girls in the media.

Engagement of women and girls in the media

One quantitative measure of women’s engagement with the media is the proportion of journalists who are women. Almost half of the Beijing+20 respondent countries (18 of 39; 46.2 per cent) were not able to provide information as to the representation of women amongst journalists. Of the 21 respondent countries that provided statistical data, in 12 of those countries women constitute less than 50 per

198 The discussion on “women and the media” does not include analysis of the nature of women’s and girls’ experiences in working and interacting with media and ICT, of the nature of the portrayals of women and girls in the media, or of the efficacy of measures to promote women’s and girls’ participation in and access to media and ICT and their non-stereotypical portrayal.

cent of professional journalists (ranging from 0 per cent to 45 per cent), with a notable presence of countries from the South and South-West Asia subregion, but also with countries from the Pacific, East and North-East Asia and South-East Asia. In five of the 21 countries, equal numbers of women and men journalists were reported, while in four countries women were reported as constituting the majority of professional journalists (commonly around 60 per cent).

While women are the majority of professional journalists in a few Asian and Pacific countries, women continue to encounter obstacles to their engagement in the media; challenges related, for example, to “low and unequal wage, unfair treatment and lack of recognition of work”;¹⁹⁹ to “annoyance and harassment of women at work station”;²⁰⁰ and to balancing professional and personal responsibilities.

In response to the recognised challenges, 18 of the 39 (46.2 per cent) Beijing+20 respondent countries reported having integrated measures in place – combining policy, legislation, action plans and/or programmes – for increasing women’s and girls’ participation in the media. Of a restricted list of options, the most common measure is the production and dissemination of media programmes that address the needs, concerns and interests of women and girls (28 of 39 countries; 79.8 per cent), followed by the production and dissemination of programmes by women (25 of 39 countries; 64.1 per cent) and education and training programmes for women and girls who wish to engage with the mass media (24 of 39 countries; 61.5 per cent).

Examples of media programmes for and by women include radio programmes, such as those produced by *Vois Blong Mere Solomon* in the Solomon Islands and “*Tinig Ng Kababaihan!*” (Women’s Voices!) in the Philippines. Countries from the Pacific to North and Central Asia reported increased coverage of issues concerning violence against women and girls. Yet, as reported for the Solomon Islands, “it is harder for women’s information to be published in

the mainstream media, which in Honiara includes the radio stations, TV and newspapers”.²⁰¹

Just over half of the Beijing+20 respondent countries reported the existence of media watch entities that monitor and consult with the media to ensure equitable coverage of the needs, concerns and interests of women and men (20 of 39 countries; 51.3 per cent). For example, in Turkey where, between 2005 and 2010, reportedly 76 per cent of news story subjects were men, the Radio and Television Supreme Council and the Sub-Committee on the Role of Media in Gender Equality, of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, fulfil supervisory functions with respect to media and gender equality.

Approximately one-third of the Beijing+20 respondent countries reported that they have measures for (a) reviewing and revising media policies and legislation such that policy and legislation supports gender equality (14 of 39 countries; 35.9 per cent); (b) increasing the number of women occupying decision-making positions within public and private media bodies (14 of 39 countries; 35.9 per cent), and (c) promoting the employment of women in the media industry (13 of 39 countries; 33.3 per cent).

An example of the review and revision of media policies and legislation is the Georgian Law on Broadcasting which requires broadcasters “to reflect ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, age, and gender diversity in programs”,²⁰² contrasting to the situation in Afghanistan where there has been “non-implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in Media programs and policies”, with the associated “unemployment of women in all levels of the Media”.²⁰³

Countries as diverse as Georgia, Nepal and Samoa described initiatives to increase the number of women occupying decision-making positions within the media. Reflecting measures in relation to women’s political participation, some countries

199 Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 46

200 Afghanistan, Beijing+20 national review report, p. 37

201 Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 52

202 Georgia, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 37

203 Afghanistan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 37

have instituted quotas. For instance, in Armenia, at least one of the five members of the Council of Public Television and Radio Company must be a woman,²⁰⁴ while in Nepal three of the 29 members of the executive board of the Nepal Journalists Association must be women. In Samoa, the Asia Pacific Journalism Centre implements an initiative promoting women as news media leaders. Diversity also characterises the Asia-Pacific region in relation to the quantitative representation of women in senior media positions. In the Pacific, women are the Chief Executive Officers of New Zealand's Radio Network, Mediaworks, Broadcasting Standards Authority and the Advertising Standards Authority, while in neighbouring Fiji, 35.7 per cent of persons in media governance positions, including boards of directors, are reportedly women. Yet, in Bangladesh, women occupy 0.6 per cent of editorial and managerial positions and “the number of female field agents is negligible”,²⁰⁵ while in Afghanistan there is “unemployment of women in all levels of Media”.²⁰⁶

Portrayal of women and girls in the media

In addition to participation, of importance to gender equality is the portrayal of women and girls in the media. Twenty of the 39 (51.3 per cent) Beijing+20 respondent countries reported having integrated measures – policies, legislation, action plans and/or programmes – for promoting balanced and non-stereotypical portrayals of women and girls in the media.

Of listed options, for the Beijing+20 respondent countries, the most common mechanism addressing the media portrayal of women and girls is that which restricts the production and dissemination of pornography (27 of 39 countries; 69.2 per cent), followed by professional codes of conduct (24 of 39 countries; 61.5 per cent).

In relation to pornography, the Beijing+20 respondent countries listed legislation that criminalizes and/or controls pornography; such as the 2012

Pornography Control Act²⁰⁷ in Bangladesh; Article 5.1 of the Law on the Media in Mongolia (proscribing the advertising of pornography); the Georgian Law on Broadcasting²⁰⁸ that prohibits the screening of pornography on television, and Republic Acts 9775²⁰⁹ and 9995²¹⁰ of 2009 in the Philippines which address child pornography and photo and video voyeurism respectively.

Many examples also exist of professional codes of practice, like those associated with the Broadcasting Standards Authority's Free-to-Air Television Code of Broadcasting Practice²¹¹ and the Advertising Standards Authority's Code for People in Advertising²¹² in New Zealand; the Code of Conduct of Broadcasters of the Georgian National Communications Commission; the Code of Ethics for Media²¹³ in the Philippines, or the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice Advisory Note on the Portrayal of Women and Men in Australia.

Slightly more than half of the Beijing+20 respondent countries (21 of 39; 53.9 per cent) reported having regulatory mechanisms that reduce the presentation and portrayal of violence against women and girls, with slightly less than half of the respondent countries reporting delivery of gender awareness and sensitivity education and/or training for members of the media industry (19 of 39; 48.7 per cent). For the more generic category of regulatory mechanisms that ensure balanced and diverse portrayals of women and girls, 17 of the 39 (43.6 per cent) reporting countries reported such mechanisms.

In regulating the coverage of violence against, and promoting balanced and diverse portrayals of,

207 www.oijj.org/en/docs/general/control-of-pornography-act-2012

208 www.unesco.org/culture/natlaws/media/pdf/georgia/geo_lawbroadcast_engtof.pdf

209 www1.umn.edu/humanrts/research/Philippines/RA%209775%20-%20Anti-Child%20Pornography%20Act%20of%202009.pdf

210 www1.umn.edu/humanrts/research/Philippines/RA%209995%20-%20Anti%20Photo%20and%20Video%20Voyeurism%20Act.pdf

211 <http://bsa.govt.nz/images/assets/Codes/FTA-TV-Code-May-2011-Edition-English.pdf>

212 www.asa.co.nz/code_people.php

213 www.pcoo.gov.ph/genderfairmedia/buk1_code_of_ethics_for_media.pdf

204 Armenia, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 30

205 Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 46

206 Afghanistan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 37

women and girls, there are legislative measures such as exist in the Philippines and in Armenia. In the Philippines the Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act of 2010²¹⁴ and the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012²¹⁵ address the portrayal of violence against women and girls. Violence is similarly addressed in Armenia, where the laws “About Television and Radio”²¹⁶ and “On Advertisement”²¹⁷ proscribe insulting, violent and cruel gender-related images and messages.

Beyond legislation, various entities in Asia and the Pacific, from media bodies to national women’s machineries, have conducted education and training sessions for members of the media, for the purpose of promoting positive and non-stereotypical portrayals of women and girls, such as in the Philippines and Timor-Leste. “Media workshops” have been held in Turkey and the programme “Cultivating Tolerance and Gender Equality in the Media” delivered to journalists in the Russian Federation between 2009 and 2013. In the Kazakhstan, seminars were held for journalists in 2012 and 2013 on “Principles and Standards of Gender Sensitivity in the Media: Strategy, Approach and Prospects”.

Information and communication technologies

As well as addressing media-related measures for gender equality, the Beijing+20 respondent countries reported addressing women’s and girls’ access to ICT.²¹⁸ Twenty of the 39 (51.3 per cent) respondent countries reported that integrated measures – policy, legislation, action plans and/or programmes – are in place for increasing women’s and girls’ access to ICT. A greater number of respondent countries (27 of 39; 69.2 per cent) reported having education and training programmes for

women and girls who wish to use ICTs. In Samoa, Fesootai (ICT) Centres have been established in 12 rural villages, through which women and girls can access ICT. In Bangladesh, the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs implements a project that provides women with training in ICT centre management.

Summary

Influencing perceptions, priorities and practices, the media and ICT remain critical areas of concern in relation to gender equality.

Reflective, in part, of both education systems and sociocultural practices, women and girls are engaged with the media and ICT to different degrees and in different ways across Asia and the Pacific. There is, however, a shared recognition of the need to increase the participation of women and girls in the media and ICT sectors, necessitating such measures as review and revision of policies and legislation; education and training programmes, elaboration of criteria for gender-responsive (and respectful) programming and enforceable codes of conduct.

The Beijing+20 respondent countries also reported initiatives to promote balanced and non-stereotypical portrayals of women and girls in the media, including addressing issues related to pornography and violence.

Yet, as abusive and exploitative images of, and messages about, women and girls continue to be generated and conveyed in countries across Asia and the Pacific, the need for (strengthened and resourced) “integrated measures” remains.

214 www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2010/ra_9995_2010.html

215 www.ipophil.gov.ph/images%5Cipenforcement%5CRA10175Cybercrime_Act.pdf

216 <http://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=2978>

217 www.parliament.am/law_docs/250596HO55eng.pdf?lang=eng

218 Relative to the other critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action, limited information was obtained from the ESCAP members and associate members as to initiatives relating to gender equality and ICT.

Women and the environment

“Women have an essential role to play in the development of sustainable and ecologically sound consumption and production patterns and approaches to natural resource management.”

Platform for Action, Critical Area of Concern K, paragraph 246

The focus of critical area of concern K of the Platform for Action, “Women and the Environment”, is on the integration of gender into environmental and sustainable development policies and programmes, including the engagement of women in all levels of decision-making. Within the framework of gender mainstreaming and enhancing women’s participation, this section of the report addresses three environmental issues in particular, namely natural resources, climate change and disaster risk reduction.²¹⁹

Natural resources

In relation to natural resources, the Beijing+20 respondent countries provided information as to women’s (a) command of natural resources, and (b) access to clean and renewable energy sources.

It is to be noted that most of the information provided by the Beijing+20 respondent countries in relation to the Platform for Action critical area of concern K (through both the regional survey and national review reports) concerned environmental initiatives applicable to general populations and not to women and girls specifically. Statements were also made that actions focussing on women and girls in particular are not required as equality between women and men already exists. For example, in its 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission, Japan remarked that “[t]here are no measures specifically designed to promote women’s and men’s equal ownership, management

²¹⁹ While policies and participation are addressed in this Section 3.11 of the report, qualitative analysis of the policies and participation of women is not provided; nor is their elaboration of the experiences of women and girls of environmental issues and events.

and use of natural resources because Japan has already attained them. Women are not excluded or discriminated against by law in ownership, management and use of natural resources.”

Command of natural resources

With respect to the command of natural resources, 27 of the 39 (69.2 per cent) Beijing+20 respondent countries reported the existence of national policies that promote women’s and men’s equal ownership, management and use of natural resources, such as water, fuel, land and forests. Examples provided by the respondent countries reflected consideration of women and girls within overarching policy, such as the reported gender components of the Republic of Palau’s National Water, Energy²²⁰ and Sustainable Land Management Policies; the Resource Management Act 1991,²²¹ which protects the interests of the indigenous women of New Zealand with respect to management and use of natural resources, and reference in Bangladesh’s National Women Development Policy²²² to women’s engagement in the management of natural resources and in environmental decision-making. The participation of women “in the planning and management (including monitoring) of habitats and species in areas under communal / freehold ownership and control” is one of the key environmental sector objectives of Samoa’s National Environment and Development Sector Plan 2013–2016.²²³

Other measures addressing the equal ownership, management and use of natural resources by women and men, include job creation initiatives, specification of quotas for decision-making bodies and formulation of guidelines and other sources of instruction. Nepal reportedly promotes “green jobs” for women and men through its National and Local Adaptation Programmes of Action, while the

government-funded Australian Women in Resources Alliance²²⁴ seeks to attract and retain women in the resources workforce. In terms of quotas Bangladesh requires that women constitute 40 per cent of the members of Co-Management Committees for Protected Forest Areas and that, in accordance with the 2000 Guidelines for Participatory Water Management, women participate in water management cooperatives. According to Nepal’s Forest Sector Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy 2064 (2008),²²⁵ 50 per cent of members of the Community Forest User Groups must be women. In Azerbaijan, three of the eighteen members of the Public Environmental Council, within the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, are women. A higher proportional representation of women exists in the Republic of Palau, where women are two of the five members of the Environmental Protection Board. In neighbouring Vanuatu, the Land Reform (Amendment) Act of 2013²²⁶ provides for representation of women during community level meetings addressing land ownership issues. Back in North and Central Asia, the 2014–2016 National Action Plan for Implementation of the Gender Equality Policy of Georgia, requires “gender balance in the decision-making process on the environmental issues and awareness raising”.²²⁷ In the Philippines gender-focussed assistance is provided to environmental and natural resource decision-making entities through, for example, the Gender Responsive Environment and Natural Resources Enterprises in the Philippines (GREEN) Kit.²²⁸ In India, the National Gender Resource Centre in Agriculture promotes the mainstreaming of gender in natural resource management.

220 www.palauenergyoffice.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Palau-Energy-Policy.pdf

221 www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1991/0069/latest/DLM230265.html

222 www.mowca.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/National-Women-Policy-2011English.pdf

223 www.mnre.gov.ws/images/stories/MNRE/publication/NESP%202013%20-%202016.pdf

224 www.amma.org.au/awra

225 [www.msfp.org.np/uploads/publications/file/MFSC%20GSI%20Strategy%20\(English%20version\)_20130129010447.pdf](http://www.msfp.org.np/uploads/publications/file/MFSC%20GSI%20Strategy%20(English%20version)_20130129010447.pdf)

226 [http://mol.gov.vu/Ministry%20of%20Lands%20Acts/2014/Land%20Reform%20\(Am\)%20Act%20No.%2031%20of%202013.pdf](http://mol.gov.vu/Ministry%20of%20Lands%20Acts/2014/Land%20Reform%20(Am)%20Act%20No.%2031%20of%202013.pdf)

227 Georgia, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 43

228 www.pcw.gov.ph/publication/gender-responsive-environment-and-natural-resources-enterprises-green-kit

Access to clean and renewable energy sources and technologies

Amongst the 39 Beijing+20 respondent countries, 20 (51.3 per cent) reported having national policies that promote women's and men's equal access to clean and renewable energy sources and technologies.

As in relation to command of natural resources, some of the Beijing+20 respondent countries stated that measures targeting women and girls either do not exist or are not required, given that, in the case of Sri Lanka for example, “[t]here is no need for a special policy since Sri Lanka has always provided equal Opportunities for men and women in all aspects.”²²⁹

While a couple of examples of the measures for promoting the equal access of women and men to clean and renewable energy sources and technologies were described by the Beijing+20 respondent countries – such as the introduction of “improved cook stoves” in Bangladesh that reportedly reduce the workloads of women with respect to the gathering of fuel and food preparation – 13 of the 39 (33.3 per cent) respondent countries explicitly stated the absence of such targeted measures.

