

10 The Beijing + 5 10 Review

*Women 2000:
Gender Equality,
Development
and Peace for the
21st Century*
5-9 June 2000,
the United Nations
Headquarters,
New York, USA

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ENSURE
THAT WOMEN
ARE INFORMED.

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AND MAKE
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR...

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WHY THE REVIEW?



Four years ago, governments signified their commitment to advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women around the world by adopting the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA). The BPFA is the final outcome of the 4th World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China in 1995.

The BPFA obliges governments to look at its 12 Critical Areas of Concern as priorities for action. Following its empowering mission, government signatories to the BPFA are to address barriers and constraints in these 12 Critical Areas of Concern:

- 1. Women and poverty*
 - 2. Women and education and training*
 - 3. Women and health*
 - 4. Violence against women*
 - 5. Women and armed conflict*
 - 6. Women and the economy*
 - 7. Women in power and decision-making*
 - 8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women*
 - 9. Human rights of women*
 - 10. Women and media*
 - 11. Women and environment*
 - 12. The girl-child*
-

ACCELERATING AND FULLY IMPLEMENTING THE BPFA AND NFLS

Five years after the adoption of the BPFA, governments are being called to participate in a Special Session to assess advances and progress made in its implementation. It is officially called Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century. The Review Session is also known as the Beijing+ 5 Review.

This Special Session is to be convened by the UN General Assembly. It will be held on 5-9 June 2000 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, USA. It will also include a review of the 1985 Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for Women (NFLS).

The primary aim for convening the Special Session is to speed up the full implementation of the BPFA and the NFLS, two major documents that affirm the goals of equality, peace, and development for the world's women.

As specified by the UN General Assembly, the BPFA in this first five-year review is not negotiable and no changes will be made. Recommendations will be made on how it was adopted in 1995.

The NFLS was adopted at the 3rd World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985. Five years later in 1990, the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) took the lead in reviewing it and noted its slow implementation. The CSW, together with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) recommended that a second review be held in 1995. The review eventually led to the convening of the 4th World Conference on Women in 1995 in Beijing, China.

How Will THE REVIEW PROCEED?



What is the principle to be observed in the process of the Review?

Open-ended process and beyond official forums

In the 1995 Beijing Conference, women's groups and NGOs from around the world visibly, actively and tirelessly participated in negotiations that led to the adoption of the BPFA. The BPFA itself states that the "participation and contribution of all actors of civil society, particularly women's groups, non-governmental and community-based organisations, in co-operation with governments, are important to its effective implementation and follow-ups."

Women's organisations have already signified their interest to participate in preparatory processes and the Review Session itself during the 43rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women held in March 1999. Their position is that the process for the Review should be open-ended and not simply limit the Review to official guidelines.

Who is in charge of preparations for the Review? *The Roles of the CSW and the DAW*

The UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the main UN body that makes recommendations to Member States' policies on the status of women. It has been designated by the UN General Assembly as the Preparatory Committee for the Review. The UN Division on the Advancement of Women (DAW) acts as the CSW's Secretariat.

As the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom), the CSW is to hold two preparatory meetings. PrepCom I was already held on 15-19 March 1999 (when the agenda, areas to be covered, expected participants and the processes for the Review were determined). PrepCom II is to take place on 6-24 March 2000 to complete all preparations for the actual holding of the Special Session.

The DAW, on the other hand, is in charge of distributing and compiling the responses to the questionnaire sent to governments as regards their implementation of the BPEA. The questionnaire seeks to get responses on:

- ☞ *best practices*
- ☞ *positive actions*
- ☞ *lessons learnt*
- ☞ *use of qualitative and quantitative indicators*
- ☞ *obstacles and constraints*
- ☞ *other areas of critical concern*

By August 1999, governments should have submitted the accomplished questionnaire to the DAW.



What are the approaches to the Review?

