

ASIA-PACIFIC FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2016

“Regional priorities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific”

3-5 APRIL 2016 | UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE CENTRE . BANGKOK, THAILAND

Achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment: transforming economies, realizing Agenda 2030

Side event

5 April 2016, 13.30-15.00

Venue: United Nations Conference Centre, Room A

Co-organizers:

UN Regional Coordination Mechanism Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (RCM TWG-GEEW). An event jointly organized by UNDP, ESCAP, UN Women and UNFPA.

Description:

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has put the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women at its centre through a stand-alone goal on gender equality, i.e. **Goal 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”** and integrating gender equality throughout the other SDGs and targets. This emphasis reflects the recognition that women and girls are critical to finding solutions to the challenges of poverty and inequality that will ensure sustainable economic growth and social change. It also reflects the urgency to realize the full human rights and equal opportunities for women and girls.

The various targets under SDG 5 and other Goals focus on eliminating deeply-rooted discrimination and violence against women and girls, including changing the unequal power relations between men and women. This event will focus on three such targets that were missing from the MDGs and that have cross-sectoral impacts and thus require support from stakeholders in multiple ministries:

- **Target 5.2: to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation by 2030,**
- **Target 5.3: to eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, and**
- **Target 5.4: Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.**

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) has numerous immediate and longstanding damages to women and girls, but also to their families, communities, as well as society at large, and endures substantial economic and social costs for countries. Globally, at least one out of every three women experiences violence in her lifetime. According to incomplete data, prevalence of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence in Asia and the Pacific is higher than the global average, particularly with regard to domestic violence and marital rape. Thus the issue of VAWG is a particular concern for the Asian-Pacific region.

Harmful practices such as child marriage, gender-biased sex selection, and female genital mutilation are a violation of the rights of young women and girls and an extreme form of gender based discrimination. An estimated 117 million women are missing across Asia, as a result of son preference and gender biased sex selection. Globally between 130 and 140 million women and girls have undergone some form of FGM, and 3 million girls are at risk of being mutilated each year. 13.5 million girls are married off each year, and in developing countries one in every three girls is married before the age of 18, and one in nine before the age of 15. Child marriage exposes young women and girls to domestic violence, abuse and exploitation, demonstrating the link between harmful practices and violence against women and girls.

Women have a disproportionately large responsibility for unpaid work and domestic care across the region, just like the rest of the world. But the importance of this responsibility is not recognized or valued, as reflected in government policies and programmes that result in perverse consequences for gender equality and empowerment of women and thus undermine women's role in promoting economic prosperity, climate adaptation and mitigation, as well as disaster risk reduction. Previous experiences have demonstrated that effective strategies should focus on recognition, reduction and redistribution (3R strategy) of unpaid work and domestic care to ensure sustainable development results without passing the burdens on women - as it has been. The issues of VAWG on the one hand and unpaid work and domestic care on the other are interrelated and both have substantial impact on the overall economic growth and human development.

Key objectives:

The event will serve as a platform to share and exchange good practices in addressing VAWG, harmful practices, and unpaid work and domestic care, targeting policy makers and development practitioners. The panelists will focus on examples of why and what investment in ending VAWG and harmful practices, and recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work is crucial to achieve SDG 5 as well as other SDGs. Given limited human and financial resources that some countries might have, the panel will explore a joined-up approach to addressing and tackling different SDG targets by advocating investment in gender equality and empowerment of women and girls as the catalyst essential to achieve other SDGs.

The panel will explore the following questions:

- What strategies have worked in addressing the VAWG, harmful practices and unpaid care and domestic work?

- Besides supporting basic human rights, what societal and economic benefits can be generated (in regards to other SDGs) from public investment in ending VAWG and harmful practices as well as recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid work?
- What does an effective multi-sectoral and joined-up approach to ending VAWG and harmful practices, and reducing and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work look like?
- Who are the key actors and how they can be engaged? And
- How can progress tracking effectively contribute to the achievement of these three key targets in Asia and the Pacific?

Speakers:

Moderator: Mr. Nicholas Rosellini, UNDP Deputy Regional Director for Asia & the Pacific and Director, Bangkok Regional Hub

- Ms. Roberta Clarke, Regional Director and Representative in Thailand, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
- Dr. Jeannette Gurung, Executive Director, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture & Natural Resource Management (WOCAN)
- Dr. Chompoonuh K. Perpoonwiwat, Associate Professor in Economics, School of Economics and Public Policy at Sirnakharinwirpt University, Bangkok, Thailand
- Ms. Anjali Sen, Regional Director, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) South Asia Region
- Ms Yoriko Yasukawa, Regional Director, UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Office

Programme:

Multi-sectoral plenary discussion combined with participatory discussion.

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