Climate change

In general, and depending on the particular measure, between half and two-thirds of the Beijing+20 respondent countries are reportedly integrating and addressing the vulnerabilities and needs of women and girls in climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives. In 27 of the 39 (69.2 per cent) respondent countries, the vulnerabilities and needs of women and girls have reportedly been assessed and integrated into such initiatives. For example, in the Philippines, “[g]ender mainstreaming is one of the cross-cutting strategies” of the National Climate Change Action Plan 2011–2028.²³⁰ According to the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action

Plan, “the needs of the poor and vulnerable, including women and children, will be prioritized in all activities implemented under the Action Plan”.²³¹ In Nepal, the proposed Climate Change and Gender Strategy and Action Plan is to be considered by Cabinet for endorsement.

Alongside statements of assessment and integration of women's and girls' vulnerabilities and needs in relation to climate change by some of the Beijing+20 respondent countries, other respondent countries acknowledged the absence of such actions. For instance, while the Solomon Islands National Climate Change Policy 2012–2017²³² references gender equity, gender analysis and integration of gender considerations in the planning and implementation of mitigation actions, “there hasn't been any visible women's involvement in environmental initiatives that deal directly with environment change and climate change and how they affect women's lives”.²³³ In Kyrgyzstan, addressing the vulnerabilities and needs of women and girls is impeded because “there are no statistics on the impact of the environmental change on vulnerable groups such as rural women, women with disabilities, pregnant women etc.”.²³⁴

Where they exist, and from the restricted list of options, the most common measure amongst the Beijing+20 respondent countries is increasing women's and girls' access to climate change information (25 of 39 countries; 64.1 per cent). In Afghanistan, for example, workshops were held for women public servants on addressing the impacts of climate change. Related to raising the awareness and understanding of women and girls, is the measure of public campaigns that highlight the differential impacts of climate change for women, men, girls and boys (22 of 39 countries; 56.4 per cent).

229 Sri Lanka, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

230 http://adaptationmarketplace.org/data/library-documents/NCCAP_TechDoc.pdf

231 Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (2009). Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009, Dhaka: Ministry of Environment and Forests, http://www.moef.gov.bd/climate_change_strategy2009.pdf

232 www.gcca.eu/sites/default/files/catherine.paul/si_climate_change_policy.pdf

233 Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 56

234 Kyrgyzstan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 55

For approximately half of the Beijing+20 respondent countries, (a) gender is reportedly mainstreamed into climate change research and planning guidelines (20 of 39 countries; 51.3 per cent), (b) the equal participation of women and men in national climate change policy, planning and decision-making processes is promoted (19 of 39 countries; 48.7 per cent), and (c) the livelihood needs of women are integrated in climate change adaptation measures (19 of 39 countries; 48.7 per cent). In relation to research, there is the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility²³⁵ in Australia which has, amongst other topics, investigated the impacts of climate change on the traditional roles of Australian indigenous women. Women have participated in policy, planning and decision-making processes in, amongst other countries, Cambodia, Nepal, the Philippines and Timor Leste. In the Philippines, one of the three Commissioners of the Climate Change Commission must be a woman. Challenges in promoting women's participation were, however noted, by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, such as Bangladesh which reflected that “[w]omen's participation and adequate share into this green economy would be a challenge”.²³⁶

Less than half of the Beijing+20 respondent countries attested to (a) the provision of services and resources to women and girls that enable them to make timely decisions and undertake effective climate change adaptation measures (17 of 39 countries; 43.6 per cent) and (b) the promotion of women's and girls' vocational and tertiary education in climate-change related studies, such as through scholarships (13 of 39 countries; 33.3 per cent).

Disaster risk reduction

Another issue relevant to “women and the environment” is disaster risk reduction. For 17 of the 39 (43.6 per cent) Beijing+20 respondent countries, gender is reportedly mainstreamed into disaster risk reduction policies and programmes. New Zealand,

for instance, stated that “[t]here is gender mainstreaming in the development of disaster risk reduction and emergency readiness, and response and recovery strategies”.²³⁷ In the Philippines, and in accordance with the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010,²³⁸ the Government must “ensure that the disaster risk reduction and climate change measures are gender responsive”, while the Magna Carta of Women²³⁹ mandates that “women have the right to protection and security in times of disasters, calamities, and other crisis situations especially in all phases of relief, recovery, rehabilitation, and construction efforts”. In turn, Turkey's National Earthquake Strategy and Action Plan 2012–2013 references consideration of the interests of women in relation to “special arrangements” for at-risk groups, noting that “the vulnerabilities of women, the aged and the handicapped emerge as factors that increase the likely impact of disasters on them.”²⁴⁰

Not all disaster risk reduction policies and programmes across Asia and the Pacific are, however, “gender responsive”. In the Samoa National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management 2011–2016,²⁴¹ for instance, the only reference to “gender” is in relation to the formulation of indicators for cross-cutting concerns (of which “gender” is one) as part of the development of a disaster risk management monitoring and evaluation system. Moreover, only 10 of the 39 (25.6 per cent) Beijing+20 respondent countries reported that sex-disaggregated data informs the design and planning of their disaster risk reduction policies and programmes. The absence of reference to sex-disaggregated data was noted by, for example, by the Republic of Palau and the Philippines.

“Palau has not mainstreamed gender into disaster risk reduction policies and programs. The disaster

235 www.nccarf.edu.au/

236 Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 50

237 New Zealand, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 36

238 www.ndrrmc.gov.ph/attachments/045_RA%2010121.pdf

239 http://pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/files/documents/laws/republic_act_9710.pdf

240 Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (2012). National Earthquake Strategy and Action Plan 2012–2013, Ankara, www.deprem.gov.tr/sarbis/Doc/Belgeler/UDSEP2012-2023_ENG.pdf

241 www.logcluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/national_action_plan_for_disaster_management_2011_2016

risk reduction policies and programs are not informed by sex-disaggregated data during the design and planning phases”.

(Republic of Palau, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 29)

“Oftentimes, data on individuals exposed to risks and affected by environmental disasters and degradation are not sex-disaggregated”.

Philippines, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 41

Where gender has been integrated into disaster risk reduction policies and programmes, the most common initiative in this respect, amongst the Beijing+20 respondent countries, pertains to education and training programmes that equip women and girls with the knowledge and skills to be able to meaningfully participate in disaster risk reduction initiatives, including at the decision-making level (16 of 39 countries; 41.0 per cent). One third of the respondent countries (13 of 39, 33.3 per cent) have reportedly (a) conducted research on disaster risk reduction that is inclusive of gender equality and women’s empowerment issues and (b) undertaken gender sensitisation education for disaster risk reduction decision-makers and experts.

Approximately one-quarter of the 2014 Beijing+20 respondent countries have:

- a** conducted evaluations of the impacts of disaster risk reduction policies and programmes in the lives of women and girls (11 of 39 countries; 28.2 per cent);
- b** integrated gender into disaster-preparedness infrastructure planning and decision-making processes (10 of 39 countries; 25.6 per cent);
- c** implemented gender-responsive disaster risk reduction public awareness-raising campaigns (9 of 39 countries; 23.1 per cent); and
- d** provided support to women in acquiring, investing in and deploying technologies that contribute to disaster risk reduction (9 of 39 countries; 23.1 per cent).

Measures promoting the equal participation of women and men in disaster risk reduction planning and preparedness processes include (a) the creation of the Weather the Storm toolkit,²⁴² by the Australian National Rural Women’s Coalition, which is designed to support women in preparing for natural disaster and emergencies; (b) the representation of women on Vanuatu’s National Advisory Board on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as on the provincial and village-level committees; (c) the delivery of training for women in the Islamic Republic of Iran in responding to natural disasters, and (d) the requirement under the Republic Act 10121²⁴³ of the Philippines that the Chairperson of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (now the Philippine Commission on Women) serves as a member of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

Summary

Across the three environmental issues of natural resources, climate change and disaster risk reduction, the needs, concerns and interests of women have been addressed by some countries in Asia and the Pacific, ranging from one to three-quarters depending on the particular issue or measure.

A significant proportion of the Beijing+20 respondent countries provided information about non-gender and non-women specific environment-related initiatives; failing to elaborate on environmental measures that target women and girls in particular. Opportunities are thus evident across Asia and the Pacific for strengthening the gender-responsiveness of policies and programmes that promote women’s and men’s equal command of natural resources, engagement in climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives and contribution to disaster risk reduction.

242 www.nrwc.com.au/Projects/WeatherTheStorm.aspx

243 www.ndrrmc.gov.ph/attachments/045_RA%2010121.pdf

The girl child

“All barriers must therefore be eliminated to enable girls without exception to develop their full potential and skills through equal access to education and training, nutrition, physical and mental health and related information.”

Platform for Action, Critical Area of Concern L, paragraph 272

Under critical area of concern L of the Platform for Action, “The Girl Child”, there are seven strategic objectives related to the elimination of discrimination against and abuse of girls, along with the promotion of the girl-child’s awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life. Accordingly, this section of the report provides a broad overview of the measures adopted by countries in Asia and the Pacific to (a) eliminate discrimination against girls, and (b) promote their awareness and participation in public domain.²⁴⁴

Eliminating all forms of discrimination against the girl child

The vast majority of the Beijing+20 respondent countries (36 of 40; 90 per cent) reported having integrated measures – policies, legislation, actions plans and/or programmes – for eliminating all forms of discrimination against the girl child.

With universal ratification²⁴⁵ of the Convention on the Rights of the Child²⁴⁶ (CRC) in Asia and the Pacific, various child-focused (but not girl specific) national policy measures (reflecting CRC measures) were cited to support statements of integrated measures. Examples from the Pacific include the National Policy for Children of Samoa 2010–2015, the National Children’s Policy 2010–2015 of the

244 Section 3.12 of the report does not provide a description or analysis of girls’ diverse experiences of discrimination or the nature and extent of their participation in social, economic and political life. Nor does this section of the report provide analysis of the coverage and efficacy of measures adopted by countries in Asia and the Pacific to eliminate discrimination against girls and to promote their participation in public life.

245 https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en

246 www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx

Solomon Islands, the Vulnerable Children Bill 2013 in New Zealand²⁴⁷ and the Lukautim Pikinini (Child) Act 2009 in Papua New Guinea, while in Australia there is the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020.²⁴⁸ Other examples from the Asia-Pacific region include Bangladesh's National Children Policy 2011 and National Children's Task Force;²⁴⁹ the Philippines' Council for the Welfare of Children²⁵⁰ which formulates policies and plans to protect the well-being of children and the 2012 Child Protection Policy of the Department of Education;²⁵¹ and the National Children's Strategy 2012–2017²⁵² in the Russian Federation, which also has a Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights.

As well as affirming the existence of policies, some of the Beijing+20 respondent countries highlighted policy gaps and the need to focus attention and resources on girls and on boys, separate from the categories of “children” and “women and girls”. For instance, Mongolia remarked that the “special features and needs of the girl child are neglected to some degree and issues of the girl child rights are mostly integrated or mingled with the ones of children's or women's rights.”²⁵³

Types of measures for eliminating all forms of discrimination against the girl child

The proportions of the Beijing+20 respondent countries that attested to other types of measures for eliminating discrimination against the girl child are shown in Figure 23.

As suggested in Figure 23, normative measures and both awareness-raising and public campaigns are more common measures, in Asia-Pacific countries,

than are programme and service initiatives for eliminating all forms of discrimination against the girl child.

Examples of legislation include the Kazakhstan Law on the Rights of the Child 2002²⁵⁴ and Law on the Prevention of Offences Among Minors and the Prevention of Child Neglect and Homelessness 2004. In the neighbouring Russian Federation, there is the Federal Law on Basic Guarantees of the Rights of the Child in the Russian Federation 1998.²⁵⁵ Nepal has, in turn, legislated against the practices of “ch-haupadi” (social isolation of females during menstruation), “kamlari” (unpaid domestic workers) and “deuki” (offering young girls to Hindu temples to gain religious merit). Yet, in other countries, such as Timor Leste, “[t]here is an urgent need to create a legal framework that will support children and youth with regards to issues specific to them... and advocating specifically for the promotion of the rights and protection of girls”.²⁵⁶

Amongst the 35 and 31 (of 40) 2014 Beijing+20 respondent countries that attested to awareness-raising programmes and public campaigns, respectively, manifestations of discrimination against the girl child that are addressed include violence, early marriage, trafficking, child labour and education. A prominent example is the Meena cartoon series that is popular in Bangladesh, but also telecast in other South and South-West Asia countries, as well as in some South-East Asia countries.

Slightly more than half of the Beijing+20 respondent countries affirmed the use of pedagogy (23 of 40 countries; 57.5 per cent) and of teaching curricula and materials (22 of 40 countries; 55.0 per cent) to address the elimination of all forms of discrimination against the girl child.

Pedagogy and teaching curricula and materials are deemed to be important areas of focus given such reflections as “teachers at schools hold conservative notions of ‘appropriate’ roles of men and women”,

247 www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2013/0150/latest/DLM5501618.html

248 www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/publications-articles/protecting-children-is-everyones-business

249 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Children%27s_Task_Force

250 www.cwc.gov.ph/

251 www.pap.org.ph/includes/view/default/uploads/dep_ed.pdf

252 <http://tdh-childprotection.org/documents/russian-national-childrens-strategy-for-20122017>

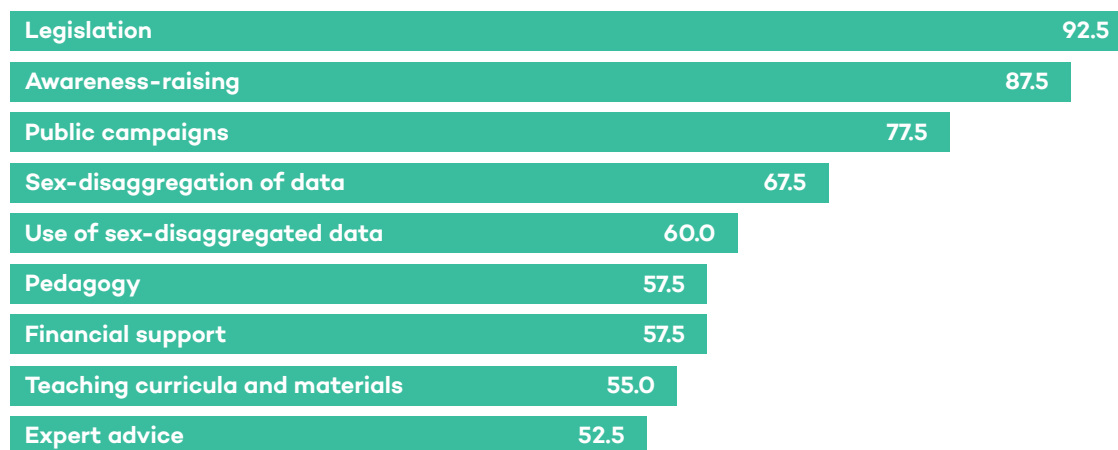
253 Mongolia, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 survey submission

254 www.geneva-academy.ch/RULAC/pdf_state/Law-on-Rights-of-Child-KAZ-RUS-.pdf

255 <http://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=1807>

256 Timor-Leste, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 49

FIGURE 23
PROPORTIONS OF BEIJING+20 RESPONDENT COUNTRIES THAT ATTEST TO THE EXISTENCE OF SELECTED MEASURES FOR ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE GIRL CHILD



“[g]ender stereotypes still persist in the learning materials and textbooks at all levels of education”,²⁵⁷ and that review of school textbooks “showed that existing curriculum in schools is not providing sufficient materials to promote gender equality ideas and oftentimes reinforce discriminatory gender stereotypes”.²⁵⁸ Examples of initiatives in relation to pedagogy include the integration of gender sensitivity, gender awareness or gender equality modules within the curriculum of student teachers, such as in Nepal and Turkey. In other countries, initiatives have been, and are being, implemented to review and revise education curricula and textbooks, as is reportedly occurring in Timor Leste for instance.