Five Focus Areas, Four Cross-Cutting Themes

The following themes have been proposed by the DAW to make the Review holistic and establish the linkages among the 12 Critical Areas of Concern:

- ☞ *political will towards an enabling environment for the BPFA implementation* (legal reforms to end discriminatory practices against women, policies for women and girls, gender sensitive policies, equal participation of women at all levels and in all areas)
 - ☞ *capacity building for women's advancement and gender mainstreaming* (awareness raising, institutional mechanisms in support of capacity building, capacity building for gender and development practitioners)
 - ☞ *accountability, strategies for action and bases for assessing the BPFA* (time frame for implementation, indicators, budget allocation, gender disaggregated data and analysis, gender sensitive procedures and guidelines)
 - ☞ *cooperation and partnership for implementing the BPFA* (public-private sector partnership, international cooperation, South-South cooperation, partnership with women's groups and the civil society)
 - ☞ *assistance to women and girls currently subject to discrimination* (programmes for girls in need of special protection, emergency assistance to victims of gender-based violence, situations of armed conflict, economic dislocation)
-

In addition, the following cross-cutting themes have been recommended:

- ☞ *globalisation and women's economic empowerment*
- ☞ *women, science and technology and the new information age*
- ☞ *women's leadership*
- ☞ *human security and social protection*

Based on the recommendations of the CSW, the whole review is to be guided by the following areas of focus:

- ☞ *best practices*
- ☞ *obstacles and constraints*
- ☞ *vision for the future*
- ☞ *new and emerging trends*

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women is also invited to supply information relevant to the BPEFA implementation. Composed of 23 international experts, this Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in countries that ratified it. It reports to the UN General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council, which in turn furnishes the CSW copy of these reports.

What are the guidelines for women's groups and NGOs' participation?

Active involvement and ensured presence

The UN General Assembly has stressed that women's groups and NGOs should actively involve themselves during

preparations for the Review and that their presence in the actual Review be arranged and ensured.

Following the CSW's recommendation, NGOs in the following categories are allowed to participate:

- ☞ *NGOs in Consultative Status with the ECOSOC*
- ☞ *NGOs accredited to the Beijing Conference*
- ☞ *NGOs that have no consultative status nor accreditation but have registered under a qualified NGO*

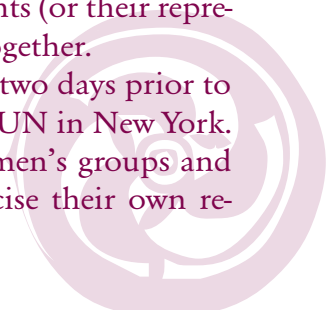
Questions regarding the participation of women's groups that are not in consultative status with the ECOSOC nor accredited during the 1995 Beijing Conference but have been actively working for the BPFA implementation will be taken up during the CSW's PrepCom II Meeting on 6-24 March 2000.

How will NGOs and women's groups take part during the Review Session?

By participating in the Committee of the Whole

During the Review Session, the CSW will organise a Committee of the Whole. NGOs and governments (or their representatives) will have the chance to work together.

An NGO Working Session will be held two days prior to the Review Session on 3-4 June 2000 at the UN in New York. This Working Session is the venue for women's groups and NGOs to consolidate, finalise, and publicise their own report on the implementation of the BPFA.



WHAT PREPARATIONS ARE NEEDED FOR THE REVIEW?



The preparatory process is as crucial as the Review Session itself. It is an opportunity for NGOs and women's groups to influence the direction of the Review and make substantive input as regards its final outcome. It is a way of ensuring that government and official reports reflect the real situation and sentiments of the women.

In preparatory processes, mechanisms must be put in place to guarantee broader and active participation of women's organisations and NGOs and the recognition of their input and contributions.

National, sub-regional, and regional level preparations are necessary stages that need to be undertaken to come up with consolidated reports that will be taken up at the global level when the Review Session is finally convened in June 2000. In all these levels of preparatory processes, women's organisations and NGOs are strongly encouraged to be involved and make their contributions.

Preparatory Activities Leading to Women 2000: An Overview of the Different Levels of Preparations

STAGE 1

National Level Preparations

National Governments

Women's Organisations/NGOs

what are they supposed to do?

