Session 2:
Women's Economic Empowerment

Ms. Cai Cai
Chief, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section
Social Development Division, ESCAP

Ms. Joni Simpson (session moderator)
Senior Specialist on Gender, Equality and Non-Discrimination
International Labour Organization (ILO)

Virtual Expert Group Meeting
Implementing Beijing+25 Commitments in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic
15 September 2020, Virtual, 11.00 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.
Factors that enable women's empowerment

- Access to decent incomes
- Access to property, assets and financial services
- Representation and collective action
- Access to social protection
- Support for care work
- Education, skills development and training

Women's Labour Force Participation

Improving women's economic empowerment is key to advancing gender equality in Asia and the Pacific.

Labor force participation rate among those 25 and older:

- Men: 84%
- Women: 50%

Gap: 34%

Women's labor force participation has declined since 1995.

Women are 21 per cent less likely than men to be employed on a full-time basis.

Mothers are 28 per cent less likely than men to be employed on a full-time basis.

INFORMAL WORK

The **majority** of working women in the Asia-Pacific region are employed in the informal sector.

Informal workers face higher job losses from economic shocks.

Women's livelihoods are disproportionately threatened by the COVID-19 pandemic, creating...

- Increased reliance on inadequate or non-existent social protection systems.
- Negative outcomes for children.
- Greater food insecurity.
- Heightened risk of poverty.

Source: ILO, Game Changers: Women and the Future of Work in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, 2018); Women Count, Surveys show that COVID-19 has gendered effects in Asia and the Pacific (2020).
UNPAID CARE WORK

Uncompensated care for other people and household work.

ASIA-PACIFIC

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<th>UNPAID CARE WORK</th>
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<td>WOMEN</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>198</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEN</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>348</td>
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Time in minutes.

Combining unpaid and paid work, women in Asia-Pacific work the longest hours in the world. Worldwide, women do three times more unpaid care work than men, but four times as much in Asia-Pacific.

WORLDWIDE

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Recommendations from the Beijing+25 Asia-Pacific Declaration

Women’s labour force participation
• Private sector engagement and women’s entrepreneurship
• Gender-responsive macroeconomic policies

Informal work
• Facilitate transition from informal to formal employment
• Extend legal and social protection to women workers in the formal and informal economy

Unpaid care work
• Promote equal sharing of unpaid care work and domestic responsibilities
• Invest in the care economy, quality care services and care-related infrastructure
Panelists

Advancing women’s empowerment in Nepal

The care economy and women’s economic participation

Fostering enabling environment for women entrepreneurs

Holistic approaches to private sector engagement

Ms. Yam Kumari Khatiwada, Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Nepal

Ms. Deepta Chopra, Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies

Ms. Meenakshi Krishnan, Organization Development Consultant & Doctoral Researcher, Institute of Development Studies

Ms. Sudha Gooty, Programme Manager - Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship, ESCAP

Ms. Katja Freiwald, Regional Programme Manager ‘WeEmpower Asia’ UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Discussants

Ms. Nadira Mohd Yusoff, Founder & CEO of Kiddocare and Head of AWEN Malaysia

Ms. Cai Yiping, Executive Committee member, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era

Ms. Joni Simpson, Senior Specialist on Gender, Equality and Non-Discrimination, International Labour Organization (ILO)
# Outline of Session 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Women’s Economic Empowerment</th>
<th>Panelists and Discussants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:05-11:40</td>
<td>Initiatives to advance women's economic empowerment in Nepal</td>
<td>Ms. Yam Kumari Khatiwada</td>
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<td>The care economy and women's economic participation</td>
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<td>Ms. Meenakshi Krishnan</td>
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<td>11:05-11:40</td>
<td>Fostering enabling environment for women entrepreneurs</td>
<td>Ms. Sudha Gooty</td>
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<td>Holistic approaches to private sector engagement to boost women's economic empowerment</td>
<td>Ms. Katja Freiwald</td>
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<td>11:40-12:00</td>
<td>Reflections</td>
<td>Ms. Nadira Mohd Yusoff</td>
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<td>Ms. Cai Yiping</td>
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<td>12:00-12:30</td>
<td>Interactive discussion</td>
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<td>12:30</td>
<td>Closing of meeting for the day</td>
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Guiding questions

- What are the greatest challenges women entrepreneurs and paid and unpaid caregivers are facing during COVID-19? Is this crisis different from previous economic shocks?

- Why is it in the interest of member states to provide emergency response support specifically directed at caregivers? Are there regions where this has been done well?

- Will the pandemic fundamentally alter business as usual for women owned SMEs in the long term (i.e. e-commerce and digital platforms, remote work, banking risk assessments)?

- What can governments do to support women’s economic empowerment in their roles as caregivers, employees, and business owners in the long-term to support building resilient communities?

- How can governments promote the voices of women and intersectional vulnerable groups in crisis response and long-term planning (migrant workers, refugees, minority women)?
THANK YOU!

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