There is the “integration of gender concepts and use of gender sensitive principles in curriculum development”²⁵⁹ by the Department of Education in the Philippines, as reflected, for example, in the inclusion of gender and development modules

in the secondary school curriculum. The curriculum in both Fiji and New Zealand is, at least “on paper”, gender-responsive given that according to the Fiji Islands National Curriculum Framework “all learning and teaching programmes must be inclusive of gender...”²⁶⁰ and that the “[k]ey principles of the New Zealand Curriculum [for primary and secondary schools] are that it is non-sexist, nonracist, and non-discriminatory”.²⁶¹ Efforts have been undertaken in Nepal to “banish negative gender stereotype in [secondary] education” curriculum²⁶² and in India with the integration of gender into textbooks for grades six, seven and eight in relation to such concepts and issues as rule of law, equality and power. A gender equality perspective was applied to teaching curricula in Turkey as part of implementation of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality for 2008 to 2013.

257 Viet Nam, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 18

258 Georgia, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 19

259 Philippines, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 17

260 Ministry of Education (2007). The Fiji Islands National Curriculum Framework: Education for a Better Future, Republic of the Fiji Islands: Suva, p. 16, www.paddle.usp.ac.fj/collect/paddle/index/assoc/fj33.dir/doc.pdf

261 New Zealand, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 20

262 Nepal, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 27

Issues addressed by the measures for eliminating discrimination against the girl child

As is evident in Figure 24, the vast majority of the Beijing+20 respondent countries attested to addressing particular issues in their efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child.

The three most common issues (from a specified list) reportedly addressed by 37 of the 40 Beijing+20 respondent countries are (a) birth registration, wherein all female and male babies must be registered and have the right to both name and nationality, (b) marriage, entailing a legal requirement for free and full consent to marry and a minimum legal age for marriage, and (c) violence against the girl child.

Birth certificates provide girls (and boys) with identities and official recognition of their existence, as well as being one prerequisite for both realizing their human rights and accessing public services. For example, in Bangladesh and Malaysia, birth certificates are needed for enrolment in schools and for obtaining passports. Yet, not all girls (or boys) are registered at birth. In Samoa, for instance, 48 per cent of children under the age of five are, reportedly, registered. Obstacles to birth registration include requirements for the provision of the names and/or signatures of fathers (such as in Bhutan) and grandfathers (such as in Nepal), or of a marriage certificate (as in Indonesia). To varying degrees, countries in Asia and the Pacific have addressed this issue through, for example, mandatory birth registration, as applies, for instance, in Australia, Bangladesh, Japan and Timor-Leste.

Concerning marriage, the Beijing+20 respondent countries, from all five ESCAP subregions, reported 18 years as being the legal age of marriage for females, with the exception of 17 years in Turkey. Despite legislation delineating the legal age of marriage, the Beijing+20 respondent countries also affirmed the existence of early marriage of girls for sociocultural, economic and safety reasons.

A “high percentage of under aged girls are forced into under aged or forced marriage”.

Afghanistan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 33

“About 50% of all 15–19 years old females are married, of whom about 33% are already mothers”.

Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 52

“[I]n Georgian public/private schools 7367 girls terminated education before the end of basic level (7–9 grades) from October, 2011 to January, 2013 and the reason for abandonment of education in majority of cases was early marriage.”

Georgia, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 45

“60 percent of marriages made in the countryside in mono-ethnic areas are accomplished through bride kidnapping (ala kachuu), of which 2/3 are performed without the consent of the girl.”

Kyrgyzstan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 30

In the Solomon Islands “families have been marrying off their young daughters in return for food or money”.

Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 58

Early marriage is associated, by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, with negative consequences for the formal education and health of girls, with subsequent impacts on their employment, economic well-being and engagement in the public domain.

“In some cases, religious marriage ceremonies (neke) are held, where the blessings of an imam are all that is required. This represents a direct breach of the girls’ rights. These early weddings are not recorded in the civil register... There is a risk that, in the future, the woman and her children will not be covered by the law in the event of divorce, and it may not be possible to

FIGURE 24
PROPORTIONS OF BEIJING+20 RESPONDENT COUNTRIES THAT ATTESTED TO THE TYPES OF ISSUES THAT THEIR MEASURES FOR ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE GIRL CHILD ADDRESS

Birth registration	92.5
Marriage	92.5
Violence	92.5
Child support	87.5
Economic exploitation	82.5
Education and training	80.0
Inheritance	75.0
Health and nutrition	75.0
Cultural attitudes and practices	72.5
Girls with disabilities	70.0
Intra-family discrimination	62.5

divide jointly acquired property or to recover alimony.”

Kazakhstan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 31

“The phenomenon of early marriage is still common in some indigenous groups and Muslim communities... Data show that among indigenous girls, only 10% finished elementary, 5% finished high school, 20% have no formal education or are classified illiterate.”

Philippines, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 38

“The early marriages of ethnic minority girls still remain very popular in remote areas of Vietnam; the percentage of girls dropping out of school in this area is also higher as compared to boys.”

Viet Nam, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 39

Moreover, while forced marriage is considered a “slavery-like practice” in countries such as Australia,²⁶³ in other countries, like Turkey, forced marriage is not a criminal offence.²⁶⁴

The third most commonly reported issue addressed by the 2014 Beijing+20 respondent countries is violence against the girl child.

In attesting to girls being subjected to such forms of violence as child pornography,²⁶⁵ pre-natal sex

263 Crimes Legislation Amendment (Slavery, Slavery-like Conditions and People Trafficking) Act 2013; www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2013A00006

264 Forced marriage is not, reportedly, a component of the Turkish Penal Code.

265 For example, the Philippines reported that “webcam child sex tourism is proliferating and spreading quickly through the use of the internet” and that “[a]larmingly, there are also parents who involve their children in cybersex as these parents do not see it as a form of sexual exploitation because there is ‘no sexual or physical contact to the children’” (Philippines 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, pp. 41 & 43).

selection favouring boys,²⁶⁶ sexual abuse²⁶⁷ and domestic violence,²⁶⁸ the respondent countries highlighted such measures as the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children;²⁶⁹ education of parents and education professionals in the Islamic Republic of Iran; criminalisation of the sexual abuse of children in Turkey; the establishment of Committees on Controlling Human Trafficking in villages in Nepal, and Australia's National Compact on Female Genital Mutilation.

Other issues reportedly addressed by a clear majority of the Beijing+20 respondent countries, as shown in Figure 24, are a requirement for parents to provide financial support to their children (35 of 40 countries; 87.5 per cent) and the economic exploitation of the girl child (33 of 40 countries, 82.5 per cent), which, despite legislative measures, was reported as taking place.

“A majority of employed girls work as domestic help and often are denied of their rights.”

Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 52

“A growing number of children in PNG are engaged in the worst forms of child labour, illicit activities and hazardous work. Many children below the age of 18 work as domestic servants on plantations and in the tourist industry.”

Papua New Guinea, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 43

266 For example, Georgia reported a skewed sex ratio at birth, of 111 boys to 100 girls, which is attributed, in part, to pre-natal sex selection.

267 For example, Mongolia observed that “[s]exual violence against the girl child is one of the most serious violations of girls’ rights in Mongolia. Although the number of sexual violence cases brought to light has been increasing from year to year, crimes are not fully reported yet. There is no state policy and legislation to protect girls from sexual violence and no care and service system for affected girls.” (Mongolia, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission)

268 For example, the Solomon Islands reflected that “problems the girl child experiences are physical violence by her parents or siblings when she is seen to be disobedient. Sexual abuse is not unknown in the home especially by close male relatives, a stepfather or even a father”. (Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 58)

269 www.saievac.org/

“In rural areas, heavily indebted parents sometimes provide their children as indentured servants as a way to settle the debt.”

Timor-Leste, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 53

“[S]ome families with financial difficulties especially to pay for school fees will retain girls back home and allow their brothers to continue their education. She may be sent to be a baby sitter for members of the immediate family who are living and working in Honiara or other urban centres in the provinces, hoping that she can earn money and remit it to her parents back in the village”.

Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 58

Recognising the need to eliminate the economic exploitation of the girl child, the Beijing+20 respondent countries highlighted initiatives to combat child labour; initiatives that encompass constitutional,²⁷⁰ policy²⁷¹ and legislative²⁷² provisions; rehabilitation programmes for child labourers, such as in Nepal, and public campaigns, like the annual 12 Days Against the Exploitation of Child Labour campaign in Kazakhstan.

Another economic-related issue addressed by three-quarters (30 of 40) of the Beijing+20 respondent countries is the equal right of the girl child and boy child to succession and inheritance. Yet, as indicated in the reports of the respondent countries, not all girls and boys in Asia and the Pacific enjoy the equal right to succession and inheritance.

In Bangladesh, “the proposal for equal right to inherit is being contested by some groups”.

Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 11

270 For example, Article 49 of the Constitution of Afghanistan, www.afghanembassy.com.pl/afg/images/pliki/TheConstitution.pdf

271 For example, Bangladesh's National Child Labour Elimination Policy 2010.

272 Examples include Article 51, “Employment of Children”, of the Labour and Employment Relations Act 2013 of Samoa, (www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_201328.pdf) and Article 68 of Timor-Leste's Labour Code 2012 (www.jornal.gov.tl/lawsTL/RDTL-Law/RDTL-Laws/Law%204-2012%20%20Labour%20Code.pdf).

In the Republic of Palau, “[i]n the absence [of a will]... lands held in fee simple... shall, upon the death of the owner, be inherited by the owner’s oldest legitimate living male child of sound mind, natural or adopted or if male heirs are lacking, the oldest legitimate living female child”.

Article 25, Palau National Code 301²⁷³

Inequalities in inheritance and succession rights are, in part, related to negative cultural attitudes and practices that were, in turn, cited by the Beijing+20 respondent countries in relation to such issues as education, status and domestic duties.

“A Georgian nationwide study in 2013 showed that 20% of the population still regards school education as more important for boys than girls, and 26% say the same about University education”.

Georgia, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 20

“Mongolia is one of the patriarchal countries and it influences on the attitude toward girls and violation of rights of the girl child. For example, girls may be asked to spend more time on housework rather than on their personal development.”

Mongolia, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

“In traditional Solomon Island families, the birth of a girl child is welcomed especially if she is the first child, as the responsibility of looking after future siblings, helping her mother with the household chores, subsistence gardening and other women’s role is in the family and the community; is automatically perceived to be borne by her as she grows up. Additionally, for those Solomon Island communities where bride price is still practiced, a girl child is a future ‘investment’ for her family”.

Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 57

“Discrimination against girls’ access to education persists in many areas causes by traditional attitudes towards women and girls, early marriage and pregnancies, gender biased teaching, and sexual harassment towards school girls. Girls and young women are expected to manage educational and domestic responsibilities, often resulting in poor scholastic performance and drop out during mid-secondary levels.

Timor-Leste, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 51

As well as negative cultural attitudes and practices against the girl child, practical issues of infrastructure and transportation were also noted, by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, as impeding the educational and social and, subsequently, livelihood opportunities of girls.

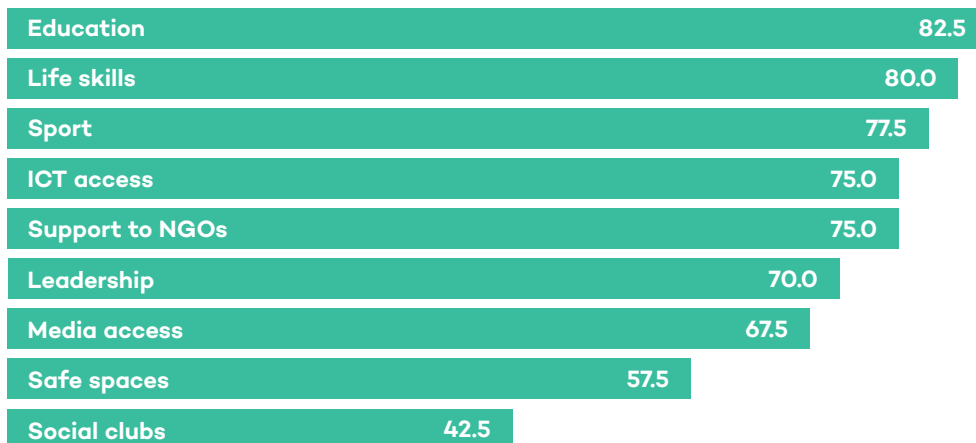
Promoting the girl child’s awareness of, and participation in, sociocultural, political and economic life

To address the identified forms of discrimination against the girl child, government ministries, departments, commissions, committees, councils and bureaus, as well as non-governmental and community-based organizations, pursue a range of measures to promote the girl child’s awareness of, and participation in, sociocultural, political and economic life, as reflected in Figure 25.

The two most common measures for promoting the girl child’s awareness and participation, across the Beijing+20 respondent countries, are (a) awareness-raising and education programmes on sociocultural issues for girls (33 of 40 countries), and (b) life skills training (32 of 40 countries). Community forums, clubs at school, youth meetings and programmes targeting out-of-school adolescent girls are examples of the forms that these two measures take in countries straddling the five ESCAP subregions.

273 As reported in the Republic of Palau’s 2014 Beijing+20 national review report.

FIGURE 25
PROPORTIONS OF BEIJING+20 RESPONDENT COUNTRIES THAT ATTESTED TO HAVING SPECIFIC MEASURES IN PLACE FOR PROMOTING THE GIRL CHILD'S AWARENESS OF SOCIOCULTURAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN



Physical activity and sports for girls are reportedly supported by three-quarters of the Beijing+20 respondent countries (31 of 40; 77.5 per cent) given such observations as that by Timor-Leste, of girls being less likely than boys to engage in sports.

Between two-thirds and three-quarters of the Beijing+20 respondent countries promote the girl child's access to information and communication technologies (30 of 40 countries; 75.0 per cent) and to the media (27 of 40 countries; 67.5 per cent). Fewer respondent countries (23 of 40 countries; 57.5 per cent), however, create and maintain safe spaces in communities where girls can interact with one another or support social clubs for girls (17 of 40 countries; 42.5 per cent); spaces and places where girls can learn, gain skills, find emotional support and/or develop a sense of self-efficacy.

Summary

Across Asia and the Pacific, and as reported by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, normative frameworks are in place to address the elimination

of all forms of discrimination against the girl child. The policies and legislation fostering the rights of the girl (and boy) child, which vary in form and content, are complemented by practical measures, from awareness-raising and education initiatives to those involving provision of technical and financial resources.

The different manifestations of discrimination against the girl child are variably addressed by countries in Asia and the Pacific: birth registration; child, early and forced marriage; inheritance; child support; child labour; discriminatory sociocultural practices and violence.

Implementation of awareness-raising programmes, facilitation of access to the media and to ICT, creation of environments where girls can gather together, provision of life skills and leadership training and promotion of sport are some of the measures pursued by countries in Asia and the Pacific to redress discrimination and to promote the girl child's engagement in sociocultural, political and economic life.

Chapter 4

Implementing the Platform for Action

“The success of the Platform for Action will require a strong commitment on the part of Governments, international organizations and institutions at all levels. It will also require adequate mobilization of resources at the national and international levels as well as new and additional resources to the developing countries from all available funding mechanisms, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources for the advancement of women; financial resources to strengthen the capacity of national, subregional, regional and international institutions; a commitment to equal rights, equal responsibilities and equal opportunities and to the equal participation of women and men in all national, regional and international bodies and policy-making processes; and the establishment or strengthening of mechanisms at all levels for accountability to the world’s women”.

Platform for Action, Mission Statement, p. 7

As stated in the Platform for Action, realization of the strategic objectives on gender equality and women's empowerment requires political commitment, capable institutions, accountability mechanisms, participation and resources.

In this Chapter the requirements for, and means of, implementing the Platform for Action are considered, with particular attention given to (a) normative frameworks and institutions, (b) partnership and cooperation, (c) data and statistics, and (d) budgets and funding.

4.1

GENDER EQUALITY NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS AND INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

As referenced in Chapter 3 and reported by ESCAP members and associate members, countries in Asia and the Pacific have governing frameworks for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment; exemplified in national policies and legislation and in institutional mechanisms, notably national women's machineries.

