

**Minutes of the**  
**Thematic Working Group on Women's Empowerment**  
**and Gender Equality Meeting**  
**Tuesday, 8 February, 2005 10-12 am, UNIFEM meeting room**

The Thematic Working Group meeting was convened with the objective of planning our International Women's Day 2005 event. The theme for International Women's Day 2005, decided in NY, would be "Gender Equality Beyond 2005: Building a more a secure future", with a focus on the following:

- security
- development
- disaster
- human rights

Prior to beginning the planning of IWD 2005, the discussion regarding the TWG's TOR was continued to follow-up from our last TWG meeting in November of 2004. The UNIFEM Co-chair noted that we as a technical working group should be a value-adding forum for efforts to harmonize and synergize our efforts with regards to gender. The examples were given of the Cambodian Ministry of Women's Affairs working group on gender and its focus on information sharing and gender advocacy, as well as the example in China of DFID and other donor agencies' strong role in terms of involvement and funding in the gender theme group. In the China Gender Facility, the theme group consists of NGOs, donors, UN agencies as well as Government agencies.

FAO raised the concern that in order to strengthen the function of this TWG, the group's role within the UN Coordinating system needed to be clarified.

The UNIFEM Co-chair added that it is up to this group to determine what our specific function should be. For example, in the Thailand MDG report, it is indicated that there are few gender-sensitive policies, and the percentage of women in politics is still low. Our thematic working group could have a stronger advocacy role in this area. It was suggested that we take one theme per year that is not adequately tackled, and then organize events around this theme. UNDP agreed that this was a good idea, but that the decision on the theme would depend partly on the mandate of each agency, such as the theme of governance being the UNDP focus. UNFPA reiterated that the information-sharing aspect of the TWG was the most useful role, and that meeting once a month would be too frequent, since too many would miss the meetings due to missions. It was mentioned that practical issues such as funding and the differences in certain agencies working nationally, others more regionally would have to be tackled.

The UNIFEM Co-chair shared that under the theme of the feminization of poverty, the impact of trade liberalization on Cambodia's garment work was the focus of a multi-stakeholder dialogue under a UNIFEM Gender and MDG project. This had generated public commitments by duty bearers, and such an initiative could be elevated from the national to the regional level. With regards to themes such as gender and poverty statistics, for example, UNESCAP could have very strong involvement. The UNESCAP Co-chair noted that with regards to gender and trade, issues such as trade in services, the multi-fiber agreement, and other bilateral trade agreements have profound gendered implications, which need to be analyzed and researched more closely. The UNIFEM Co-chair noted the lack of data and statistics, especially gender statistics, which pervades all of these issues. The co-chairs suggested that a plan for a thematic series could be developed, with certain gender themes that each agency could contribute to, with their expertise and experience. Such a series could involve four events planned by the TWG-WEGE per year. The Co-chairs agreed to come up with such a plan for a thematic series.

### IWD 2005

The discussion turned to the planning of International Women's Day 2005. It was agreed that the theme proposed from New York, "Gender Equality Beyond 2005: Building a more a secure future", with a focus security, development, disaster and human rights was quite broad, and it had to be decided whether one or all four themes should be highlighted. A focus on natural disasters, such as the recent tsunami, could incorporate a strong gender perspective, including a focus on human rights and issues such as migrant workers, gendered responses to relief and recovery, as well as property rights, social protection, land-access, and ageing. It was agreed that the IWD could have the theme of "Gender and Human Rights in the Context of Natural Disasters".

UNFPA noted that this year is a historic occasion with regards to the anniversary of the BPfA, Beijing Plus Ten. We should consider if we should focus on this theme, possibly incorporating any activities that UNESCAP may be planning in connection with Beijing plus Ten. It could be a forward-looking event to highlight the anniversary and make a symbolic demarcation of the anniversary.

It was decided to form a task force of members of TWG-WEGE to plan International Women's Day jointly. The task force would meet separately to plan details around IWD organization.

FAO announced a publication from Sage India regarding Gender and Disaster and said it would be sent to the members of the TWG.

UNESCO announced it was planning a panel on IWD focusing on MDG Goal 3 and Gender and Education, and we would be updated when the plan is finalized.

UNFPA announced it was sponsoring 1-2 Thai NGO representatives to attend the Commission on the Status of Women in NY for Beijing Plus Ten.

UNDP announced an upcoming workshop in Sa Keo, organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, for representatives from provincial offices, local government organizations and civil society from provinces from the North and the Northeastern regions (Chanthaburi, Trad, Sakawe, Mukdaharn, Udonthani, Nongkai, and Nakorn Phanom. Provinces). The theme of the workshop is trafficking of women and children, in order to promote local empowerment on women and children issue.

The first workshop was held in Chiang Mai during 13 – 14 Jan 05. which covered participants from 9 provinces from Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Tak, Nan, Payao, Prae, Maehongson, Lam Pang and Lam Poon.

AFPPD announced the upcoming Asia-Pacific Workshop of Academic Parliamentarians: Education and Population from 8-9 March in Krabi, Thailand, and shared AFPPD newsletters as well as AFPPD calendar of events for 2005 with the members.

## List of Participants

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