

Asia-Pacific Group 1

Committee Background Guide

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Asia Pacific Group 1

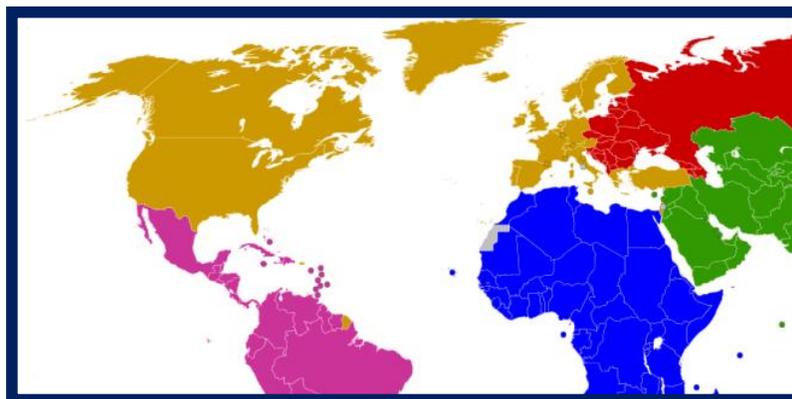
About this Committee

The Asia-Pacific Group (formerly the Asian Group) has 53 members (27% of all UN members) and is the second largest regional group by number of member states (one fewer than the African Group). Its territory is composed of much of the continents of Asia and Oceania. However, Russia is a member of the Eastern European Group and Australia, New Zealand, Israel, and Turkey are all members of the Western European and Others Group. The Asia-Pacific Group has three seats on the Security Council: the permanent seat of China, and two non-permanent seats. The Group also has 11 seats on the United Nations Economic and Social Council and 13 seats on the United Nations Human Rights Council.

There are 53 member states

 Afghanistan	 Kyrgyzstan	 Republic of Korea
 Bahrain	 Laos	 Samoa
 Bangladesh	 Lebanon	 Saudi Arabia
 Bhutan	 Malaysia	 Singapore
 Brunei Darussalam	 Maldives	 Solomon Islands
 Cambodia	 Marshall Islands	 Sri Lanka
 China	 Federated States of Micronesia	 Syria
 Cyprus	 Mongolia	 Tajikistan
 Democratic People's Republic of Korea	 Myanmar	 Thailand
 Fiji	 Nauru	 Timor-Leste
 India	 Nepal	 Tonga
 Indonesia	 Oman	 Turkmenistan
 Iran	 Pakistan	 Tuvalu
 Iraq	 Palau	 United Arab Emirates
 Japan	 Papua New Guinea	 Uzbekistan
 Jordan	 Philippines	 Vanuatu
 Kazakhstan	 Qatar	 Vietnam
 Kuwait		 Yemen

In addition to the above states, the Palestine Liberation Organization, designated the name "Palestine" within the United Nations, has been a full member of the Asia-Pacific group since 2 April 1986.



Regional Information

Gender equality and women's empowerment are essential for meeting Asia's aspirations of inclusive and sustainable development. Gender equality needs to be pursued in its own right for a just and equal society, and for better development outcomes - inclusive growth, faster poverty reduction and accelerated progress towards Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) attainment.

There are 19 countries and territories in the Asia-Pacific region that have passed laws to prohibit domestic violence. However, only eight countries and territories throughout the Asia-Pacific region explicitly criminalize marital rape, leaving millions of women exposed to abuse at the hands of their partners.

Global data show that where laws are in place against domestic violence, prevalence of domestic violence is lower and fewer people think it is acceptable. A survey in Cambodia, where a new law was passed in 2005, found that whereas in 2005 64 percent of respondents knew a man who physically abused his wife, by 2009 this figure had dropped to 53 percent. In Asia and the Pacific region, UN Women's work focuses on achieving gender equality in democratic governance and on reducing feminized poverty and exclusion through the realization of women's human rights and human security. Particular emphasis lies on migrant women workers in the whole region, women's political participation in the Pacific, and human trafficking as well as HIV and AIDS in South East Asia and the Pacific.