Gender equality policies and legislation

Countries in the five ESCAP subregions have adopted policies in support of gender equality. Stemming from an underlying goal of empowering women, advancing the status of women, achieving social justice and/or promoting equal opportunities for women and men, the gender equality policies variously address a range of issues, including human rights, participation in public life, health, education, poverty and livelihoods, violence against women and girls, and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. Examples of such policies are (a) the 2001 National Policy for the Empowerment of Women of India,²⁷⁴ (b) the 2004 Charter of Women's Rights and Responsibilities

in the Islamic Republic of Iran,²⁷⁵ (c) the Magna Carta of Women,²⁷⁶ Republic Act 9710 of 2009 of the Philippines, (d) the National Policy for Women of Samoa 2010–2015,²⁷⁷ and (e) the Women's Charter of Singapore.²⁷⁸

For countries in North and Central Asia, the normative frameworks for gender equality are evidenced in legislation, including the 2013 Armenian law "On provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men";²⁷⁹ the 2006 Azerbaijan law "On Guarantees of Gender (Men and Women) Equality"; the 2010 Law of Georgia on Gender Equality and the 2008 Kyrgyzstan law "On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women".²⁸⁰

Operationalising the policies and legislation are gender equality strategies and action plans which, similarly and variably, embrace the 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action: issues of gender mainstreaming, human rights, access to justice, poverty and economic empowerment, political participation and leadership, education, violence against women and girls, health, and the natural environment and resources. Examples of action plans in the Pacific are the Women's Plan of Action 2009–2018 of Fiji²⁸¹ and Nauru's National Women's Plan of Action 2004–2015. In South-East Asia, Viet Nam implements the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011–2020,²⁸² the Philippines has the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive

274 www.wcd.nic.in/empwomen.htm

275 www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_205795.pdf

276 http://pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/files/documents/laws/republic_act_9710.pdf

277 www.mwcd.gov.ws/images/stories/PUBLICATIONS%20WEBSITE/New-update%202013/Ministry%20Policies/NATIONAL%20POLICY%20FOR%20WOMEN%202010-2015.pdf

278 <http://statutes.agc.gov.sg/aol/search/display/view.w3p;page=0;query=DocId%3A%22f0897dd7-1f3a-45a9-b1e7-ba30fef2dbba%22%20Status%3Ainforce%20Depth%3A0;rec=0>

279 www.parliament.am/drafts.php?sel=showdraft&DraftID=28173

280 <http://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=23962>

281 www.welfare-women.gov.fj/index.php/women1/womens-plan-of-action-2010-2019.html

282 www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/English/strategies/strategiesdetails?categoryId=30&articleId=10050924

Development 1995–2025²⁸³ and the Women’s Empowerment, Development and Gender Equality Plan 2013–2016,²⁸⁴ while Myanmar is guided by its National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women 2012–2021. In South and South-West Asia, there are the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan,²⁸⁵ the National Plan of Action for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women 2004 of Nepal and the National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2014–2018 of Turkey. The countries of North and Central Asia, in turn, have national strategies and action plans, such as the Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for 2011–2015²⁸⁶ in Georgia, the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2012–2020 in Kyrgyzstan, and the Strategy for Gender Equality in Kazakhstan for 2006 to 2016.²⁸⁷

While the 2014 Beijing+20 respondent countries reported the existence of national policies, legislation and action plans, they also observed that such documents do not necessarily address all issues pertinent to gender equality and women’s empowerment, exist in draft form or have yet to be fully implemented. For example, in the Marshall Islands, “there is an absence of gender equality and anti-discrimination legislation and no gender mainstreaming policy in place”,²⁸⁸ while in India “[t]he real challenge is to ensure that all such legislations and policies are effectively implemented in a multi-lingual, multi-cultural country”.²⁸⁹ Bangladesh, in turn, reflected on flaws in the translation of the Platform for Action to national contexts.

“The BPFA did not have agreed upon targets and indicators and at the national level the action plans prepared did not develop these either. As a result follow-up and implementation was not systematic. Plans was

[sic] not matched with resource allocation. The various ministries and line agencies developed and implemented their programmes and policies often without explicit reference to the PFA [Platform for Action] or the NPA [National Plan of Action].”

Bangladesh, 2014 national review report, p. 54

Institutional mechanisms

Translation of policies, legislation and action plans from paper to practice requires institutional mechanisms. In relation to gender equality, a principal institutional mechanism is a “national women’s machinery”. As the national women’s machineries are discussed in Section 3.8 (“Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women”), this section of the report focusses on the proliferation of gender equality responsibilities and measures across government.

The Beijing+20 respondent countries described public sector gender mainstreaming initiatives; the construction of functions to enable implementation and monitoring of policies, plans and programmes, and the importance of communication and collaboration.

Examples of gender mainstreaming initiatives include the formulation of sector-specific gender equality policies, the execution of gender audits, the propagation of gender analysis and the adoption of gender-responsive budgeting.

Countries such as Australia, Nepal, the Philippines and Singapore pursue a “whole-of-government” approach to gender mainstreaming, with responsibilities and action on gender equality being shared across government entities. In countries like Bangladesh and Timor-Leste, particular government ministries have targeted gender equality policies, such as in relation to education, health, local planning, agriculture and fisheries, while in New Zealand policies submitted to the Cabinet Social Policy Committee must contain statements as to the implications for women and men.

283 www.pcw.gov.ph/publication/philippine-plan-gender-responsive-development-1995-2025

284 <http://pcw.gov.ph/publication/women%E2%80%99s-empowerment-development-and-gender-equality-wedge-plan-2013%E2%88%922016>

285 www.svri.org/Afghanistanpolicy.pdf

286 www.legislationline.org/topics/country/45/topic/7

287 www.ndi.org/files/Kazakhstan-Gender-Strategy-2006-2016.pdf

288 Marshall Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 17

289 India, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 8

Countries in the Pacific, like the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji and Tonga have undertaken institutional gender audits (or “stocktakes”), establishing baselines from which gender equality can be advanced.

Two key means of institutionalising gender equality within government are gender analysis and gender-responsive budgeting, such as occurs in India, Indonesia and the Philippines for example.

Enabling the mainstreaming of gender across government are gender focal points and gender networks. Countries like Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Cambodia, Nepal, Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands have appointed gender focal points in ministries and departments, from the national to local levels, who coalesce in working groups and committees to provide support in delivering on their mandates, which may include building the capacities of parliamentarians and public servants to act for gender equality in a coordinated, consultative and collaborative manner.

It cannot, however, be presumed that the existence of people and entities mandated to address gender equality automatically translates into full and effective implementation and monitoring of related policies, plans and programmes; to gender equality results. For instance, Nauru observed that there are a lack of “efforts by government to actively promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in the public sector”.²⁹⁰ As stated in Section 3.8, there is a reported need for strengthening political will, capacity and resource investment across the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women for substantive gender equality gains to be realized.

4.2

COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Where gender equality is constituted as a “cross-cutting issue”, cooperation and partnership are integral to economical, efficient and effective operationalization of policies, enforcement of

legislation, implementation of programmes and delivery of services. As reported by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, cooperation and partnership manifest (a) between government entities, and (b) between government and civil society.

Intra-governmental cooperation and partnership

The Beijing+20 respondent countries stated that intra-governmental cooperation and participation is primarily enabled by the national women’s machineries and manifests in multi-stakeholder bodies, written agreements and joint implementation and monitoring of commitments and initiatives for gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Facilitating cooperation and partnership, the national women’s machineries reportedly coordinate government entities; provide technical assistance and review the gender equality-related work of line ministries by, for example, analysis of annual reports.

In Hong Kong (China), the Women’s Commission provides gender-related advice and recommendations to line ministries, while in the Philippines, the Philippines Commission on Women assists the national and local government entities, including in relation to “gender and development” planning and budgeting. The Islamic Republic of Iran has, in turn, reportedly established women’s affairs advisory positions in its ministries. One of the functions of the National Commission for Women and Children in Bhutan is to monitor the gender equality and women’s empowerment initiatives.

Inter-ministerial, departmental or agency forums, taskforces, committees and reference groups are other means through which intra-governmental cooperation and partnership on gender equality is demonstrated. The multi-stakeholder bodies may engage in policy consultation, oversee the implementation of joint initiatives and/or engage in the monitoring of action on international and national commitments, such as pertaining to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, the Platform for Action, national

290 Nauru, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p.8

policies, legislation and action plans. The various modalities of cooperation and partnership may be formalised through such written agreements as memorandums of understanding or memorandums of agreement.

The Office for Women in Australia facilitates coordinated formulation of policy and fosters inter-departmental discussions on issues like paid parental leave, child care and the women, peace and security agenda. There is a multi-stakeholder taskforce in Kiribati addressing the elimination of gender-based violence. Other examples include the national gender equality-related standing, coordinating and steering committees that exist in such countries as Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. In terms of programming, intra-governmental entities in the Cook Islands tackle issues related to reproductive health and violence against women and girls. In Papua New Guinea, multiple government entities are engaged in the national reporting on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. Monitoring of implementation of the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan is facilitated by the gender units that reportedly exist in the national ministries and government offices.

As well as citing the structures and processes for intra-governmental cooperation and partnership, the Beijing+20 respondent countries, like Georgia and Nauru, reflected that insufficient collaboration can be an obstacle to full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action.

“The lack of coordination among government agencies and between the government and civil society has been an additional obstacle to the successful implementation of the Action Plans”.

Georgia, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 8

“Convergence of efforts of various Ministries/ Departments/Civil Society has been an ongoing challenge.”

India, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 9

“There is the need for more corroborative efforts from all stakeholders in the promotion of programs for the advancement of women, but as this is not the priority of departments it is quite difficult. There is the need to incorporate Gender Capacity Training for public servants to encourage the commitment to include gender equality measures.”

Nauru, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

Government and civil society cooperation and partnership

In adopting the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, United Nations Member States affirmed that “[t]he participation and contribution of all actors of civil society, particularly women’s groups and networks and other non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, with full respect for their autonomy, in cooperation with Governments, are important to the effective implementation and follow-up of the Platform for Action”.²⁹¹ Reflecting the recognition of the importance of the engagement of civil society in the implementation of the Platform for Action, the Beijing+20 respondent countries recounted the means through which they cooperate and partner with non-government entities.

Respondent countries from the five ESCAP subregions mentioned national councils, committees and forums for which members are comprised of both government and civil society representatives; examples include the National Council on Women and Children’s Development in Bangladesh; the Technical Working Group on Gender in Cambodia; the Women and Children Work Committee in China; the Women’s Commission in Macao (China); the High Level Committee on the Status of Women in India; the National Women’s Council in Nauru; the CEDAW Reference Group and Core Committee in Papua New Guinea, and the Women’s National Forum in Sri Lanka. The representation of women from civil society is required for local development councils in the Philippines, including on local school boards,

²⁹¹ Beijing Declaration, paragraph 20.

health boards, peace and order councils, housing boards and development councils.

In other countries of Asia and the Pacific, the national women's machineries cooperate and partner with particular non-governmental entities. For instance, in New Zealand, the Ministry of Women's Affairs works with the Maori Women's Welfare League, the National Council of Women, the Young Women Christian Association and P.A.C.I.F.I.C.A. Inc. (Pacific Allied Women's Council). In Singapore, the Office for Women's Development works with the Singapore Council of Women's Organisations (being a federation of 57 women's organisations). The Solomon Islands' Ministry of Women, Children, Youth and Family Affairs engages with both the National Council of Women and Vois Blong Mere (the voice belonging to women) Solomon.

The various government-civil society bodies are reportedly convened on a regular basis to promote continuous consultation. For instance, the Ministry of Women's Affairs in New Zealand hosts the International Caucus that brings together representatives of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, the Family Planning Association, Girl Guides, the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, the Human Rights Commission, Rural Women New Zealand and the Women's Health Action Trust to discuss issues pertaining to gender equality and women's empowerment. Timor-Leste similarly sees the gathering of government and non-government representatives, every four years, at the National Women's Congress.

Such consultations contribute to government entities and civil society collaborating in the formulation and implementation of policies and action plans on gender equality. The Beijing+20 respondent countries reported working with civil society in the development and amendment of policies, legislation and action plans such as occurs, for example, in Australia and has resulted in the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children and the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

Governments and civil society also, reportedly, cooperate and partner in (a) conducting campaigns to raise awareness on gender equality, (b) implementing programmes such as those that focus on the elimination of violence against women and girls, (c) participating in international and regional forums, and (d) monitoring the operationalization of policies and action plans. As an example, in relation to the issue of violence against women and girls in the Pacific, the Gender and Development Office in the Marshall Islands works with Women United Together, while the Fiji Government partners with the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and Empower Pacific. In New Zealand, the Campaign for Action on Family Violence²⁹² engages sports organisations, faith and ethnic communities and businesses to advocate and educate for relinquishing attitudes and behaviours that condone violence against women and girls.

Another modality of engagement is the provision of funding by government to civil society organisations. In Hong Kong (China), for instance, the Women's Commission administers a funding scheme for women's development through which non-governmental organisations receive financial resources to implement projects designed to empower women. In French Polynesia, the government provides grants to non-governmental organisations for operating and programming expenses. The Australian Government, in turn, funds the National Women's Alliances, which is a consortium of more than 120 women's organisations.

It should be noted, however, that the existence of structures and modalities of cooperation and partnership between government and civil society on implementation of the Platform for Action, and on achieving gender equality more broadly, is not indicative of the quality and effectiveness of the collaboration. As observed, for example, by Timor-Leste, "[c]oordination with civil society and the private sector is often weak as the private sector is very nascent in Timor-Leste and often public-private partnerships are not well balanced financially causing coordination and planning problems. This can prohibit strong platforms for dialogue and cooperation".²⁹³

292 www.areyouok.org.nz/

293 Timor-Leste, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 12

4.3 GENDER EQUALITY DATA AND STATISTICS

Strategic implementation of the Platform for Action is contingent on the availability of, and access to, gender equality data and statistics. Without comprehensive and consistent measurement, inequalities, and the effective means of reducing them, remain obscured. Data and statistics are, moreover, integral to monitoring change and efforts to create change, as well as underpinning accountability.

Across Asia and the Pacific, the national statistics offices – variably manifesting as bureaus, directorates, authorities, agencies, councils, committees, institutes and offices – are, according to the Beijing+20 respondent countries, investing in the sex-disaggregation of data and the articulation and application of national core sets of gender indicators, including a subset on the issue of violence against women and girls.

National gender equality indicators

In measuring the multiple dimensions of gender equality, countries in Asia and the Pacific have formulated, and are formulating, national indicators and progressively applying the minimum set of (52) gender indicators as agreed by the United Nations Statistical Commission.²⁹⁴

In addressing the issue of data and statistics, the Beijing+20 respondent countries from the five ESCAP subregions enumerated their methods of data collection, their indicators of gender equality, their modes of sharing data and their application of gender data. In terms of data collection, such Beijing+20 respondent countries as Australia, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nauru and Timor-Leste listed demographic and health surveys, population and housing surveys, multiple cluster indicator surveys, time use surveys, and health and safety surveys as sources of sex-disaggregated data and information on gender equality.

Depending on the country and the nature of the survey, information is gathered on a range of subjects, including age, ethnic affiliation, language, religion, family, education, housing, health, disability, economic security, the labour force, employment, livelihoods, decision-making, human rights, life satisfaction, crime and safety, justice, governance, citizenship and the natural environment. The Philippines, for example, has the Core Gender and Development Indicators.²⁹⁵ Mongolia reportedly has 216 gender indicators across 14 categories, while Azerbaijan collects data on 250 indicators in 12 areas.