National Women's Machineries are expected to take a lead

initiate consultations with women's groups/NGOs

ensure that a duly recognised NGO representative is part of all official Review activities at the national, regional and global levels

submit BPFA National Plan of Action as required by the UN General Assembly (for countries that have yet to submit)

submit the accomplished questionnaire to DAW on or before August 1999

prepare a national report to be presented at regional level consultations

allocate funds for the Review process

what can they do?

initiate consultations with government agencies responsible for the Review, e.g. National Women's Machineries or constitute a body for the purpose of the Review

lobby for NGO participation and representation in all official Review activities at the national, regional and global levels

actively participate in consultations organised by governments and women's groups at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels

ensure that all official reports reflect the voices of grassroots women

inform as many women as possible about the Review and its processes to ensure broader participation

come up with an alternative NGO Report

assist in fund-raising efforts to support NGO participation

STAGE 2

Regional Level Preparations: Asia and the Pacific

UN ESCAP

The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is the regional focal point for the BPFA Review. It will convene a High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to review the BPFA on 26-29 October 1999 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The ESCAP Meeting is regarded as the immediate space to lobby and advocate for the integration of contributions from women's organisations and NGOs.

what is it supposed to do?

make its preparatory activities open to the participation of women's groups and NGOs in the region

use the Jakarta Declaration/Regional Plan of Action as the framework for implementing the BPFA in the region

tackle during the high-level intergovernmental meeting questions on good practices, lessons learnt and obstacles and challenges in implementing the BPFA in the region; discuss as sub-themes in the BPFA regional review areas on women's economic empowerment, women's political empowerment, rights based approach to women's empowerment and strategies for women's empowerment

Women's Organisations/NGOs

Women's groups are aiming for a high level participation in the Review of the BPFA. They are organising the Asia-Pacific Regional NGO Symposium as an expression of that aim. The theme of the Symposium is "Asia-Pacific Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century." It is going to be held on 31 August-4 September 1999 in Bangkok, Thailand.

what can they do?

discuss how the 12 Critical Areas of Concern of the BPFA have been addressed in the region and identify emerging issues that are not covered by the BPFA

consolidate women's positions and recommendations that will serve as the NGO contribution to the ESCAP Meeting

participate in the ESCAP Meeting and present recommendations of the Regional NGO Symposium

further strategise on next steps to be undertaken until June 2000

STAGE 3**Global Level Preparations****National Governments**

work with NGO representatives in the Committee of the Whole to be set up by the CSW

Women's Organisations/NGOs

work with government representatives in the Committee of the Whole to consolidate, finalise and publicise reports that will be taken up during the Review Session

participate in the NGO Working Session, which will be held at the UN two days before the Review Session (3-4 June 1999); the Working Session can be the venue for consolidating the Global NGO Alternative Report

The Final Stage

The UN General Assembly Session on "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century," 5-9 June 2000, UN Headquarters, New York, USA



WHAT CAN WOMEN'S GROUPS DO BETWEEN NOW AND JUNE 2000?



Between now and June 2000, there are many activities women's groups and NGOs in the region can undertake as their contributions to the preparatory processes leading to the Review Session in June 2000. They can:

- ☞ *disseminate information to as many women as possible about the Review Session*
- ☞ *find out what national governments are doing in preparation for the Review*
- ☞ *lobby for NGO participation and representation in preparatory activities and during the Review Session*
- ☞ *contribute information and relevant documents in support of NGOs' initiative to come up with an alternative report*
- ☞ *help in fund raising efforts in support of NGO preparatory activities and NGO representation at the actual Review Session*

A number of women's groups and NGOs in the Asia and the Pacific region have already scheduled national and sub-regional meetings in the coming months:

National Level Meetings

Women's organisations in various parts of Asia and the Pacific are already preparing for national level consultative meetings between now and June 2000.

Sub-Regional Meetings

AUSTRALIA and some Pacific Island countries 8-11 July 1999, Australia

Contact: Eileen Pittaway

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of Women (CAPOW)

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114 Maitland St., Hackett ACT 2602, Australia

Tel: (61-6) 247-1265

Fax: (61-6) 247-1354

E-mail: E.Pittaway@unsw.edu.au

SOUTH ASIA Regional Meeting 11-14 August 1999, Nepal

Contact: Dr. Anjana Shakya

NGO Ad Hoc Committee Beyond Beijing

P.O. Box 2125 Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: (9771) 523-805

Fax: (9771) 520-042

E-mail: shakyaanjana@hotmail.com

COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES in Asia and Pacific Island countries

21-24 August 1999, New Zealand

Contact: Barbara Mckenzie

National Council of Women of New Zealand

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PACIFIC ISLANDS

have done their own sub-regional meetings and currently finishing their sub-regional reports to be presented to the NGO Symposium.

