

AP-RCEM WOMEN'S CONSTITUENCY STATEMENT
APFSD 2016, 3-5 April 2016
Schedule: 3 April, Day 1, 1130-12.

Did not make statement
due to time limited
made statement earlier
Session 2

Session 1: Regional priorities for implementation: Overview

We, the Women's Constituency, represent 97 organisations from the Asia and the Pacific region. We associate with the joint statement and reiterate the need for a more ambitious roadmap to be jointly developed over the next 12 months and to elevate the ambition of the APFSD. Women's rights movements offer our assistance in this collective endeavour.

Several regional priorities identified in the document are essential in advancing women's human rights. Overcoming the vast and growing inequalities of wealth, where 0.001% of the population owns 30% of the region's wealth, owning 17 times more wealth than the least developed countries in Asia combined. With women representing the majority of the economically poor we must urgently address the economic and political instruments and rules causing these gaps: privatisation of public goods and services, growing reliance on public private partnerships, land-grabbing, tax and investment rules that advantage foreign investors and the trade agreements that cement those rules, erode national sovereignty and threaten the commitments made in Agenda 2030.

While you have recognised gender inequality as a major barrier in the region the document misses key barriers to women's human rights. Inequality is not an accident. It persists because of patriarchal norms that permeate our public and private lives

We must recognise the intersectionality of barriers to women's rights like climate change, that deepens gender inequality, the absence of living wages which is a core element of economic empowerment for women, as is universal social protection. We know that violence against women is reduced when women have access and control over land (as our opening speaker said) and critically we cannot ignore the fact that religious fundamentalists and extremists hold sway over our public policies and laws and where a young woman's schooling ends abruptly to uphold customs such as forced and early marriages and fear of promiscuity. Overall sexual and reproductive rights and the need to address HIV and AIDS, and other health issues are clearly missing from the document. Rising to these challenges will require going beyond 'quick fixes,' and moving to an intersectionality approach that tackles structural inequities and analyses the political, physical, ecological, economic, cultural and social dimensions of these overlapping concerns, through a holistic frame. Bringing together different sectors, alliances, and government ministries is needed to ensure a truly transformative agenda for gender, social, ecological, and economic justice in the Asia and the Pacific, and globally.

We offer you a set of key recommendations which will be annexed to this statement and we call on you to demonstrate leadership, and show the rest of the world you are delivering on your promise to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women. We call for gender justice as a core component of Development Justice!