The collected data are compiled and made accessible to interested persons through electronic and print mediums. Examples of the online databases and publications include Armenia's national statistical database;²⁹⁶ "Gender Indicators, Australia";²⁹⁷ Georgia's "Gender Statistics" and "Man and Woman in Georgia";²⁹⁸ Hong Kong's (China) annual "Women and Men in Hong Kong: Key Statistics";²⁹⁹ Japan's annual "White Paper on Gender Equality";³⁰⁰ Kyrgyzstan's "Women and Men in the Kyrgyz Republic";³⁰¹ "The New Zealand Census of Women's Participation";³⁰² the Philippines' "Statistics on Women and Men in the Philippines";³⁰³ Singapore's "Gender Statistics"³⁰⁴ and "Gender QuickStat";³⁰⁵ "Men and Women in the Russian Federation" and Viet Nam's "Gender Statistical Indicator System".

According to the Beijing+20 respondent countries, the gender data that are collected, compiled, analysed and published informs government planning processes, policy formulation, service delivery, programme implementation and monitoring of activities.

295 <http://pcw.gov.ph/statistics/core-gad-indicators>

296 www.armstat.am/en/?nid=45&year=2013

297 www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4125.0

298 http://geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=1172&lang=eng

299 www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B11303032013AN13B0100.pdf

300 www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/about_danjo/whitepaper/

301 www.unfpa.kg/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Myjchin_Jenchini_ENG.pdf

302 www.neon.org.nz/census2010/census2012/

303 www.nscb.gov.ph/publication/social/social_wm.asp

304 <http://app.msf.gov.sg/Policies/Women-Celebrating-Women/Gender-Statistics>

305 <http://web0.psa.gov.ph/statistics/quickstat>

294 www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.3/2013/10

“Statistics... provide evidence-based support in identifying appropriate programs and strategies to address specific problems, especially of marginalized groups such as women and girls.”

Philippines, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

“The sex-disaggregated data is used to identify gaps and devise strategies to address and improve participation of men and women in specific development areas as well as to celebrate achievements from men and women towards a particular development program.”

Vanuatu, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 survey submission

While affirming that gender equality data are collected and utilised, the Beijing+20 respondent countries also reported shortcomings in their statistical systems in terms of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics. The efficiency and effectiveness of national statistical systems is, reportedly, impeded by:

- a limited awareness of the importance of gathering data on gender equality;

“[D]ue to lack of orientation in all agencies availability of sex disaggregated data is difficult”.

Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 57

- b non-existent or narrow datasets and databases;

“There is a need for more sex-disaggregated data and the need for regular updating of these data.”

Brunei Darussalam, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 12

“Gender disaggregated data is still inadequate and in shortage of legal effectiveness, which impedes the formulation, execution of policies and intervention programs meeting gender needs;”

Viet Nam, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 7

“No formal depository of information regarding gender data. Gender disaggregated data is limited. A comprehensive data collection and reporting process is needed”.

Palau, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 12

“[M]uch data exist, but systematically collating these into a cohesive national data set remains a challenge”.

Timor-Leste, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 56

- c lack of technical capacity; and

“Limited resources and capacity in data management and analysis make it difficult for agencies such as SEPI [State Secretary for the Promotion of Equality] to meet the requirements for gender-related monitoring and evaluation. This is an area where ongoing capacity development is needed to build the skills and systems to efficiently produce and use data.”

Timor-Leste, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 45

- d insufficient resources.

“Part of the reason why national indicators have not been established is because of limited resources available for this work, the lack of a national gender equality policy to collect statistics against and the release of the gender monograph based on the 2009 Census of Population and Housing.”

Vanuatu, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 20

“[T]here are also data gaps on critical issues which need substantial resources to be able to proceed with data generation considering the inadequacy of the system in the storage, retrieval and use of data”.

Philippines, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 45

The implications of such deficiencies in terms of gender equality data and statistics are policies, plans and programmes that fail to adequately respond

to the different needs and interests of women and men, girls and boys.

“Because of the lack of national database due to capacity and coordination challenges, many policies are passed without the use of sex disaggregated data.”

Papua New Guinea, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

“There is not much sex-disaggregated data around so most policy and planning are not informed by sex-disaggregated data. There are some policy and programme development that were informed by data. The development of the national policy on elimination of violence against women was informed by the data collected through a nation-wide consultation in 2009.”

Solomon Islands, 2014 Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submission

In relation to the globally-agreed minimum set of (52) gender indicators, several countries in Asia and the Pacific – from New Zealand the Republic of Palau in the Pacific and the Philippines, Singapore and Timor-Leste in South-East Asia, to Macao (China) in East and North East Asia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey in South and South-West Asia and both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in North and Central Asia – attested to planning to or commencing collection of data on the global minimum set of gender indicators. This is not, however, the case for all countries in the Asia-Pacific region as noted, for example, by several countries in the Pacific.

“To date there has not been any progressive work in regards to the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators”.

Fiji, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 41

“At present there is not a core set of national indicators for monitoring progress in gender equality and data collection. Compilation of the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators or the nine indicators on violence against women has not begun specifically although various organisations and stakeholders are assessing a

number of gender indicators in their individual remits.”

Papua New Guinea, 2014 Beijing +20 national review report, p. 45

“No core set of national indicators for monitoring progress in gender equality has been established.”

Solomon Islands, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 59

“The data collection and compilation for the United Nations Minimum Set of Gender Indicators has not yet begun as a formal national process.”; “Gaps include no data on time use and one ‘ad hoc’ VAW survey conducted by an NGO with VNSO [Vanuatu National Statistics Office] support.”

Vanuatu, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 20

For some countries, not all of the 52 indicators are deemed applicable to their national contexts. For example, Bangladesh observed that “indicator number 50 on female genital mutilation is not relevant for Bangladesh”.³⁰⁶

In relation to gender equality data and statistics, the Beijing+20 respondent countries reported that information pertaining to different categories of “women” and girls” is collected, collated and analysed. Data pertaining to “women” and “girls” can, reportedly, be disaggregated by such variables as age, geographic location, ethnic identity, civil status, health, disability, education, economic status and household type. Although, as noted by, for example, countries in North and Central Asia, more information elucidating the diversity that exists amongst women and girls is required.

“Currently limited official data exist on the situation of particular groups of women, such as rural women, older women, women with disabilities, indigenous women, women living with HIV and AIDS and other groups”.

Georgia, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 49

³⁰⁶ Bangladesh, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 57

Indicators on Violence Against Women

As with the global minimum set of gender indicators, varied progress has been made by countries in Asia and the Pacific in the application of the nine core indicators on violence against women, as adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission.³⁰⁷

While some countries have yet to commence employing the nine core indicators to measure violence against women and girls at the national level, others are pursuing various initiatives. For example, family health and safety surveys have, and are being, conducted in such Pacific countries as the Cook Islands, Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, the Republic of Palau, Samoa and the Solomon Islands, with application of the World Health Organization's methodology, while neighbouring countries of Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu having completed national studies. Other countries in the same ESCAP subregion, such as Australia and New Zealand, conduct crime and safety surveys through which information on violence against women and girls is gathered. In 2010, Viet Nam carried out a national survey on domestic violence against women.

Countries in and beyond the Pacific are, in turn, establishing national gender-based violence or violence against women databases, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines³⁰⁸ and Turkey.

As with databases, countries in the four ESCAP subregions other than the Pacific similarly conduct surveys and studies on violence against women; studies that incorporate some or all of the nine core indicators as undertaken, for instance, in Azerbaijan, Bangladesh and Turkey.³⁰⁹ The “Women’s Safety Module” of the Philippines 2008 and 2013 National Demographic Health Surveys reportedly collected data on seven of the nine violence against women indicators.

307 <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/vaw/docs/finalreport.pdf>

308 National Violence Against Women Documentation System, www.pcv.gov.ph/unfpa/vaw-documentation-system

309 2008 National Research on Domestic Violence Against Women in Turkey (also conducted in 2014)

Given that information collected on the nine core indicators of violence against women, reportedly, contributes to strategic planning, budgeting and response by governments, there is an identified need to strengthen statistical systems in this respect.

“[T]here is a severe lack of data” on violence against women and girls, with “a comprehensive study on GBV is yet to be conducted in Nepal”.

Nepal, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, pp. 13 and 31

“[T]he availability of reliable statistics on domestic violence is an important component in addressing the problem. However, the existing systems for collecting data on violence against women and domestic violence needs to be improved”.

Kyrgyzstan, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 25

While some countries in the Asia and the Pacific region intend to repeat surveys and studies applying the nine core indicators of violence against women and girls to ensure targeted policy and programme responses, like in both Georgia and Kazakhstan, no such plans exist in other countries. For instance, Vanuatu observed that “[s]tatistics on gender based violence were released by the Vanuatu Women’s Centre based on a 2011 survey; with no plans to conduct this survey again.”³¹⁰

4.4

BUDGETS AND FUNDING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Twenty years since the observation that “[f]inancial and human resources have generally been insufficient for the advancement of women”,³¹¹ government funding for gender equality is seemingly still inadequate for achieving the strategic objectives of the Platform for Action. As summarised in Section 3.8 of this report, the national women’s machineries — in 15 of the 17 Beijing+20 respondent countries

310 Vanuatu, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 20

311 Platform for Action, Chapter IV, paragraph 345.

that provided funding information — are allocated less than one per cent of the national budgets, despite their substantial mandates.

Besides quantitative allocation of funds, gender-responsive budgeting is a modality employed by some countries in Asia and the Pacific to foster equitable and accountable resource allocation. In Chapter 3, specifically Section 3.1.2, the reported adoption of gender-responsive budgeting by 11 of the 26 Beijing+20 respondent countries was noted, along with some form of gender-responsive budgeting having been documented in countries that did not submit the Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey and/or national review reports, including Australia, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan.

Examples of the different manifestations of gender-responsive budgeting in Asia and the Pacific include (a) gender budget statements, such as produced by ministries in India and Indonesia, (b) the inclusion of gender-responsive budgeting in Bangladesh’s Medium Term Budgetary Framework for 2008, and (c) designation of five per cent as the minimum budget allocation for “projects designed to address gender issues” in the Philippines.³¹²

Countries in Asia and the Pacific have, however, yet to universally adopt gender-responsive budgeting as one means of advancing gender equality and of enabling implementation of the Platform for Action. The reluctance to embrace gender-responsive budgeting was noted by, for example, Papua New Guinea.

“To date there have been no significant initiatives to ensure any degree of gender responsive budgeting. The common assumption or expression of concern is that there is little political will to do so and that there is a lack of capacity to plan and monitor and report on budgeting per se without the addition of gender related planning and budgeting. Calls by various individuals to promote gender

responsive budgeting from both in and out of Government have not been followed up.”

Papua New Guinea, 2014 Beijing+20 national review report, p. 9

4.5

SUMMARY

As reported by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, implementation of the Platform for Action has been pursued through (a) the enactment of normative frameworks, commonly in the form of policies, legislation and action plans, (b) the construction of institutional mechanisms, notably national women’s machineries, (c) cooperation and partnership, between government entities and with civil society, (d) development of statistical systems and collection of data, and (e) application of budgeting mechanisms and the allocation of financial resources.

There is, however, variability between countries in Asia and the Pacific in the extent to which they invest in each means of implementation of the Platform for Action. There are identified “gaps” in gender equality policies and legislation. National women’s machineries are mandated to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women but do not necessarily have adequate resources to fulfil their mandates. With varying gender equality awareness and capacity, along with the recognised need to strengthen communication and collaboration, the existence of formal mechanisms for cooperation and partnership between government entities does not equate to efficient and effective delivery of initiatives. In terms of budgeting and funding, there is potential for strengthening existing gender-responsive budgeting measures and for increasing the adoption of gender-responsive budgeting across Asia and the Pacific.

312 Republic Act No. 9174 (General Appropriates Act of 1996), Section 27, <http://www.pcw.gov.ph/law/republic-act-8174>

Chapter 5

Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment

“Equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and is also a necessary and fundamental prerequisite for equality, development and peace. A transformed partnership based on equality between women and men is a condition for people centred sustainable development. A sustained and long-term commitment is essential, so that women and men can work together for themselves, for their children and for society to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.”

Platform for Action, Mission Statement, paragraph 1

In Asia and the Pacific (and globally), gender equality has yet to be achieved and all women have yet to be empowered. The necessity of “sustained and long-term commitment” if gender equality is to be achieved was highlighted in 1995. As recognised by the 2014 Beijing+20 respondent countries, such commitment needs to be strengthened and sustained if there is to be “equality, development and peace” for all persons – women, men, girls and boys. The respondent countries identified both (a) priority areas for action on gender equality, and (b) requirements for accelerating implementation of the Platform for Action.

5.1

PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION ON GENDER EQUALITY

The Beijing+20 respondent countries identified priority areas for action on gender equality that reflected the 12 critical areas of concern listed in the Platform for Action in 1995.

Three priority areas were shared by countries from the five ESCAP subregions, namely: (1) increasing women’s engagement in public and political life; (2) empowering women economically, and (3) eliminating violence against women and girls.

With respect to women’s presence in the public domain, the Beijing+20 respondent countries emphasised the need to increase the number of women occupying leadership and decision-making positions, from national parliaments to local levels of governance. Achieving gender parity across leadership and decision-making positions is seen, by the respondent countries, as requiring identifying women with the potential to lead; investing in building the capacities of women to occupy leadership positions; engaging “male champions”, and employing special temporary measures, such as quotas, affirmative action and targeted funding.

Multiple initiatives are required, according to the Beijing+20 respondent countries, to empower women economically. Suggested measures to reduce poverty amongst women and girls and to promote their economic independence include gender-responsive

economic policies and programmes that embrace social protection, facilitate the acquisition of labour market knowledge and skills by women, promote the employment of women and enhance women's access to assets, credit and other productive resources. Other identified areas for attention include reducing the gender pay gap, accounting for women's unpaid care work, advancing the rights of women engaged in the informal sector, fostering entrepreneurship and making decent work a reality for more women workers.

In relation to the third priority area for action for all five ESCAP subregions, eliminating violence against women and girls, application of the due diligence standard of prevention, protection and prosecution (access to justice) was reinforced. Action on violence against women is seen as requiring the existence and implementation of normative frameworks comprised of policies, legislation and strategies, along with a position of "zero tolerance". Other requirements for eliminating violence against women, as listed by the 2014 Beijing+20 respondent countries, are education initiatives; provision of a range of services, including safe houses and reintegration measures for violence survivors; community mobilisation, ensuring the engagement of leaders; research to elucidate the various aspects of violence against women and girls, and gender-sensitive judicial systems. Particular forms of violence were highlighted for attention by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, including trafficking in women and girls; child, early and forced marriage and other harmful practices; domestic violence; cyber prostitution and pornography; sorcery-related crimes, and violence against elderly women.

For countries in the Pacific, South-East Asia, South and South-West Asia and North and Central Asia, successfully addressing issues of leadership and decision-making, economic empowerment and violence requires tackling the underlying cause of inequality between women and men, namely patriarchy. To equalise relations of power between women and men, the respondent countries emphasized improving the status of women in society and revising negative and stereotyped images and attitudes about women and girls and their roles. Women and men, as well as girls and boys, are

identified as target groups in the transformation of sociocultural norms, wherein members of both sexes are "agents of change".

Countries in the same four ESCAP subregions – Pacific, South-East Asia, South and South-West Asia and North and Central Asia – in turn identified the need to strengthen normative frameworks and associated institutional mechanisms which can structure and substantiate action on gender equality. To this end, the adoption of gender equality policies and legislation, as well as ensuring gender equitable impacts of other government policies and legislation, were deemed important. Effective implementation of policies and legislation is, in turn, viewed as requiring greater coordination between, and gender capacities of, all government entities. Particular mention was made of the need to strengthen the national women's machineries and to expand the application of gender-responsive budgeting.

With policies, legislation and strategies framing action on gender equality, the Beijing+20 respondent countries further listed specific sector issues requiring attention. Women's and girls' health was registered as one such issue by countries in all ESCAP subregions except East and North-East Asia. In the area of health, the respondent countries emphasised the need to address women's and girls' (a) maternal health (particularly in relation to reducing mortality rates), (b) access to health services, and (c) sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Another sector specific priority area for action identified by countries in the Pacific, in South-East Asia and in South and South-West Asia was the natural environment. The Beijing+20 respondent countries drew particular attention to the need for gender-aware attention and response to both the impacts of climate change and the management and use of natural resources, including potable water and renewable energy sources. Actions are deemed to be necessary for raising women's and girls' awareness of environmental issues and for building their resilience to climate change, as well as for fostering gender-responsive disaster risk reduction.

