



ESCAP PROGRESS REPORT ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING

2023



ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission
for Asia and the Pacific

Acknowledgements

This *ESCAP Progress Report on Gender Mainstreaming 2023* has been prepared in order to recognize the excellent work and achievements of Gender Focal Points in supporting the efforts of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in mainstreaming gender considerations across the work of the Commission.

The report was developed with input from Gender Focal Points in ESCAP's divisions, subregional offices and regional institutions under the overall direction and guidance of Srinivas Tata, Director of the Social Development Division with ESCAP.

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Celine D'Imperio and Jessica Henn designed the publication.

Explanatory notes

The narratives in this report are based on data and information available up to the end of December 2023.



**Achieve gender
equality and
empower all
women and girls**

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Acronyms

APFSD: Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development
APCICT: Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development
APCTT: Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology
ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BPfA: Beijing Platform for Action
CKMS: Communications and Knowledge Management Section
CWE: Catalysing Women's Entrepreneurship
CSAM: Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization
CSW: Commission on the Status of Women
DA: Division of Administration
ED: Energy Division
EDD: Environment and Development Division
EGM: Expert Group Meeting
ENE: ESCAP Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia
EPO: Subregional Office for the Pacific
ES: Executive Secretary
GFP: Gender Focal Points
GEWE: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
IDD: ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division
IWD: International Women's Day
IGM: Intergovernmental Meeting
MPFD: Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division
MSME: Micro, Small and Medium (sized) Enterprises
OES: Office of the Executive Secretary
PI: Performance Indicators
PSC: Project Support Cost Funding
SD: Statistics Division
SDD: Social Development Division
SEA: Subregional Office for South-East Asia
SIAP: Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific
SONCA: Subregional Office for North and Central Asia
SPECA: United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia
SPMD: Strategy and Programme Management Division
SSWA: Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia
STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TIID: Trade, Investment and Innovation Division
TP: Transport Division
UN-SWAP: UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VAWG: Violence Against Women and Girls
WEE: Women's Economic Empowerment

Key highlights

Following the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, ESCAP has made significant efforts to build back better towards the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls within the context of the System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP). Key highlights include:

Important work carried out to review progress made towards achieving gender equality

- ESCAP's divisions, subregional offices and regional institutions have continued and started new projects mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment, conducted numerous studies, and organized a large number of events in support of advancing and achieving gender equality in Asia and the Pacific.

Gender parity at the senior-level position

- Thanks to continuous and widespread efforts, ESCAP has reached gender parity at senior-most levels this year.
- As of December 2023, gender parity has been achieved across all levels, marking a significant milestone, particularly at the D1 level, where parity has been attained for the first time.

Successful progress made on UN-SWAP-2.0

- ESCAP is now exceeding or meeting all of UN-SWAP 2.0 performance indicators.
- In 2023, ESCAP went from approaching requirements for the Equal representation of women (PI 14) with gender parity at the D1 level reaching 47% compared to 43% last year.
- ESCAP went from meeting requirements to exceeding requirements in Evaluation (PI 4) thanks to an ESCAP gender mainstreaming evaluation led by an external evaluator.

Improved staff knowledge and skills in gender equality

- To improve staff's knowledge of gender concepts, ESCAP has developed various induction modules on mainstreaming gender into the technical topics ESCAP divisions work on. These modules will be accessible in video format to ESCAP employees and senior managers via the iSeek Page on gender mainstreaming and to the public through the upcoming Asia-Pacific Gender Portal.
- The Gender Focal Point network has been reinforced through the arrival of new focal points, the initiation of mid-year bilateral meetings, the offering of capacity-building and peer learning, and the continuation of a yearly meeting gathering all gender focal points.



Progress in women's rights won over decades is vanishing before our eyes. On the current track, gender equality is 300 years away. Promoting women's full contributions to society is not an act of charity or a favour to women. It is a must and it benefits everyone.

António Guterres
Secretary-General of the UN



If we pair the untapped potential of women and girls, we will take a giant step towards rectifying many of the inequalities and injustices created by generations past. Given equal opportunities, they will flourish and contribute to creative solutions to tackle the world's multi-faceted challenges.

