

The 2<sup>nd</sup> East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting

**NEW DELHI JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMUNIQUE**  
**7<sup>th</sup> December 2007**

**Preamble**

1. We, the Ministers, our representatives and other representatives of national institutions leading the cause of women's empowerment and gender equality from East Asian countries<sup>1</sup>, gathered at New Delhi on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> December 2007, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting and the empowerment of women.
2. While recalling and reaffirming the commitments for the realization of women's human rights and gender equality made at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing, in 1995, the Outcome Document of the Beijing +5, the Resolutions of the Beijing + 10 review at the 49<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in 2005, as well as the commitments made in the Millennium Declaration and through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in September 2000.
3. Realizing that Goal 3 of the MDGs which focuses on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women is a goal in itself, it is also key to achieve all the eight MDGs. This notion was clearly articulated at the World Summit held in New York in September 2005, which reaffirmed that "Progress for women is progress for all." Unless concerted efforts are made to address gender gaps and inequalities in each MDG, it would not be possible to achieve them.
4. Recalling that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) provides the substantive framework for women's equal enjoyment with men of civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
5. Realizing that the real challenge is in the speedy and full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the provisions of CEDAW, in every region and in every country, which in turn requires determined political will and leadership, strategic partnerships, innovative thinking and approaches, and adequate resources.
6. Recalling that this 2<sup>nd</sup> East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting once again provides us with a unique opportunity to discuss and share common challenges, best practices and experiences, and together chart out strategies for the future.

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<sup>1</sup> The 16 countries involved in the first EAS include the 10 ASEAN countries plus China, Japan, South Korea, India, New Zealand and Australia.

**We acknowledge challenges in the following areas:**

7. While on the one hand globalization offers new opportunities and fosters economic growth, on the other hand it has the potential to widen existing inequalities and gaps, especially those based on gender, race, income and ethnicity. The challenge is to be able to take advantage of the opportunities that globalization offers while at the same time diminishing any potential negative effects.

8. The growing poverty and the increasing migration of women is also an area of concern. While migration can yield economic benefits for both sending and receiving countries, unsafe and undocumented migration especially of women puts them at a great risk and makes them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, often leading to trafficking of women. The challenge is to ensure that women have freedom of movement and choice of employment while at the same time ensuring that they do not get exploited and abused.

9. Women turn to home-based work due to lack of necessary qualifications and formal training, absence of child care support, social & cultural constraints and absence of alternatives amongst other reasons. Home-based work is fast emerging as an increasingly important source of employment worldwide. Fewer workers, the world over, are working in formal, unionized jobs and more and more people, particularly women, are working informally, many of them at home. Home based workers remain invisible and unrecognized and are also unprotected by the law in some countries. They lack bargaining power and social protection, face exploitation, are confronted with the seasonality of work, which provides very low wages and no secure contracts. There is also no uniform definition of home based work in the region.

10. There is increasing vulnerability of women especially in marginalized groups to violence and trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced marriage and organ transplant. This has got further accentuated with the opening up of borders. One of the biggest challenges of the region is to put an end to this multi-million dollar trade in human misery.

11. There is unequal participation and leadership of women in decision-making at all levels and in all spheres, including political, administrative and judicial. Equal partnership between women and men are prerequisites to achieve gender equality and the advancement of women. The challenge is to build a society that is equitable and sustainable, by changing power relations at all levels - individual, societal and governmental.

12. There are gender stereo-types and socialization patterns in our region which reinforce traditional gender roles and gender-based division of labor. Exclusion, overwork and the burden of care often stunts the growth and development of women preventing them from achieving their full potential. Many women in our region are struggling to strike a good work-life balance. The challenge is to have a more equitable and just distribution of responsibilities and opportunities, which will lead to improving the quality of life of both genders.

**We agree, therefore, to adopt a rights-based and results-based approach and prioritize our efforts and actions towards the following:**

**13. Promote Women's Participation and Leadership at all levels of decision making.**

- (i) Build capacities and create an enabling environment to allow women legislators to participate in and contribute to the deliberations and decisions of the elected bodies of which they are members
- (ii) Remove or modify, as appropriate, provisions that hinder women's equal participation in decision making
- (iii) Promote and adopt, as appropriate, positive action and measures for greater participation of women at all levels of decision making – in the legislature, judiciary, administration, executive, private sector and community.
- (iv) Adopt policies that promote Gender Equality and Women in Leadership at workplaces and encourage workplaces that promote Gender Equality and Women in Leadership.

**14. Prevent violence against women including trafficking of women & children**

- i) Put in place rights based legal provisions and administrative reforms to address Violence Against Women (VAW), including trafficking of women and children
- ii) Make the justice system and appropriate authority more responsive to violence against women and trafficking of women and children.
- iii) Promote and strengthen gender sensitive community based interventions to address VAW and trafficking of women and children
- iv) Strengthen civil society to promote zero tolerance against VAW and trafficking of women and children

**15. Recognise, organize and empower Home Based Workers**

- i) Identify a common definition and understanding of home based workers, across the region
- ii) Encourage governments, where appropriate, to formulate a National Policy on Home-based Workers, in consultation with the stakeholders to address the following:

- (a) Minimum protection, i.e. minimum remuneration, occupational health and safety measures and schemes for upgradation of their homes and their workplaces;
- (b) Social protection, i.e., life and health insurance, access to health care, child care, pension, disability benefit, maternity benefit and housing, literacy programmes;
- (c) Economic Security i.e. access to market and economic resources including raw material, marketing infrastructure, technology, skill training, trade related capacity building, credit and information, market protection for the products of the home based workers;
- (d) Voice and governance - give workers access to collective bargaining, recognition of Home Net and other forums for home based workers' voice and resource support to enable homeworkers to organize and campaign

#### 16. Develop and Strengthen institutional mechanisms for gender equality and equity

- I. Ensure appropriate and sufficient authority and status for national machineries for women and gender equality.
- II. Ensure that the above are adequately resourced i.e. financial and human resources, in order to play their role as 'champions of gender mainstreaming' with a view to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.
- III. Encourage government and non-governmental institutions to integrate women's human rights and gender concerns into their policies and programmes, and establish appropriate gender management systems
- IV. Repeal and/or amend discriminatory laws against women
- V. Promote and/or ensure gender budget allocated and expended at all levels.
- VI. Promote greater male participation in creating a gender just society
- VII. Enhance and encourage corporate social responsibility
- VIII. Strengthen partnerships with women's groups and civil society organizations
- IX. Promote gender sensitive media
- X. Ensure linkages between Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as mutually complementary processes.

#### 17. Develop systems for Engendering Statistics, Gender Analysis, and Gender Responsive Budgeting

(i) Collect sex-disaggregated data and gender relevant statistics to analyse and identify gender issues, women's concerns, determine gaps and disparities in developing strategies for women's advancement and gender equality.

(ii) Develop methodologies to quantify women's unpaid work in order to better assess and measure the contribution of women to society.

Conclusion:

18. We pledge to continue to take leadership and we call for political will to mainstream gender and achieve gender equality. Having realized the benefits of this forum, i.e. The East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting, we hereby commit to further reinforce our partnership and collaboration for gender equality and women's empowerment in this region by regularly holding biennial meetings.