Kathmandu Declaration and regional cooperation to advance social protection: Lessons learned from SAARC

Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for CSW 63
“Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”
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SAARC at a glance

• 8 member states – 1.8 billion people, 1/4th of world population

• From the highest mountains of the Himalayas to the lowest islands of Maldives.

• Fastest growing region, but yet many live under poverty

• SAARC Summits at the Heads of State level are the highest tier of decision making. The last Summit was held in 2014.

• Secretariat monitors and coordinates the implementation of activities that are agreed by the member states unanimously.
Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women

• Women constitute almost 50% of our population.
• The need to bring them fully into the mainstream of socio-economic development.
• Mechanisms include Ministerial Meeting on Women, a Technical Committee on Women, Youth and Children
• SAARC Social Charter and SAARC Conventions also focus on women and girls.
• SAARC Year of the Girl Child
Efforts undertaken

• intra-regional connectivity

• Programmes aimed at home-based workers, to assist in the economic empowerment

• Awareness efforts on child marriages, early pregnancies, healthcare facilities and nutrition

• SAARC Gender Policy Advocacy Group (SAARC-GPAG)

• Womens leadership and participation
Challenges - Poverty!
• Access to rural communities – education, health
• Age-old traditions and customs
• Lack of awareness and patriarchal societies
• Informal methods of income generation – formalization / protection
• Employment generation
• Aging population
• **Solution:** End Poverty!

• Revisit the SAARC Plan of Action and its effective implementation, taking into account the Post-2015 Development Agenda

• Universal health coverage (UHC)

• Eliminate illiteracy from the region

• Women’s political leadership and economic empowerment

• Role of community leaders

• Gender responsive budgeting – role of parliamentarians
Thank You!