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana
Under-Secretary-General of the UN
and Executive Secretary of ESCAP



Executive summary

Recent global crises have had a disproportionate effect on women and girls around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic threatened their economic security, increased the burden of unpaid care and elevated the risk gender-based violence. Adding to the pandemic, the economic crisis has increased women's unemployment rates, their involvement in the informal economy, and their school dropout rates and decreased their access to finance. Food insecurity and environmental crises have further exacerbated these impacts.

ESCAP has made significant efforts to address and mitigate the gendered challenges posed by these cascading crises. ESCAP worked hand in hand with member States to empower women to cope with the economic fallout and provided analyses of the gendered impacts of responses to the pandemic and recommendations for recovery policies. This report provides concrete examples of such actions.

Moving forward, ESCAP will continue to place women and girls at the centre of its efforts to craft the post-pandemic future. In accordance with its Gender Equality Policy (2023-2027), ESCAP will continue to play its part in supporting its member States in Asia and the Pacific as well as strengthening the skill set of its staff towards increasing gender-responsive programming and implementation of ESCAP's programme of work.

As an organization, ESCAP must lead by example. Thus, it has made successful progress towards gender equality within its institution, meeting or exceeding all the UN System-wide requirements on gender equality and achieving gender parity across all levels, including at the senior-most level.



Introduction

ESCAP's gender mainstreaming efforts are carried out within the context of the System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP), which is the central United Nations policy framework to strengthen the institutional environment and deliver substantive outcomes on gender equality and the SDGs.

As an important component of ESCAP's gender mainstreaming efforts, the biennial Gender Mainstreaming Report serves the purpose of making our gender mainstreaming work across ESCAP more visible while encouraging colleagues to consider gender mainstreaming issues in their work systematically.

The present report illustrates the systemic gender mainstreaming efforts ESCAP made in 2023, highlighting the institutionalized policies, mechanisms and plans that integrated gender mainstreaming into ESCAP's organizational culture, structures and processes, and providing evidence of direct and indirect interventions promoting gender equality in our work.

ESCAP in Brief

ESCAP is one of the United Nations' five regional commissions across the world. The regional commissions are unique intergovernmental platforms for advancing regional integration, developing regional norms and standards, and exchanging knowledge for cooperation. ESCAP leverages its convening power to promote dialogue and knowledge-sharing at the national, regional and global levels.

ESCAP supports its member States to accelerate the implementation of global gender equality commitments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The gender dimensions of regional priorities for economic and social development are integrated into programme planning and implementation across ESCAP's work. ESCAP also dedicates focused analysis, targeted programming, and technical support at the request of member States to promote and protect the rights of women and girls. Emphasis is placed on enabling economic participation and enhancing women's share in safe, formal, and fully remunerated employment across Asia and the Pacific.

Strategic context

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for peace, prosperity and sustainability. Women and girls represent half of the world's population, but gender inequality continues to persist everywhere. Women continue to be underrepresented at all levels of political leadership and perform a disproportionate share of unpaid care work. As such, gender equality remains a crucial yet unfulfilled mission.

Over the past few decades, countries in Asia and the Pacific have made significant progress in empowering women and girls, particularly in the key areas of educational access and women's health. International commitments and grassroots movements have advanced gender equality further. However, despite these advancements, women and girls still face discriminatory policies and social and cultural barriers that restrict their economic and civic participation, impede their rights, and hinder their potential. Moreover, the region is witnessing growing disparities in income and wealth, further aggravated by technological transformation and the climate crisis, disproportionately affecting women and girls and placing them at increased risk of being left behind.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. They balance the economic, social, and ecological dimensions of sustainable development, and place the fight against poverty and sustainable development on the same agenda for the first time. Through the pledge to "Leave No One Behind", countries have committed to fast-track progress for those furthest behind.

Gender equality is one of the major human development challenges around the world. Equality is not merely a political and ethical issue, but it also serves to guarantee the effectiveness of development policies. Strengthening the rights of women and girls helps all of society move forward.

Women's equality and empowerment is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, but also integral to all dimensions of inclusive and sustainable development. SDG 5 aims to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" and is a cross-cutting theme for all 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Empowering women and girls, defending their sexual and reproductive health and rights, eliminating all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence in all areas of social, political and economic life and fighting stereotypes are all sustainable development drivers.