Countries in the Pacific, in South-East Asia and in North and Central Asia further identified implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, as exemplified in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, as a priority area for action. Countries in these three ESCAP subregions stressed the importance of promoting the rights and security of women and girls during times of conflict and in post-conflict settings.

Related to the women, peace and security agenda is another area for action listed by countries in the Pacific, in South-East Asia, in South and South-West Asia and in North and Central Asia: access to justice. There is a perceived need, at least in these four ESCAP subregions, to enforce legislation, to end impunity for persons who violate the rights of women and girls, to increase women's and girls' legal literacy and to provide (free) legal services. Given that women's and girls' ability to exercise their rights is contingent upon official recognition of their existence, civil registration, including the right to citizenship regardless of the legal status of a child's parent(s), is a related area for attention.

Two further priorities identified by the Beijing+20 respondent countries – priorities that cut across all of the aforementioned areas for action – are (a) addressing the specific needs and interests of different groups of women and girls, and (b) strengthening gender statistics and the sex-disaggregation of data. Given the intersectionality of inequalities, conscious consideration of differences and similarities of women and girls categorised as rural, indigenous, migrant, refugee, with disability and poor, for example, is required if all women and girls are to be empowered. Sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics are, in turn, deemed to be priorities because strategic action on, and accountability for, gender equality and the empowerment of women requires the collection, analysis and application of reliable, valid and comprehensive information; evidence-based and evidence-responsive action.

5.2

ACCELERATING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION

With some overlap with the priority areas of action on gender equality, the Beijing+20 respondent countries³¹³ identified six key requirements for accelerating implementation of the Platform for Action.

The first key requirement is political commitment and a “whole-of-government” approach to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Beijing+20 respondent countries emphasised the need for greater political will and shared responsibility across government ministries and departments, reflected in the existence and implementation of comprehensive and multi-sector gender equality policies, plans and programmes.

The translation of policies, plans and programmes to concrete actions requires consciousness, capacity and collaboration; three other means of accelerating implementation of the Platform for Action identified by the Beijing+20 respondent countries. In terms of consciousness, the respondent countries declared that there is a need to raise the awareness and understanding of parliamentarians, public servants and the public more broadly. That is, greater cognisance of gender, gender equality, gender mainstreaming and gender issues is required for accelerated action on gender equality. The respondent countries made particular reference to raising the awareness of government representatives, the judicial sector, civil society and women.

Developing upon raised consciousness, there is perceived need, by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, to strengthen the capacity of individuals and entities responsible for implementing gender equality policies, plans and programmes. Gender equality capacity investment is understood to require the delivery of training and the provision of technical assistance across the government sector

313 Due to the limited number of 2014 Beijing+20 national review reports received from the countries of North and East Asia, the means of accelerated action as summarised in this section of the report are those identified by ESCAP members and associate members in the other four subregions.

in order to enable the mainstreaming of gender and the adoption of such measures as gender-responsive budgeting. In terms of capacity, the 2014 Beijing+20 respondent countries emphasised the need to invest in the national women's machineries.

Enhancing collaboration between government entities, and between governments and civil society, is another posited means of accelerating implementation of the Platform for Action. Under the umbrella of collaboration, the Beijing+20 respondent countries highlighted the importance of strengthening (a) the sharing of knowledge, including data, and experiences, particularly in relation to the Platform for Action; (b) the coordination mechanisms, such as multi-stakeholder committees, councils and forms, and (c) the participation of women and women's organisations from the international to local levels. Shared ownership, within which there is clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities, was, in turn, listed as a means of bolstering cooperation and partnership on gender equality.

The Beijing+20 respondent countries further maintained that accelerating implementation of the Platform for Action requires greater resource investment. With particular emphasis on financial resources, the respondent countries affirmed the need for sustainable financing mechanisms, targeted resourcing and greater national budget allocations for their national women's machineries. Fulfilment of mandates and operationalization of commitments is seen as being contingent on adequate resource investment.

The sixth key means of accelerating implementation of the Platform for Action, identified by the Beijing+20 respondent countries, is accountability. Enhanced accountability requires monitoring and evaluation of the breadth of gender equality initiatives which, in turn, necessitates the articulation of measurable targets and indicators, as well as the collection of sex-disaggregated data and application of gender statistics.

Fundamentally, accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action must occur from a rights-based, inclusive and equitable foundation, for which there is shared ownership, investment and accountability.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Through their Beijing+20 national review reports and Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 regional survey submissions, the ESCAP members and associate members reported progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment across the 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action.

The Beijing+20 respondent countries also attested to encountering challenges in realising all of the strategic objectives of the Platform for Action. Twenty years after commitments were made to implement the Platform for Action, sustained and enhanced efforts are still required in order to overcome the persistent obstacles to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

While "women" and "girls" are heterogeneous categories that risk obscuring difference (and thus the ability of all women and girls to realise their human rights and fundamental freedoms), across the geographically vast, and socioeconomically, politically and culturally varied, region of Asia and the Pacific, "women" and "girls" share the reality of inequality, discrimination, prejudice and oppression.

The Beijing+20 respondent countries identified priority areas for action to redress the inequalities that exist between women and men, and between girls and boys, along with the core requirements for achieving gender equality. As the respondent countries revealed, progress is possible but more needs to be done because gender equality is not yet a reality for all women and men, girls and boys, in Asia and the Pacific.

Fundamentally, realization of gender equality requires transformation of patriarchal power relations in favour of substantive equality between women and men; equality that has been defined and elucidated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Platform for Action. The collective aim is for women and men, girls and boys, to live lives with dignity, agency, choice, freedoms and voice, all of which underpin social justice, democracy and peace.

“The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women’s issue. They are the only way to build a sustainable, just and developed society. Empowerment of women and equality between women and men are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among all peoples”.

Platform for Action, Chapter III, “Critical Areas of Concern”, p. 16

Annex A

Guidance note for preparation of national reviews

Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000) in the context of the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 2015

Guidance note for the preparation of national reviews

I BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women will carry out a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000).

In resolution E/RES/2013/18, the United Nations Economic and Social Council called upon all States to undertake comprehensive national-level reviews of the progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Paragraphs three to five of the resolution state the following:

“Decides that at its fifty-ninth session, in 2015, the Commission will undertake a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, including current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as opportunities for strengthening gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda through the integration of a gender perspective;

Calls upon all States to undertake comprehensive national-level reviews of the progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and encourages the regional commissions to undertake regional reviews so that the outcomes of intergovernmental processes at the regional level can feed into the 2015 review;

Strongly encourages 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[;]"

In addition to a review and appraisal of progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, the reviews are also an opportunity for consultation and awareness-raising. Therefore, in preparing the national reviews, Member States are encouraged to undertake a consultative process with a broad range of stakeholders within and outside government.

UN Women and the five United Nations regional commissions are collaborating in the review and appraisal process. The regional commissions will use the national reviews to prepare regional assessment reports that will be submitted to regional intergovernmental processes in the course of 2014. All national reviews will be posted on the website of UN Women, with links to the websites of the respective regional commissions. They will also contribute to the global review and appraisal to be prepared by UN Women, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to be submitted to the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

The present guidance note aims to assist in and facilitate the preparation of these national reviews.

II GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT OF NATIONAL REVIEWS

National reviews 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. 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.

The national reviews should, in section one, cover the period since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. They should be informed by past reviews of progress, i.e. those conducted in 2000, 2005 and 2010. A variety of other sources can be drawn from, including national Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) reports, the surveys prepared for the 2014 review of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), reports submitted by States parties under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the global review of gender statistics programmes in countries administered by the United Nations regional commissions and presented to the UN Statistical Commission in February 2013,³¹⁴ and other national assessments. The national reviews need not reproduce the findings of these, but rather build on them to produce an integrated and comprehensive analysis, reflecting long-term trends, opportunities and challenges, and results achieved since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

In section two, the national reviews should address progress in the twelve critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action, with an emphasis on the years since 2009.

Section three should cover issues related to data and statistics. It should complement the results of

³¹⁴ The global review is a comprehensive assessment of gender statistics in national statistical systems developed by the UN Statistics Division in consultation with the regional commissions and finalized by a task team of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics. It was administered by regional commissions in their respective regions and contained 30 questions related to the planning, production and use of gender statistics. For results, see <http://undocs.org/E/CN.3/2013/10>.

the global review of gender statistics programmes in countries presented to the UN Statistical Commission in February 2013.

Section four should address key emerging issues in terms of opportunities and challenges in implementing the Platform for Action and additional priorities, including recommendations to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women in the current discussions on Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda.

Whenever possible, information should be provided on the situation of particular groups of women, such as rural women, older women, women with disabilities, indigenous women, women living with HIV and AIDS, and any other groups that might face multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage. Countries are encouraged to provide information on indicators used at the national and local level to monitor the situation of gender equality and empowerment of women.

Structure and Content of National Reviews

National reviews should be structured according to the following sections and address the following guiding questions:

Section One: Overview Analysis of Achievements and Challenges Since 1995 (suggested length: 10 pages)

- a What are the country's three to five major achievements in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly?
- b Why are these considered to be the major achievements? Please provide evidence that supports this assessment.

What has contributed to this success? Describe measures taken in terms of policies and mechanisms to maintain or build on this success.

What are the country's three to five major challenges in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly?

Why are these considered to be the major challenges?

Describe the strategy(ies) that is (are) in place to address the challenges?

- c What setbacks/reversals in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women have been experienced since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (if different from those already identified in b)?

What were the major factors that caused the setbacks?

What mitigation measures or other actions, if any, have been implemented to counter the setbacks?

- d What have been the main constitutional, legislative and/or legal developments in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women?

What laws and/or regulations remain in place (or have been introduced) that could have adverse effects on promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in the country?

- e What is the approximate share of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women?

Describe efforts to increase and track national planning and budgetary allocations related to achieving gender equality and empowerment of women, in preparation of development plans and budgets at national, regional/provincial and local levels.

- f** What mechanisms are in place for regular dialogue between Government and civil society? If mechanisms are in place, briefly describe them.

Do non-governmental organizations, including civil society organizations, women's organizations, academia, faith-based organizations, the private sector and other actors participate formally in the mechanisms established to monitor and implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action?

If no, what are the main obstacles preventing the establishment of such mechanisms?

- g** What main in-country, bilateral, subregional and/or regional cooperation is the country engaged in to support sharing of knowledge and experiences in the monitoring and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly?

What results have been achieved through such efforts and what lessons have been learnt?

What is the perceived value of the cooperation?

In what ways could cooperation be improved to strengthen sharing of knowledge and experiences in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action?

- h** How, and to what extent, have the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) overall, and in particular the gender-related MDGs, facilitated or strengthened the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action?

Section Two: Progress in the Implementation of the Critical Areas of Concern of the Platform for Action Since 2009 (suggested length: 25 pages)

- a** What is the status of progress in each of the twelve critical areas of concern and their strategic objectives, and relevant sections of the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General

Assembly? Please provide concrete supporting evidence, including statistical data and other relevant sources.

Has any of these areas been supported by legal measures, national policies, strategies, plans, programmes and/or projects developed and implemented since 2009? Please provide examples of such measures.

Were these measures monitored in the relevant areas? Please provide statistical data and assessments on the results achieved through these measures.

- b** Describe the obstacles, gaps and challenges since 2009 in implementing the critical areas of concern.

Were there any countercyclical measures introduced in your country since 2009 to mitigate the consequences of global economic and financial crisis?

If so, did these measures incorporate a gender perspective and/or include women as a targeted group?

- c** Have austerity policies/measures, such as tax increases, cuts in public expenditure, or public sector downsizing, been introduced in your country in the aftermath of the 2007/2008 financial crisis?

If so, to what extent have they affected the critical areas of concern? Please describe the effects of such measures on key indicators, such as participation of women and men in social and economic activity, including education, training, participation in labour markets, unpaid work, access to social protection, access to credit, or entrepreneurship.

Section Three: Data and Statistics (Suggested length: 5 pages)

- a** Has a core set of national indicators for monitoring progress in gender equality been established? If so, please provide the indicators in an annex.

Where is responsibility for collecting the data located?

If national indicators have not been established, what are the reasons?

- b** Has data collection and compilation on the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators begun, which was agreed by the UN Statistical Commission in 2013? (The link to the list of indicators is provided in Part III.)

If so, what is the status of data collection and compilation? Please describe plans to improve gender-related data collection and compilation at the national level that have been developed.

If not, are there any plans at the national level to begin work based on the Minimum Set? Please describe briefly.

- c** Has data collection and compilation on the nine indicators on violence against women, as agreed by the UN Statistical Commission in 2013, begun? (The list of indicators is provided in Part III).

If so, what is the status of data collection and compilation? Please describe plans that have been developed to produce these indicators at the national level.

If not, are there any plans at the national level to begin work based on these indicators? Please describe briefly.

- d** What processes have been undertaken to collect data on the situation of particular groups of women, such as rural women, older women, women with disabilities, indigenous women, women living with HIV and AIDS, or other groups? Please describe briefly.

Section Four: Emerging Priorities (Suggested length: 2 pages)

- a** What are the key priorities for action over the next three to five years for accelerating implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform

for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and subsequent intergovernmental agreements for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women at the national level?

- b** What are your country's priorities and recommendations to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women in the current discussions on Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda?

Annexes to National Reviews

In addition to relevant information not covered elsewhere, the annexes to the national reviews should contain the following:

- information on the process of preparing the national review, including an indication of which Government departments and institutions were involved, and consultations held with stakeholders
- detailed statistical information, as applicable, on the overall trends discussed in section one, and on all critical areas of concern discussed in section two
- case studies/good practice examples of policies and initiatives implemented in any of the critical areas of concern, not included elsewhere
- a list of policies, strategies, action plans and publications, with links to their location (electronic copies).

III SUBMISSION OF NATIONAL REVIEWS

States are invited to send their national reviews in hard copy and electronic format in one of the six official United Nations languages to the relevant regional commissions, and to UN- Women, no later than 1 May 2014.

UN Women

Intergovernmental Support Division
 220 East 42nd Street, Room 18-43
 New York, NY 10017
 Contact: Patience Stephens, Director,
 Intergovernmental Support Division
 Email: igsd.beijing20@unwomen.org
 Fax: +1 646 781 4496

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

P.O. Box 3001
 Menelik Avenue
 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
 Contact: Thokozile (Thoko) Ruzvidzo, Director,
 African Centre for Gender and
 Social Development
 Email: truzvidz@uneca.org
 Fax: +25111 5 51 27 85

Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

Office of the Executive Secretary
 Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva, Switzerland
 Contact: Malinka Koparanova,
 Senior Social Affairs Officer
 Email: gender@unece.org
 Fax: +41 22 917 0036

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Casilla 179-D
 Santiago de Chile, 7630412, Chile
 Contact: Sonia Montaña, Directora, División de
 Asuntos de Género
 Email: sonia.montano@cepal.org
 Fax: +56 2 208 0252

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Social Development Division
 United Nations Building
 Rajadamnern Nok Avenue, Bangkok 10200,
 Thailand
 Contact: Cai Cai, Chief, Gender Equality and
 Women's Empowerment
 Email: escap-sdd@un.org
 Fax: +66 2 288 1030

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

P. O. Box 11-8575
 Riad El-Solh Square, Beirut, Lebanon
 Contact: Samira Atallah, Director, ESCWA Centre
 for Women
 Email: beijing20review@un.org
 Fax: +961 1 981 510

IV

RELEVANT WEBSITES AND LINKS

Information about past review and appraisal processes is available at the following links, including reports submitted by Member States to the United Nations Secretariat prior to the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), and for the five-year (2000), ten-year (2005) and fifteen-year (2010) review and appraisal processes.

