

Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the 58th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

12-13 February 2014
Meeting Room G
United Nations Conference Centre
Bangkok

Aide-mémoire

I. Background of the Regional Preparatory Meeting

As the 2015 target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approaches, intergovernmental and other processes are well under way to inform and design a post-2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will consider, as its priority theme, the “Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls”. It provides a pivotal opportunity to take stock of achievements and challenges in achieving the MDGs for women and girls, evaluate the MDG framework from a gender perspective, and inform the debate on the post-2015 development agenda, and the 20-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The Asian and Pacific region has achieved considerable success in relation to the MDGs: for example, halving the proportion of the population in the region living on less than US\$1.25 per day and achieving gender parity at the primary and secondary school levels. Women and girls, however, continue to face discrimination and inequalities in relation to such areas as health, socio-political engagement, access to and control of resources and decision-making authority. As the Asia-Pacific region takes stock of its achievements in relation to the MDGs, it is opportune to examine remaining challenges and how development frameworks can be constructed to successfully achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The post-2015 development agenda will provide a new development framework that is responsive to the challenges of persisting and increasing inequalities, including in relation to access to decent and productive jobs, food and nutrition, conflict, health, education, natural disasters and climate change. In addressing the challenges to sustainable, equitable and inclusive socio-economic development, the needs and interests of women must be met if gender equality is to be realized.

In preparation for the 58th session of the CSW, a regional preparatory meeting is being convened to consider its priority theme and identify common concerns of Asia-Pacific member States.

II. Organizational arrangements

The Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the 58th Session of the CSW will take place from 12 to 13 February 2014 in Bangkok. The Preparatory Meeting is being jointly organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, in cooperation with the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women.

III. Participation

The Meeting will bring together senior-level representatives from government ministries and departments directly involved in the formulation and implementation of national policies on gender equality and women's empowerment and who will serve as members of their national delegations to the 58th session of the CSW. The 13 countries from the Asia-Pacific region that are serving on the CSW include: Bangladesh, China, Georgia, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and Thailand.

IV. Objectives

The Meeting will provide a forum for the 13 member States of the Asia-Pacific region that are members of the 58th session of the CSW to identify common priority challenges and ways forward to achieving the MDGs for women and girls. This will be discussed within the broader frameworks of the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and the post-2015 development agenda. The specific objectives of the Preparatory Meeting are:

1. To take stock of regional progress in achieving the MDGs for women and girls and identify common challenges and critical issues in areas that are off track.
2. To review the MDGs as a development framework to identify common priorities, strategies and ways forward to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, including for the post-2015 development agenda and within the frameworks of the Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW.

V. Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the Meeting will be a report summarizing discussions of the Meeting and recommendations on areas of priority concern for the achievement of the MDGs and on ways forward for the 20-year review of Beijing Platform for Action and the post-2015 development agenda. The report will be made available at the 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

VI. Format

The Meeting will involve plenary and group work so as to fully engage participants and foster the sharing of knowledge, expertise and experiences on the achievements and challenges in realizing the MDGs for women and girls. Roundtable discussions will also be conducted to probe specific issues and guide deliberations and group work. Guiding questions will be provided for the roundtable sessions to ensure focused debate and outcomes.

VII. Expected substantive contributions by participants

Participants are expected to participate in interactive discussions to share their knowledge, experience and expertise in implementing the MDGs for women and girls. Participants will share their knowledge of national development frameworks, including the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs and contribute input to the debate on ways forward for the post-2015 development agenda. Group work will be conducted for participants to discuss and develop recommendations for action, which will be included in the report of the Meeting.