In Indonesia, UNIFEM (now UN Women) supported the drafting of a local law on the protection of women migrant workers in the province of Blitar. The law and complementing decrees mandate significant protection for migrant women, including a protection fund to cover legal costs of discrimination and abuse cases faced by migrant women, and a provision to assign female doctors for medical check-ups to prevent sexual harassment. This law is being replicated in other districts of Indonesia.

Financial exploitation and deliberate misinformation of migrant women workers through illegal recruiters lead not only to economic ruin, but also to physical and sexual abuse of countless women

In South Asia, more women die in childbirth – 500 for every 100,000 live births – than in any other part of the world except Sub-Saharan Africa. The proportion of deliveries attended by skilled birth attendants is as low as 18% in Bangladesh, 19% in Nepal, and 20% in the Lao PDR.

Gender discrimination costs lives. Close to 100 million women in Asia are estimated to be 'missing' because of discriminatory treatment in access to health and nutrition, pure neglect, or pre-birth sex selection. Here are 12 things to know about gender equality in Asia and the Pacific.

Many Asian women report experiencing physical violence from their intimate partners - 30% of women in Viet Nam; more than 40% in Bangladesh, Samoa, and Timor-Leste; and more than 60% in Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

An extra year of primary school encourages girls to marry later in life and have fewer children. It also makes them less likely to experience violence and increases their eventual wages by 10-20 percent. In Pakistan a half kilometre increase in the distance to school will decrease girls' enrolment by 20%. In Afghanistan, Indonesia and several other countries, building local schools in rural communities has led to increases in girls' enrolment rates.

Only 30% of women in Asia and the Pacific are in non-agriculture wage employment, with only 20% in South Asia—the lowest among the world's regions. Nearly 50% of women in South Asia and over 60% in the Pacific Islands are still concentrated in agriculture. Unpaid work on family agricultural enterprises accounts for 34% of informal employment for women in India.

In the East Asia and Pacific region, output per worker could be 7-18% higher if female entrepreneurs and workers were in the same sectors, types of jobs and activities as men, and had the same access to productive resources.

Across the East Asia and Pacific region, female-headed households own less land than male-headed households. Few women own farms despite the fact that 40% of the region's women are employed in agriculture.

If women had the same access to productive resources as men in agriculture, they could increase yields on their farms by 20 - 30 percent. This could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5 - 4 percent, which could in turn reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12 - 17 percent. Many food insecure countries also exhibit low Gender Inequality Index rankings - Afghanistan (135), Bangladesh (116), and PNG (133), Cambodia (88) and the Lao PDR (95).

A study of women elected to local government in India found that female leadership positively affected the provision of services for both men and women. Of the 22 countries where women constitute more than 30 percent of the national legislature, 18 have some form of quota for addressing gender gaps

Availability of gender statistics

The World's Women 2010 has benefited from an increase in the availability of gender statistics in the last 10 years. The majority of countries are now able to produce sex-disaggregated statistics on population, enrolment, employment and parliamentary representation.

In addition, gender statistics in some newer areas are becoming available. For example, statistics on child labour are now collected by a larger number of countries. Similarly, surveys on time use and on violence against women were conducted in both developed and developing countries although international standards in these two statistical fields have not yet been fully developed.

However, the preparation of *The World's Women 2010* was hampered by the fact that statistics in certain domains are not available for many countries. Furthermore, even the statistics that are available are often not comparable because concepts, definitions and methods vary from country to country. Data are also lacking in detail in many cases.

In other areas, the absence of internationally agreed measurement standards and methods has resulted in a lack of gender statistics relating to disease prevalence, home-based workers, access to credit, the worst forms of child labour, human trafficking, femicide, intrahousehold poverty, individual ownership of land and losses associated with natural disasters.