UN Women:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/index.html>

ECA:

<http://www.uneca.org/beijing15>

ECE:

http://www.unece.org/gender/beijing_process.html

ECLAC:

<http://www.cepal.org/es/areas-de-trabajo/asuntos-de-genero>

ESCAP:

<http://www.unescapsdd.org/publications/bangkok-declaration-beijing15>

ESCWA:

<http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=1065E>

Information about the 2015 review and appraisal process will be posted at the following sites, including national reviews.

UN Women:
<http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw59-2015>

ECA: forthcoming

ECE: http://www.unece.org/gender/beijing_process.html

ECLAC: forthcoming

ESCAP:
<http://www.unescapdd.org/beijing20>

ESCWA: forthcoming

Reports submitted by States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women are available on the website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, treaty body database, at <http://tb.ohchr.org/default.aspx>.

Minimum Set of Gender indicators

The Minimum Set of Gender Indicators can be accessed in the following report (Annex II): <http://undocs.org/E/CN.3/2013/10>

Violence Against Women Indicators

The nine violence against women indicators are as follows:

Total and age specific rate of women subjected to physical violence in the last 12 months by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency

- 1 Total and age specific rate of women subjected to physical violence during lifetime by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency
- 2 Total and age specific rate of women subjected to sexual violence in the last 12 months by

severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency

- 3 Total and age specific rate of women subjected to sexual violence during lifetime by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency
- 4 Total and age specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to sexual and/or physical violence by current or former intimate partner in the last 12 months by frequency
- 5 Total and age specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to sexual and/or physical violence by current or former intimate partner during lifetime by frequency
- 6 Total and age specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to psychological violence in the past 12 months by the intimate partner
- 7 Total and age specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to economic violence in the past 12 months by the intimate partner
- 8 Total and age specific rate of women subjected to female genital mutilation
- 9 These indicators can be accessed in the following report: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/vaw/docs/finalreport.pdf>.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Critical Areas of Concern and Strategic Objectives

A Women and Poverty

- 1 Strategic objective A.1. Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty.
- 2 Strategic objective A.2. Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources.

- 3 Strategic objective A.3. Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions.
- 4 Strategic objective A.4. Develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminization of poverty.

B Education and training of women

- 5 Strategic objective B.1. Ensure equal access to education.
- 6 Strategic objective B.2. Eradicate illiteracy among women.
- 7 Strategic objective B.3. Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education.
- 8 Strategic objective B.4. Develop non-discriminatory education and training.
- 9 Strategic objective B.5. Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms.
- 10 Strategic objective B.6. Promote lifelong education and training for girls and women.

C Women and Health

- 11 Strategic objective C.1. Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services.
- 12 Strategic objective C.2. Strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health.
- 13 Strategic objective C.3. Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues.
- 14 Strategic objective C.4. Promote research and disseminate information on women's health.

- 15 Strategic objective C.5. Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health.

D Violence Against Women

- 16 Strategic objective D.1. Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women.
- 17 Strategic objective D.2. Study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures.
- 18 Strategic objective D.3. Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.

E Women and Armed Conflict

- 19 Strategic objective E.1. Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation.
- 20 Strategic objective E.2. Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments.
- 21 Strategic objective E.3. Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations.
- 22 Strategic objective E.4. Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace.
- 23 Strategic objective E.5. Provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women.
- 24 Strategic objective E.6. Provide assistance to the women of the colonies and non-self-governing territories.

Women and the Economy

- 25 Strategic objective F.1. Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.
- 26 Strategic objective F.2. Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade.
- 27 Strategic objective F.3. Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women.
- 28 Strategic objective F.4. Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks.
- 29 Strategic objective F.5. Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination.
- 30 Strategic objective F.6. Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men.

Women in Power and Decision-Making

- 31 Strategic objective G.1. Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making.
- 32 Strategic objective G.2. Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

- 33 Strategic objective H.1. Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies.
- 34 Strategic objective H.2. Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects.

- 35 Strategic objective H.3. Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.

Human Rights of Women

- 36 Strategic objective I.1. Promote and protect the human rights of women, through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- 37 Strategic objective I.2. Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice.
- 38 Strategic objective I.3. Achieve legal literacy.

Women and the Media

- 39 Strategic objective J.1. Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication.
- 40 Strategic objective J.2. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

Women and the Environment

- 41 Strategic objective K.1. Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels.
- 42 Strategic objective K.2. Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development.
- 43 Strategic objective K.3. Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional, and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

The Girl-Child

- 44** Strategic objective L.1. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl-child.
- 45** Strategic objective L.2. Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls.
- 46** Strategic objective L.3. Promote and protect the rights of the girl-child and increase awareness of her needs and potential.
- 47** Strategic objective L.4. Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training.
- 48** Strategic objective L.5. Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition.
- 49** Strategic objective L.6. Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work.
- 50** Strategic objective L.7. Eradicate violence against the girl-child.
- 51** Strategic objective L.8. Promote the girl-child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life.
- 52** Strategic objective L.9. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child.

Annex B

2014 Asia-Pacific Survey on Progress in Implementation of the 12 Critical Areas of Concern of the Platform for Action

GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING THE SURVEY

This survey has been designed to gather pertinent information on each of the 12 “Critical Areas of Concern” of the Beijing Platform for Action. Every effort has been made to ensure that the survey can be easily completed within a relatively short time-frame.

The survey consists of 13 sections (A to M): one section for each “critical area of concern” and a final section for additional comments. With the exception of the final section (M), the survey involves answering questions by checking boxes.

As the survey covers a range of sectors, it is recommended that the national focal point for the survey coordinate closely with concerned ministries and agencies to obtain the relevant inputs. The engagement of civil society is also encouraged. Where information is not available to answer a question, please write “no available information”.

Once completed, please return the survey, by 15 April 2014 in: (i) electronic form to escap-sdd@un.org; and (ii) hard copy to:

Director

Social Development Division

United Nations Economic and Social Commission
for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

United Nations Building

Rajadamnern Nok Avenue

Bangkok, 10200, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

In 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – the global framework for realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women – was adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women and subsequently endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1996. Every five years progress in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action is reviewed by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. There have been three reviews to date – 2000, 2005 and 2010 – with each review resulting in reinforcement of global commitment to the empowerment of women and girls and in identification of priority actions for the coming five years. The fourth review will occur in 2015, marking the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action.

In resolution E/RES/2013/18, 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 the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In addition, the ECOSOC Resolution encouraged “the regional commissions to undertake regional reviews so that the outcomes of the intergovernmental processes at the regional level can feed into the 2015 review” at the global level.

UN Women and the five United Nations regional Commissions are collaborating in the review process. Acknowledging the importance of consultation and participation, in Asia and the Pacific ESCAP is overseeing a regional survey and facilitating regional intergovernmental and civil society forums.

Undertaken in conjunction with the global review, this regional survey is specifically focused on the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action and serves two key functions. The survey is designed to assist ESCAP member States in reflecting upon their progress in implementation of the proposed actions for the 12 “Critical Areas Concern” of the

Beijing Platform for Action.³¹⁵ In “taking stock”, it is intended that this survey serve as a knowledge gathering and learning opportunity wherein the national-level information may be used by member States to further their efforts in realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women. Secondly, this survey will provide essential data from which a regional understanding of progress in realizing gender equality and advancing the human rights of women and girls can be developed, along with the remaining challenges identified.

The survey data will be compiled, analysed and presented in a report that will be shared with member States, as well as serve as the regional input to the global review. Moreover, the regional report will serve as a resource for ESCAP member States, enabling comparative reflection of national-level progress relative in the Asia-Pacific region, along with providing insights into successful strategies for realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women in Asia and the Pacific.

315 The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action can be viewed on the internet at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>

SURVEY COORDINATOR INFORMATION

Please complete the following table.

ESCAP is requesting the information of the person who coordinated completion of the survey to enable follow-up if required. All respondent information, excluding the country name, will be kept confidential.

Country: _____

Coordinator's Name: _____

Coordinator's Job Title: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone: Landline + _____

Mobile: + _____

Fax: + _____

Survey Submission Date: _____

Critical Area A: Women and Poverty

A.1 Does your country have national macroeconomic policies that specifically address the needs of women and girls living in poverty?

Yes No

Please check the boxes that reflect the types of macroeconomic measures that your country has in place that specifically address the needs of women and girls living in poverty?

Gender-responsive budgeting

Gender-responsive taxation

(e.g. revenue collection that favours progressive direct – i.e. income/wealth – taxation, rather than indirect/consumption taxation)

(e.g. marital status not being a determinant of how much tax an individual is required to pay)

Gender-responsive social protection

(e.g. childcare provisions, cash transfer schemes for women)

Employment and livelihood schemes for women

Other (Please list.)

A.2 Does your country have a strategy and/or action plan for implementing the macroeconomic policies that specifically address the needs of women and girls living in poverty?

Yes No (Please go to question A.5)

A.3 In what year did implementation of the macroeconomic policies that specifically address the needs of women and girls living in poverty commence?

A.4 For the most recent year for which data are available (e.g. 2012), what is the percentage of the female population (girls and women combined) in your country living below the:

national poverty line? ____%

Year: ____

international poverty line of 1.25 USD per day? ____ % Year: ____

A.5 In your country, what are the names of the main institutions responsible for the development and implementation of the macroeconomic policies and programmes that address the needs of women and girls living in poverty? (Please list.)

Critical Area B: Education and Training of Women

B.1 Does your country have national policies that mandate equal access of women, men, girls and boys to education?

Yes No (Please go to question B.6)

B.2 Please check the boxes that correspond to the areas addressed by the policies that mandate equal access of women, men, girls and boys to education in your country.

Equal access to primary education

Equal access to secondary education

Equal access to tertiary education

Equal access to vocational training

Equal access to education and training in science, mathematics, engineering and technology

Equal access to non-formal education

B.3 Does your country have strategies and/or action plans in place for implementing the policies that mandate equal access of women, men, girls and boys to education?

Yes No (Please go to question B.6)

B.4 In what year did implementation of the strategies and/or action plans for implementing the policies that mandate equal access of women, men, girls and boys to education commence? (Please state the year.)

B.5 What mechanisms does your country have in place for monitoring implementation of the strategies and/or action plans for promoting equal access of women, men, girls and boys to education? (Please briefly describe.)

B.6 In your country are programmes being implemented to promote the participation and retention of women and girls in education?

Yes No (Please go to question B.8)

B.7 Please check the boxes that reflect the types of programmes that your country is implementing in support of the participation and retention of women and girls in education.

- Retention of girls in primary education
- Retention of girls in secondary education
- Equal opportunities for, and participation of, women in educational administration, policy-making and decision making
- Access to education for pregnant adolescents and young mothers
(e.g. provision of child care support)
- Access of women and girls with disabilities to education
- Other (Please list.)

B.8 In your country, and for the most recent year for which data are available, what is the literacy rate for:

women (aged 18 years and over)?

___% Year: ____

men (aged 18 years and over)?

___% Year: ____

girls (less than 18 years of age)?

___% Year: ____

boys (less than 18 years of age)?

___% Year: ____

B.9 Does your country have policies, laws, strategies and/or programmes that promote literacy amongst women and girls?

- Yes No (Please go to question B.11.)

B.10 Please briefly describe the policies, strategies and/or programmes that promote literacy amongst women and girls in your country.

B.11 In your country, what are the names of the main institutions responsible for promoting the education of women and girls? (Please list.)

Critical Area C: Women and Health

C.1 Does your country have national policies that mandate universal access to quality health services for women and girls?

- Yes No (Please go to question C.3.)

C.2 Does your country have national strategies and/or action plans in place for implementing the policies that mandate universal access to quality health services for women and girls?

- Yes No

C.3 Please check the boxes that correspond to the types of services that address the health-related needs of women and girls in your country and which are provided at no or minimal financial cost to women and girls.

- Primary health care
- Maternal health (ante and post-natal care)
- Mental health
- Food security and nutrition
- Disability (physical, auditory, visual, intellectual)
- Sexual and reproductive health
- Treatment and rehabilitation for substance abuse
- Geriatric health
- HIV and sexually-transmitted infections
- Gender sensitisation for health care workers
- Other (Please list.)

C.4 Does your country have a comprehensive national policy, programme and/or strategy that addresses the sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights of women and girls, including family planning?

- Yes No

C.5 Please check the boxes that correspond to the groups of women and girls who are able to access your country's sexual and reproductive health services, at no or minimal financial cost.

- Married women
- Never married women
- Divorced women
- Widowed women
- Girls aged 15 to 18 years
- Indigenous women and girls
- Women and girls from ethnic minority
- Women and girls with disabilities
- Migrant women and girls
- Women and girls living with HIV
- Rural women and girls
- Older women (65 years of age and older)
- Women and girls at high risk of contracting HIV

C.6 In your country, what are the names of the main institutions responsible for promoting the health of women and girls? (Please list.)

Critical Area D: Violence

D.1 Does your country have national integrated measures – being a combination of two or more of policy, legislation, action plans and programmes – to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls? (Please note that “all forms of violence” means physical violence, sexual violence, emotional violence, domestic violence, economic violence and harmful practices.)

Yes No

D.2 Please check the boxes that reflect the types of measures that are in place in your country to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls.

- Multi-sector action plan to prevent violence against women and girls
- Legislation that punishes perpetrators of violence against women and girls
- Legislation on domestic violence, including marital rape as a form of domestic violence
- Gender-sensitive justice system
(e.g. fast-track courts for cases of violence against women)
- Gender-awareness education and training for law enforcement and justice officials
- Budget that allocates resources to law enforcement bodies so that they can effectively enforce legislation on violence against women and girls
- Legal services for female survivors of violence, provided at no or minimal financial cost
- Health services (both physical and psycho-social) for female survivors of violence, provided at no or minimal financial cost
- Shelters / safe housing for female survivors of violence and their dependents
- Livelihood support services for female survivors of violence
- Programmes for preventing violence against women and girls with disabilities
- Support services specifically designed for women and girls with disabilities who experience violence
- Education and training of health care workers
- Education and training of community and social workers
- Awareness-raising programs for women and girls on violence and available services
- Public awareness and education campaigns to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls
- Campaigns to eliminate harmful practices (e.g. female genital mutilation)
- Counselling and rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators of violence
- Other (Please briefly describe.)

D.3 In your country, and for the most recent year for which data are available (e.g. 2012 or 2013), what percentage of officially reported cases of violence against women and girls resulted in the accused being prosecuted?

?: _____ Year: _____

D.4 In your country, and for the most recent year for which data are available, what percentage of court orders pertaining to cases of violence against women and girls were enforced?

%: _____ Year: _____

D.5 Does your country regularly (e.g. every two to four years) conduct a national survey on the prevalence of violence against women and girls?

Yes No (Please go to question E.1.)

D.6 Based on the survey data, and for the most recent year for which data are available, what is the prevalence rate of violence against women and girls in your country?

% of the female population (women and girls combined): _____

Year: _____

Critical Area E: Women and Armed Conflict

E.1 Does your country have national policies that mandate equal participation of women and men in conflict-resolution and peace-building activities at the national level?

Yes No

E.2 Does your country have a national action plan (or comparable normative framework) that addresses the issue of women, peace and security?

Yes (Please go to question E.4.) No

E.3 Is there an official political commitment to develop a national action plan, or comparable normative framework, on women, peace and security?

Yes No

E.4 Please briefly describe your country's policies and/or legislation that mandate the equal participation of women and men in conflict-resolution and peace activities. (If you have a national action plan on women, peace and security, please provide a brief overview of the national action plan.)

E.5 Please list the conflict resolution and/or peace-building decision-making positions, in your country, that are occupied by women. (Please write "none", if women in your country do not occupy conflict resolution and/or peace-building decision-making positions.)

E.6 Since 2010, has your country conducted gender training for law enforcement officers, judicial officers and/or military personnel on violence against women and girls in armed and other conflicts?

Yes No (Please go to question E.8.)

E.7 Please briefly describe the gender training that your country has provided to law enforcement officers, judicial officers and/or military personnel on violence against women and girls in armed and other conflicts, since 2010.

E.8 Please state the percentage of your country's law enforcement officers, judicial officers and military personnel who have participated in gender training since 2010.

law enforcement officers _____ %

judicial officers _____ %

military personnel _____ %

E.9 Does your country provide education and/or training on peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation for:

women (18 years of age and older)?

