



**Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on the priority theme of the  
66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women:**

**“Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes”**

**9-10 February 2022 from 9:30 –12:30 Hours (Thailand Standard Time)**

**Concept Note**

**1. Introduction**

Between 14-25 March 2022, representatives of Member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world will meet on the Priority Theme for the Sixty-Sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 66): *Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies and programmes.*

The theme seeks to draw attention to a critical global concern - climate change, and the impacts it has had particularly for the rights of women and girls, and to generate consensus among Member States on strategies for advancing key frameworks i.e. the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) 2015–2030, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These frameworks each set out their own goals and review mechanisms, but collectively they share the objective of setting the world on a path towards a sustainable and climate-resilient future. The Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement provide clear mandate for increased coherence in countries’ approaches to climate change (CC) and DRR, with consideration of gender and disability concerns, for more sustainable, resilient and equitable future.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> At national level, responsibilities for climate change mitigation and adaptation and disaster risk reduction tend to be spread across different ministries and agencies; internationally, they are supported by several UN agencies and related processes.

The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) 2021 report on progress on the SDGs highlighted that ‘The Asia-Pacific region is moving in the wrong direction on climate action (SDG 13)’. Only two of five targets could be assessed for the 2021 report for SDG 13 and based on this, the report indicated that the region is likely to miss its 2030 ambitions, unless efforts are accelerated to build resilience against disaster and adopt and implement national DRR strategies. Most urgently, the region needs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to help prevent climate change, as nearly half of all greenhouse gas emissions worldwide originate in Asia and the Pacific. To reverse current trends in the coming decade it is vital to fulfil the commitments to net-zero emissions made by some of the largest economies in the region<sup>2</sup>.

Women have been particularly impacted by these issues, as a function of long-standing socio-economic and political gendered inequalities. The lack of both quantitative and qualitative data on women, means their roles – and how they have, and continue to be, affected – remains invisible to policy makers and other stakeholders and as these are combined with socio-cultural biases, it means that women are under-represented in environmental decision-making. Per an analysis undertaken by UN Women’s Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) to mark the theme for the Sixty-Fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 65), women were severely underrepresented as Ministers of environment and related sectors. Only 7 percent of all environment-related ministries<sup>3</sup> (comprising agriculture, crude oil, climate change, energy, fisheries, irrigation, marine resources, mines, rural development, transportation, and others) have a female minister, compared to a global average of 12 percent<sup>4</sup>.

Related to this, chances of women participating in recovery mechanisms such as national protection clusters and committees on post-disaster recovery. Their absence from decision-making bodies has had impacts on the gender-responsiveness of medium-term policies and strategies, such as those related to climate change mitigation, natural resource conservation and ‘just’ transitions to sustainable production and consumption patterns. Filling data gaps on the gender-environment nexus, including on climate change and disaster risk reduction, is a key step in informing policies and programmes to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls.

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<sup>2</sup> This data paucity was also found to be a challenge in the assessment of SDGs 14 and 15 i.e. fewer than half of the targets were measurable. This concern has been reiterated with respect to SDG 14 (Life below water) and 15 (Life on land). Based on the limited data available on to SDG 14 targets, the region is regressing on this goal. Despite some progress made since 2000 in protecting marine areas, the quality of oceans and economic gains from sustainable fisheries continue declining. On life on land, the report stated that based on current trends in forest and biodiversity losses which are projected to worsen in most of the countries in the region by 2030.

<sup>3</sup> Comprising agriculture, crude oil, climate change, energy, fisheries, irrigation, marine resources, mines, rural development, transportation, and others.

<sup>4</sup> Women were also largely absent from ministerial positions in ministries of agriculture (two out of 36 countries (Bangladesh and Mongolia) have a female minister of agriculture and energy (two out of 31 countries (Bangladesh and Nepal) had a female minister of energy and related sectors. In countries with stand-alone ministries dedicated to environmental activities, women ministers were found in only four out of 33 countries (Bhutan, Indonesia, Iran and Mongolia). Because environmental conservation is highly related to agricultural activities, including forestry and fisheries, female decision-making in other forms of fora is also key. For instance, women’s leadership in forest committees and their managerial roles in fisheries, mining and logging industries can play a critical role in conservation. Data is scarce in this area, particularly regarding forestry and mining. However, available data for China, Japan and Thailand, indicates that only 13, 5 and 2 per cent of women respectively hold director positions in the seafood industry. Ibid.

## 2. Objectives

This regional consultation aims to discuss ways in which ESCAP member States and key stakeholders can accelerate progress in implementing key frameworks including the BPfA, the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015–2030 and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. In follow up to the outcomes of the COP26, this regional consultation on the priority theme for CSW 66, will provide an opportunity for both state and non-state actors to consider possible areas for joint interventions (policy, programmatic) to address the intersectionality of gender equality, climate change, environment, and disaster risk reduction and management.

The priority theme is also aligned with the focus goals for the 2022 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) i.e., SDG 4, 5, 14, 15 and 17, and this meeting will seek to leverage the synergies between these processes to discuss with member States undertaking Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) how state and non-state actors can better collaborate (per SDG 17) to accelerate progress on the different frameworks, and help inform the ESCAP member States' inputs.

**Expected Outcome:** The outcome of the Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation for CSW66 will be a set of recommendations on areas for accelerated action, in line with the priority theme for CSW66. The recommendations will feed into the CSW66 and can inform membership contributions to the Agreed Conclusions.

## 3. Participants

This regional consultation will bring together ESCAP member States, and representatives from civil society, academia, inter-governmental organizations, UN entities, private sector, international financial institutions and others.

## 4. Modality/structure of event

The regional consultation will be convened virtually on the Zoom platform. It will take place on 9-10 February with sessions structured in line with the Expert Group Meeting report that is to inform the UN Secretary General's report on the CSW 66 priority theme.

Ahead of this meeting there will be a dedicated session by civil society actors to discuss their recommendations and inputs to the CSW 66 and sessions of the regional consultation. To the extent possible, efforts will be made to ensure that each segment of the meeting will have representation from across the sectors, to represent a 'whole of society' approach to the addressing gender considerations for sectors/issues including energy, just transition, DRR, climate technology, peace and security, agriculture, financing, transportation.

The regional consultation will also facilitate better understandings of issues that impact on women and girls and other vulnerable and/or at-risk groups due to climate-related and other disasters i.e. women's leadership and stewardship in the areas of natural resource management and environmental conservation, the water-food-climate nexus, loss of livelihoods and relevant infrastructural support

(social and physical), sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), girls' education- and how to support data collection, youth engagement, and grassroots CC and DRR solutions.

## 5. Links to key documents

### [Background Note](#)

[Report of Expert Group Meeting \(EGM\) on the CSW 66 Priority Theme: Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes \(from 11 - 14 October 2021\)](#)

[Twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties \(COP 26\): Glasgow Climate Compact](#)

## 6. Contact

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***The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)** provides an inclusive intergovernmental platform for governments and other stakeholders in the region to accelerate the implementation of global gender equality commitments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the outcomes of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.*

*ESCAP works to ensure that gender equality is addressed holistically in order to develop forward-looking strategies and contribute to efforts towards gender equality, poverty reduction and economic growth in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.*

***The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)**, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and benefit women and girls worldwide.*

*UN Women's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific located in Bangkok, covers a total of 42 countries and exercises its triple mandate and functions at a regional level and in support of UN Women's offices and UN Country Teams in 24 countries across the region.*