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Also part of the Committee is a representative of the Asia-Pacific Watch who will help in making the region actively involve in preparations and a Youth Representative from Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW). It is expected that the sub-regions of South Asia, Central Asia and East Asia will choose their own representatives to the Steering Committee.

For the UN agencies, the following can be contacted:

UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

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The following are the 51 Member States and 9 Associate Members of the ESCAP:

Member States

1. Afghanistan
2. Armenia
3. Australia
4. Azerbaijan
5. Bangladesh
6. Bhutan
7. Brunei Darussalam
8. Cambodia
9. China
10. Democratic Peoples
Republic of Korea
11. Fiji
12. France
13. India
14. Indonesia
15. Iran
16. Japan
17. Kazakhstan
18. Kiribati
19. Kyrgyzstan
20. Lao PDR
21. Malaysia
22. Maldives
23. Marshall Islands
24. Micronesia
25. Mongolia
26. Myanmar
27. Nauru
28. Nepal
29. Netherlands
30. New Zealand
31. Pakistan
32. Palau
33. Papua New Guinea
34. Philippines
35. Republic of Korea
36. Russian Federation
37. Samoa
38. Singapore
39. Solomon Islands
40. Sri Lanka
41. Tajikistan
42. Thailand
43. Tonga
44. Turkey
45. Turkmenistan
46. Tuvalu
47. United Kingdom
48. United States of
America
49. Uzbekistan
50. Vanuatu
51. Vietnam

Associate Members

1. American Samoa
2. Cook Islands
3. French Polynesia
4. Guam
5. Hong Kong, China
6. Macau
7. New Caledonia
8. Niue
9. Northern Marianas

HOW TO GET MORE INFORMATION AND KEEP IN TOUCH



There are several ways of being informed and keeping in touch. Various women's organisations both at the regional and global levels are using different media to disseminate and exchange information related to the BPFA Review.

Electronic- based media

Asian Women's Resource Exchange (AWORC) provides an Internet based information service and network in Asia. Isis International-Manila is the current co-ordinator of AWORC. Activities, calendar of events, women's groups involved in the Review process and other related information can be accessed at: www.jca.apc.org.aworc/bpfa/index/html

APWomen 2000 is an electronic-mail conferencing list for those interested in planning for the Asia-Pacific Regional NGO Symposium, posting announcements, sharing resources and participating in discussions of issues relevant to the BPFA Review. To join the list, write to: owner-apwomen2000@isiswomen.org

WomenWatch is the UN Internet Gateway on the Advancement and Empowerment of Women. It contains information on the work of UN agencies and inter-governmental and treaty bodies that deal with women's advancement and empowerment. It can be accessed at: www.un.org/womenwatch/index/html

WomenWatch also maintains a webpage devoted to the BPFA Review called Beijing + 5 Women 2000, which can be accessed at: www.un.org/womenwatch/followup/beijing5/index.html

A global and regional websites are being developed to serve as “BPFA + 5 Platforms.” The global website can be accessed at www.womenaction.org. Africa can be accessed at: www.famafrique.org/femmes2000/fem2000.html while North America at: www3.sympatico.ca/criaw/beijing.html

Print

The Asian and Pacific Development Centre-Gender and Development Programme (APDC-GAD) keeps women in the region up to date with post-Beijing activities through the *APDC-GAD NewsFlash/FaxNews*. Copies can be obtained from:

Gender and Development Programme,
Asian and Pacific Development Centre
Pesiaran Duta, P.O. Box 12224,
Kuala Lumpur 50770, Malaysia
Tel/Fax: (603) 651-9209
E-mail: gad@pc.jaring.my

The International Women’s Tribune Centre (IWTC) publishes *Preview 2000*, an occasional bulletin for plans and preparations for the BPFA Review. Copies can be obtained from:

International Women’s Tribune Center,
777 United Nations Plaza, New York,
NY 10017, USA
or accessed at: www.womenaction.org/preview.html

Radio

Isis will launch a bimonthly Radio News Dispatch to report on the various initiatives taking place in relation to the Review. This will be circulated to various radio networks across Asia and the Pacific. Watch out for dispatches, which will also be posted in the AWORC website.

Information and Communication Centre

Isis International-Manila will act as the information and communication centre for NGO preparatory activities in Asia and the Pacific leading to the Review Session in June 2000. We invite everyone to submit queries, information, papers and other resources. We will ensure that they reach as many women as possible.





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