Yes No

men (18 years of age and older)?

Yes No

girls (less than 18 years of age)?

Yes No

boys (less than 18 years of age)?

Yes No

(If you answered “no” to a, b, c and d, please go to question E.11.)

E.10 Please briefly describe the education and/or training on peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation that is provided for women, men, girls and/or boys in your country?

E.11 Does your country have policies for the protection of women and girls, including refugee and displaced women and girls (whether from your country or another country), from violence during armed conflict?

Yes No (Please go to question E.14)

E.12 Please state the year in which implementation of your country’s policies for the protection of women and girls from violence during armed conflict commenced.

E.13 Please briefly describe the actions undertaken by your country to protect women and girls, including refugee and displaced women and girls (whether from your country or another country), from violence during armed conflict?

E.14 Does your country provide assistance to women and girls who have experienced violence (e.g. rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution) in conflict situations, including refugee and displaced women and girls?

Yes No (Please go to question F.1.)

E.15 Please check the boxes that reflect the types of assistance that your country provides to women and girls who have experienced violence in conflict situations.

Physical health care / Physical rehabilitation

Mental health care / Psychological rehabilitation

Livelihoods support (e.g. vocational training, employment)

Social reintegration

Other (Please list.)

E.16 What are the names of your country's main national institutions responsible for providing assistance to women and girls who experience violence in conflict situations? (Please list.)

Critical Area F: Women and the Economy

F.1 Does your country have national policies that mandate women's and men's equal:

access to employment? Yes No

access to decent work? Yes No

access to and control over economic resources? Yes No

If you answered "No" to (a), (b) and (c), please go to question F.5.

F.2 Does your country have action plans and/or programmes in place for implementing the policies that mandate women's and men's equal access to employment, decent work and/or control over economic resources?

Yes No

F.3 In what year did implementation of the policies that mandate women's and men's equal access to employment, decent work and/or control over economic resources commence?

access to employment Year: _____

access to decent work Year: _____

access to and control over economic resources Year: _____

F.4 What mechanisms does your country have in place for monitoring implementation of the actions plans and/or programmes that promote women's and men's equal access to employment, decent working conditions and/or control over economic resources? (Please briefly describe.)

F.5 Please check the boxes that reflect the measures your country has in place for promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination in employment and in the workplace.

Legislation that mandates equal pay for equal work or work of equal value

Anti-sex discrimination legislation

Grievance mechanisms for women and men who experience sex discrimination

Legislation that mandates equal opportunity of women and men to organize and to collective bargaining

- Legislation that mandates equal opportunity of women and men to engage in all employment fields, including technical, managerial and entrepreneurial fields
- Legislation that mandates equal access of women and men to training, retraining, counselling and placement services
- Legislation that mandates equal access of women and men to employment-based migration opportunities
- Legislation that mandates equal access of women and men to, ownership and control of land and other forms of property
- Legislation that mandates equal access of women and men to, ownership and control of resources other than land and other property
- Legislation that mandates equal access to and control of credit, by women and men
- Legislation that mandates equal access of women and men to, and control of, financial savings
- Legislation that mandates equal access of women and men to social security
- Legislation that mandates the equal right of women and men (and girls and boys) to inheritance
- Programmes for elimination of occupational segregation on the basis of sex
- Protective measures for pregnant women
- Protective measures for breast-feeding women
- Protective measures for women on maternity leave
- Protective measures for women with disabilities
- Protective measures for indigenous women
- Protective measures for women working in the informal economy
- Protective measures for women migrant workers
- Measures that promote the harmonisation of work and family responsibilities (by, for example, provision of parental leave, flexible working arrangements or childcare)
- Other (Please list.)

F.6 For the year for which most recent data are available, what is the national employment rate for:

women? ____% Year: ____

men? ____% Year: ____

F.7 Does your country have measures in place to promote women's entrepreneurship?

- Yes No (Please go to question G.1.)

F.8 Please check the boxes that reflect the types of measures that your country has in place to promote women's entrepreneurship.

- Provision of government resources to institutions whose mandate includes the promotion of women's entrepreneurship
- Engagement of women in the formulation and review of entrepreneurship policies and programmes
- Integration of the needs of women into entrepreneurship-related policies, programmes and budgets
- Ensuring equitable market access for women and men entrepreneurs
- Removal of policy and regulatory obstacles to women establishing their own businesses (individually and collectively)
- Increasing women's access to financial services
- Facilitation of the transition of women entrepreneurs from the informal market to the formal market
- Provision of services to women entrepreneurs (such as childcare, training and investment funds)
- Provision of social protection to women working in the informal economy
- Other (Please describe briefly.)

F.9 What are the names of the main institutions responsible for promoting women's entrepreneurship in your country? (Please list.)

Critical Area G: Women in Power and Decision-Making

G.1 Does your country have a national policy for achieving equal representation of women and men in all civil service positions?

- Yes No

G.2 Please list the measures that have and are being undertaken to achieve equal representation of women and men in all civil service positions in your country.

G.3 Has your country undertaken electoral reforms that removed barriers to women participating in elected bodies (e.g. local council, national parliament)

- Yes No (Please go to question G.5.)

G.4 Please briefly describe the electoral reforms that removed barriers to women participating in elected bodies.

G.5 Has your country undertaken electoral reforms that introduced enabling measures for women's political participation (e.g. quotas)?

- Yes No (Please go to question G.7.)

G.6 Please briefly describe the electoral reforms that introduced enabling measures for women's political participation in your country.

G.7 Does your country collect sex-disaggregated data on the representation of women and men in decision-making positions in the:

public sector? Yes No

private sector? Yes No

(If you answered “no” to both a and b, please go to question G.9.)

G.8 Please provide the most recent figures (number and percentage) for:

	#	%	Year
a) women national parliamentarians:			
b) women national parliamentarians with disabilities:			
c) women national ministers:			
d) women governors of provinces/states/regions:			
e) women city mayors:			
f) women judges:			
g) women Chief Executive Officers / Executive Directors of private companies with more than 100 employees:			

G.9 What are the names of your country’s main national institutions responsible for promoting the equal representation of women and men in senior management and leadership positions in the public and private sectors? (Please list.)

Critical Area H: Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

H.1 Please state the full name of your country’s national machinery for the advancement of women? (e.g. Ministry of Women’s Affairs, National Commission on Gender Equality)

H.2 In what year was your country’s national machinery for the advancement of women (as stated for question H.1) created?

H.3 Please briefly state the mandate of your country’s national machinery for the advancement of women.

H.4 Please provide the following information regarding resources available to your country’s national machinery for the advancement of women for the current financial year (i.e. 2013–2014) or for the year for which the most recent data are available:

a) the amount of government funding received:	(monetary figure)	year
b) the percentage of the national budget allocation:	%	year
c) whether the overall funding level has increased or decreased since 2010:	increased / decreased	year
d) the number of full-time staff positions:	#	year

- H.5 Since 2005, what have been the successes of your country's national machinery for the advancement of women? (Please list three to five key achievements.)
- H.6 Since 2005, what have been the main challenges experienced by your country's national machinery for the advancement of women to achieving gender equality? (Please list three to five key challenges.)
- H.7 In what ways could your country's national machinery for the advancement of women be strengthened, such that it can exercise greater influence and achieve stronger outcomes in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women in your country?
- H.8 Please briefly describe the means through which your country's national machinery for the advancement of women engages with other government institutions, including ministries, departments and agencies.
- H.9 Please briefly describe the measures that your country's national machinery for the advancement of women uses to engage with civil society.
- H.10 What are the names of the main national institutions in your country that are responsible for collecting sex-disaggregated data?
- H.11 Please briefly describe the means by which sex-disaggregated data is used to inform national policy, planning and programme development, in your country.
-

Critical Area I: Human Rights of Women

- I.1 Does your country have a national strategy and/or action plan for implementing the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)? (N.B. The national strategy or action plan may be solely focused on implementation of CEDAW or implementation of CEDAW may be one component of a broader national strategy or action plan.)
- Yes No
- I.2 Does your country have independent national institutions whose mandate includes the protection and promotion of human rights for women and girls?
- Yes No (Please go to question I.4.)
- I.3 Please list the names of your country's national institutions whose mandate includes the protection and promotion of human rights for women and girls.
- I.4 Does your country have measures dedicated to investigating and prosecuting human rights violations of women and girls?
- Yes No (Please go to question I.6.)
- I.5 Please briefly describe (a) your country's measures for investigating and prosecuting human rights violations of women and girls, and (b) the effectiveness of the measures.
- I.6 Please briefly describe the human rights violations of women and girls in your country that have been successfully prosecuted since 2010.
- I.7 Does your country have measures in place for promoting the legal literacy of women and girls?
- Yes No (Please go to question J.1.)

- I.8 Please briefly describe the measures that your country has in place for promoting the legal literacy of women and girls.
-

Critical Area J: Women and the Media

- J.1 In your country, and for the year for which most recent data are available (e.g. 2012), what percentage of professional journalists are women?

?: _____ Year: _____

- J.2 Does your country have national integrated measures – being a combination of two or more of policy, legislation, action plans and programmes – in place for increasing the participation of women and girls in the media?

Yes No

- J.3 Does your country have national integrated measures – being policy, legislation, action plans and programmes – in place for increasing women’s and girls’ access to information and communication technologies?

Yes No

- J.4 Please check the boxes that reflect the measures that your country has in place for increasing the participation of women and girls in the media and/or their access to information and communication technologies.

Education and training programmes for women and girls who wish to engage with the mass media

Education and training programmes for women and girls who wish to use information and communication technologies

Measures that promote the employment of women in the media industry

Review and revision of media policies and legislation, such that media policies and legislation support gender equality and women’s empowerment

Measures to increase the number of women occupying decision-making positions within public and private media bodies

Production and dissemination of media programmes by women

Production and dissemination of media programmes that address the needs, concerns and interests of women and girls

Media watch entities that monitor and consult with the media to ensure equitable coverage of the needs, concerns and interest of women and men

Other (Please list.)

- J.5 Does your country have integrated measures – being a combination of two or more of policy, legislation, action plans and programmes – for promoting balanced and non-stereotypical portrayals of women and girls in the media?

Yes No

J.6 Please check the boxes that reflect the measures that your country has in place for promoting balanced and non-stereotypical portrayals of women and girls in the media.

- Regulatory mechanisms for ensuring balanced and diverse portrayals of women and girls
- Regulatory mechanisms that reduce the presentation and portrayal of violence against women and girls
- Mechanisms that restrict the production and dissemination of pornography
- Professional codes of conduct
- Gender awareness and sensitivity education and/or training for members of the media industry (e.g. media professionals, managers, owners)
- Other (Please list.)
-

Critical Area K: Women and the Environment

K.1 Does your country have a national policy that promotes women's and men's equal ownership, management and use of natural resources (e.g. water, fuel, land, forests)?

- Yes No

K.2 Please list the measures that your country has undertaken to promote women's and men's equal ownership, management and use of natural resources?

K.3 Does your country have a national policy that promotes women's and men's equal access to clean and renewable energy sources and technologies?

- Yes No

K.4 Please briefly describe the measures in place in your country for promoting women's and men's equal access to clean and renewable energy sources and technologies. (Please write "none" if there are no measures specifically designed to promote women's and men's equal access to and control of clean and renewable energy sources and technologies.)

K.5 Has your country assessed and integrated the vulnerabilities and needs of women and girls (e.g. food security, physical safety, livelihoods) in national climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives?

- Yes No

K.6 Please check the boxes that reflect the measures undertaken in your country for addressing the climate change-related vulnerabilities, needs and concerns of women and girls.

- Increasing women's and girls' access to climate change information
- Public campaigns that raise awareness of the differential impacts of climate change for women, men, girls and boys
- Promotion of women's and men's equal participation in national climate change policy, planning and decision-making processes (e.g. quotas)

- Promotion of women's and girls' vocational and tertiary education in climate-change related studies (e.g. through scholarships)
- Mainstreaming of gender in climate change research and planning guidelines, including gender analysis
- Provision of services and resources to women and girls that enable them to make timely decisions and undertake effective climate change adaptation measures
- Integration of women's livelihood needs in climate change adaptation measures
- Other (Please list.)

K.7 Has your country mainstreamed gender into disaster risk reduction policies and programmes?

- Yes No (Please go to question K.9)

K.8 Were the disaster risk reduction policies and programmes informed by sex-disaggregated data during the design and planning phase?

- Yes No

K.9 Please check the boxes that reflect the types of disaster risk reduction policies and programmes into which gender has been integrated in your country.

- Research on disaster risk reduction that is inclusive of gender equality and women's empowerment issues
- Gender sensitisation education for disaster risk reduction decision-makers and experts
- Evaluations of the impacts of disaster risk reduction policies and programmes in the lives of women and girls
- Gender-responsive disaster risk reduction public awareness-raising campaigns
- Gender-responsive disaster-preparedness infrastructure planning and decision-making processes
- Education and training programmes that equip women and girls with the knowledge and skills to be able to meaningfully participate in disaster risk reduction initiatives, including at the decision-making level
- Support for women in acquiring, investing in and deploying technologies that contribute to disaster risk reduction
- Other (Please list.)

K.10 Please list the measures that your country has in place for promoting women's and men's equal participation in disaster risk reduction planning and preparedness processes. (Please write "none" if your country does not have any targeted measures in place for promoting the equal participation of women and men in disaster risk reduction planning and preparedness processes.)

Critical Area L: The Girl Child

L.1 Does your country have integrated measures – being a combination of two or more of policy, legislation, action plans and programmes – for eliminating all forms of discrimination against the girl child?

Yes No

L.2 Please check the boxes that reflect the types of measures for eliminating discrimination against the girl child in your country.

- Legislation
- Public campaigns
- Awareness-raising programmes
- Pedagogy
- Teaching curricula and materials
- Disaggregation of all data relating to children by sex and age
- Use of sex and age-disaggregated data in the formulation of policies, programmes and decision-making
- Provision of financial support (for example, to community organisations or research institutions)
- Provision of expert advice (for example, to community organisations or the media)
- Other (Please list.)

L.3 Please check the boxes that reflect the issues that your country's measures address in eliminating discrimination against the girl child.

- Birth registration – all female and male babies must be registered and have the right to both name and nationality
- Child support – parents are required to provide financial support to their children
- Marriage – legal requirement for free and full consent to marry and minimum legal age for marriage
- Equal right of the girl child and boy child to succession and inheritance
- Economic exploitation (child labour)
- Negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls
- Discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training
- Discrimination against girls in health and nutrition
- Discrimination against girls with disabilities
- Violence against the girl child
- Intra-family discrimination against the girl child
- Other (Please list.)

L.4 Please check the boxes that reflect the types of measures that are in place in your country for promoting the girl child's (a) awareness of sociocultural, political and economic issues, and/or (b) participation in the public domain.

- Awareness-raising and education programmes on social-cultural issues for girls
- Access of girls to the media
- Access of girls to information and communication technologies
- Support for non-governmental organisations that work to promote the equality and participation of girls in society
- Creation and maintenance of safe spaces in communities where girls can interact with one another (e.g. community centres)
- Social clubs for girls
- Measures that promote the participation of girls in physical activities and sports
- Life skills training for girls
- Leadership training for girls
- Other (Please list.)

L.5 What are the names of the main national institutions responsible for promoting the girl child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life in your country?

Additional Information and/or Reflections

Please share with us any information, comments, observations or reflections on your country's implementation of the 12 "Critical Areas of Concern" of the Beijing Platform for Action that have not been addressed in the preceding sections.

ESCAP thanks your Government for completing the survey.

Your Government's response to the survey will constitute a critical input to the Asia-Pacific regional report on progress in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, which will be submitted as a basis for the global report and considered by ESCAP member States at the "Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review", which will be convened in Bangkok from 10 to 14 November 2014.

Please return the completed survey, by 15 April 2014 in: (i) electronic form to escap-sdd@un.org; and (ii) hard copy to:

Director
Social Development Division
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
United Nations Building
Rajadamnern Nok Avenue
Bangkok, 10200
Thailand



9 789211 207002