**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

What do we mean by gender and gender equality/parity?

Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women at a given time. In addition to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, gender also refers to the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities, and relationships are socially constructed and learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context, as are other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis, including class, race, poverty level, ethnic group, sexual orientation, age, etc.

Gender equality/parity: The goal of gender balance/equal representation of women and men applies throughout the United Nations system, and in every department, office or regional commission, overall and at each level. It applies not only to posts subject to geographical distribution but to all categories of posts, without regard to the type or duration of the appointment, or the series of Staff Rules under which the appointment is made, or the source of funding.

Equal representation of women and men in the United Nations system is a longstanding mandate. Articles 8 and 10 of the UN Charter, for example, stipulate that there shall be no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also states that there can be no distinction or discrimination on the basis of gender. Acting on these principles, the General Assembly has repeatedly called for gender balance. Most recently, in 2017, the Secretary-General launched the **System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity**, and a Gender Parity Task Force was established to develop a clear roadmap, with benchmarks and timeframes, to achieve parity across the system.



Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

An outcome of the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** marked a significant turning point for the global agenda regarding gender equality and women's empowerment. Adopted unanimously by 189 countries, the Beijing Platform for Action is considered the most comprehensive global policy framework for women's rights. It embodies the commitment of the international community to take strategic and bold action in 12 critical areas of concern: poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms, human rights, media, environment, and the girl child.

The Beijing conference was built on political agreements reached at the three previous global conferences on women. It consolidated five decades of legal advances aimed at securing the equality of women with men in law and in practice. More than 17,000 participants attended, including 6,000 government delegates at the negotiations, along with more than 4,000 accredited NGO representatives, a host of international civil servants and around 4,000 media representatives.

The 25-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action conducted in the Asia-Pacific region with the participation of ESCAP, governments and civil society organizations led to the adoption of the “**Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Beijing+25 Review**” by Asia-Pacific member States to ensure women’s economic, legal, and social protection and full integration into all spheres of life.

The year 2025 will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action. Leading up to this anniversary, the global community is undertaking a multi-level review process of the progress made and challenges encountered in its implementation. These reviews will serve to strengthen gender-responsive action and implementation and accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Mandated by ECOSOC, ESCAP is leading the Beijing+30 Regional Review in collaboration with UN Women.



Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2023

The **Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2023** presents a comprehensive assessment of whether the Asia-Pacific region and its five sub-regions are on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report underlines the sub-regions' unequal landscapes and uneven progress in achieving their SDGs.

Although the region has made progress toward a few of the goals, the current trajectory suggests that the Asia-Pacific region is projected to miss 90 per cent of the 118 measurable SDG targets by 2030. At the midpoint towards the 2030 target year, the overall progress has reached only 14.4 per cent. One in five SDG targets is even regressing and needs a complete trend reversal.

Although progress in achieving SDG 5 “Gender Equality” needs to be accelerated in each sub-region, the report highlights noteworthy accomplishments in some member States, such as Cambodia and Pakistan, where investments in midwife training have contributed to a decrease in maternal mortality rates. Similarly, India has seen positive results with a decline in child marriage and adolescent fertility rates. However, one sub-region, North and Central Asia, stands out as needing a complete reversal in trend to eliminate discrimination against women and girls.

A major concern addressed in the report is the substantial data gaps in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly for SDG 5. While data availability for the SDGs has doubled since 2017, there are still insufficient data for 51 out of 169 targets, with SDG 5 being the most impacted, as only 15% of its indicators have sufficient data. Since 2017, there has been almost no progress in the region in the availability of data for the two goals with the most significant data gaps, namely Goal 5 and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

Dashboard of expected achievements



ESCAP is advancing gender equality through two main streams:

- First, through the institutionalization of gender equality in ESCAP's organizational culture, structure and processes. This component applies gender mainstreaming, capacity building, and institutional strengthening through a number of internal policies and tools.
- Second, through the direct and indirect promotion of gender equality in all areas of work - from technical advice to regional cooperation to research. This approach is focused on delivering gender-targeted interventions and results in the Asia-Pacific region.