Challenges:

- The global economic downturn will have significant impacts on women as more of them lose jobs and are forced to manage shrinking household incomes. By arresting capital accumulation by women and drastically reducing African women's individual incomes, women are being crippled in their quest to contribute effectively to the household economy.
- While micro-finance is useful for addressing immediate household needs, it does not lead to women's economic empowerment in a transformative manner.
- Additionally, small-scale women's businesses tend to be focused on traditional jobs such as embroidery, sewing and the sale of food items, with limited opportunities for expansion. Impacts of PRSPs and other development plans which aim at reducing women's poverty call for careful scrutiny, as there is limited evidence to demonstrate that they have resulted in curbing poverty in Africa in any significant manner.
- Compared to the general impressive progress being made at primary level, a mixed picture is presented with respect to attainment of gender equality at secondary and tertiary levels. At these levels, it is observed that both males and females face obstacles in enrolment and retention.
- Although country reports indicate that gender disparities in enrolment and literacy are narrowing in every country, more remains to be done to guarantee equality between the sexes in the sector. In many countries, illiteracy rates among women remain high and disparities between men and women persist.
- Based on prevalence surveys in some countries in the region, nearly half of women have experienced physical and sexual violence at the hands of a partner. There are 19 countries and territories in the Asia-Pacific region that have passed laws to prohibit domestic violence. However, only eight countries and territories throughout the Asia-Pacific region explicitly criminalize marital rape, leaving millions of women exposed to abuse at the hands of their partners. Global data show that where laws are in place against domestic violence, prevalence of domestic violence is lower and fewer people think it is acceptable. A survey in Cambodia, where a new law was passed in 2005, found that whereas in 2005 64 percent of respondents knew a man who physically abused his wife, by 2009 this figure had dropped to 53 percent.
- In Asia and the Pacific region, UN Women's work focuses on achieving gender equality in democratic governance and on reducing feminized poverty and exclusion through the realization of women's human rights and human security.
- Particular emphasis lies on migrant women workers in the whole region, women's political participation in the Pacific, and human trafficking as well as HIV and AIDS in South East Asia and the Pacific.

Questions for Research:

1. What are the key issues for your country and region?
2. What action has your country taken to promote the equality and empowerment of women on a national and international level?
3. How is your country promoting the economic empowerment of women?
4. How is your country promoting participation of women?
5. How has your country implemented legislation that promotes equality and empowerment?
6. What legal safeguards are in place for women in terms of key issues such as trafficking, 'honour' crimes, VAW and other issues?
7. Do national polices take account of gender ('Gender Mainstreaming')
8. Does your country keep and submit data on gender equality and the empowerment of women?
9. Does your country promote the sharing of family roles and responsibilities?

Read the relevant guides to the '12 Areas of Action' from the Beijing Platform on the delegate preparation website and the 'useful websites' as a starting point for research



Gender mainstreaming

UNECOSOC formally defined concept:

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality

Useful Websites

Information specific to Asia

[ADB, Paths to 2015 MDG Priorities in Asia and the Pacific](#)

[Council of Foreign Relations 2004 - What Works in Girls' Education: Evidence and Policies from the Developing World](#)

[UN Women: CSW 56 - Facts and Figures on Rural Women](#)

[ADB, Paths to 2015 MDG Priorities in Asia and the Pacific; FAO, IFAD & ILO, Gender Dimensions of Agricultural and Rural Employment](#)

Summary information on NAPS and strategies for implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and global gender data:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/country/national/westsum.htm>

<http://web.undp.org/latinamerica/>

http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2011.pdf

Gender equality, women's empowerment and the MDGs

Gender equality and women's empowerment is central to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Yet, while there are some positive trends in gender equality, there are still many areas of concern. Girls account for the majority of children not attending school; almost two-thirds of women in the developing world work in the informal sector or as unpaid workers in the home. Despite greater parliamentary participation, women are still out numbered four-to-one in legislatures around the world.

Gender equality is a condition for inclusive, democratic, violence-free and sustainable development.



Keywords

Empowerment: increasing the spiritual, political, social, or economic strength of individuals and communities.

Development: planning and building to help improve communities and lives.

Discrimination: unfair treatment of a group based on a certain characteristic.