ESCAP systematically reports on the implementation of its main strategic plan to the annual Commission session, which includes its high-level results on gender equality and women's empowerment. At its seventy-eighth session, the Commission considered the note by the secretariat on the review of the conference structure of the Commission pursuant to resolution 73/1 and decided that the subsidiary structure of the Commission shall consist of nine committees. Each Committee shall meet biennially and, when possible and desirable, have joint plenary sessions between multiple committees to discuss cross-cutting issues, including gender equality (ESCAP/78/34, para 15 c and ESCAP/RES/78/2).



Group of Women with Child in a Village near Katmandu in Nepal © Daniele Zanni

Gender at ESCAP

Institutional policies and practices

Gender Equality Policy

The **Gender Equality Policy (2019-2023)** details ESCAP's commitment to the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women as a precondition for inclusive, equitable and sustainable development and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Gender equality will be realized when women, men, girls and boys fully and freely exercise their fundamental human rights and freedoms, with equitable access to opportunities, the realization of their full potential and equal influence in shaping their societies. The engagement of men as well as women underscores ESCAP's efforts towards this outcome.

In recognition that realizing equality between women and men, girls and boys, requires concerted and resourced attention by both the Commission itself and ESCAP member States, the Policy identifies the scope, objectives, guiding principles, strategic focus and gender architecture required to support member States in achieving gender-related SDG results by providing a gender-responsive institutional and operational framework within ESCAP.

The Policy is accompanied by the ESCAP **Gender Equality Implementation Plan (2019-2023)**, which aims to operationalize the policies and commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women. The plan outlines the responsibility and accountability mechanisms to implement ESCAP's policies and commitments. This is divided into three strategic areas: strengthening the delivery of gender-related SDG results, tracking financial resources for gender equality and strengthening the institutional framework.

ESCAP is currently drafting a new Gender Equality Policy Implementation Plan for the upcoming years.

UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP)

In addition, ESCAP also reports to the **UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP)**. The UN-SWAP is a UN-wide framework that is enhancing accountability and measuring progress towards the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. It includes a set of 17 performance indicators that establish a common understanding of what it means to achieve gender equality and a common method to work towards it.



In 2023, ESCAP has achieved significant milestones by meeting or exceeding all UN SWAP indicators. A notable accomplishment is the attainment of gender parity across all staffing levels, including the D1 level, for the first time.

100 PER CENT

of UN-SWAP 2.0
requirements were met
or exceeded by ESCAP



13 OUT OF 17

UN-SWAP 2.0
performance indicators
were exceeded
by ESCAP in 2023



ESCAP's Comparative SWAP Performance	2020	2021	2022	2023
PI 1: Strategic planning gender-related SDG results	E	E	E	E
PI 2: Reporting on gender-related SDG results	M	E	E	E
PI 3: Programmatic gender-related SDG results not directly captured in the strategic plan	M	N/A	N/A	N/A
PI 4: Evaluation	M	M	M	E
PI 5: Audit	E	E	E	E
PI 6: Policy	E	E	E	E
PI 7: Leadership	E	E	E	E
PI 8: Gender-responsive performance management	E	E	E	E
PI 9: Financial Resource Tracking	M	M	M	M
PI 10: Financial Resource Allocation	A	E	E	E
PI 11: Gender Architecture	M	E	E	E
PI 12: Equal representation of women	A	A	A	M
PI 13: Organisation Culture	M	M	M	M
PI 14: Capacity Assessment	E	E	E	E
PI 15: Capacity Development	M	E	E	E
PI 16: Knowledge and Communication	E	E	E	E
PI 17: Coherence	M	M	E	E

M = meets requirements
 E = exceeds requirements
 A = approaches requirements

Non Applicable
 Approaches

Meets
 Exceeds



ESCAP Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation

This year, ESCAP management commissioned a gender mainstreaming corporate evaluation to be undertaken by an external evaluator. The external evaluator assessed ESCAP's internal performance on gender mainstreaming to provide actionable recommendations for improvement. Five evaluation criteria were considered: impact, effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, and sustainability. The results of the evaluation will be finalized in 2024.

This evaluation aims to provide an impartial and credible body of evidence regarding ESCAP's performance on gender mainstreaming and areas for improvement that will inform or guide the formulation and implementation of the next phase of the ESCAP Gender Policy and Implementation Plan.

Objectives of the Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation

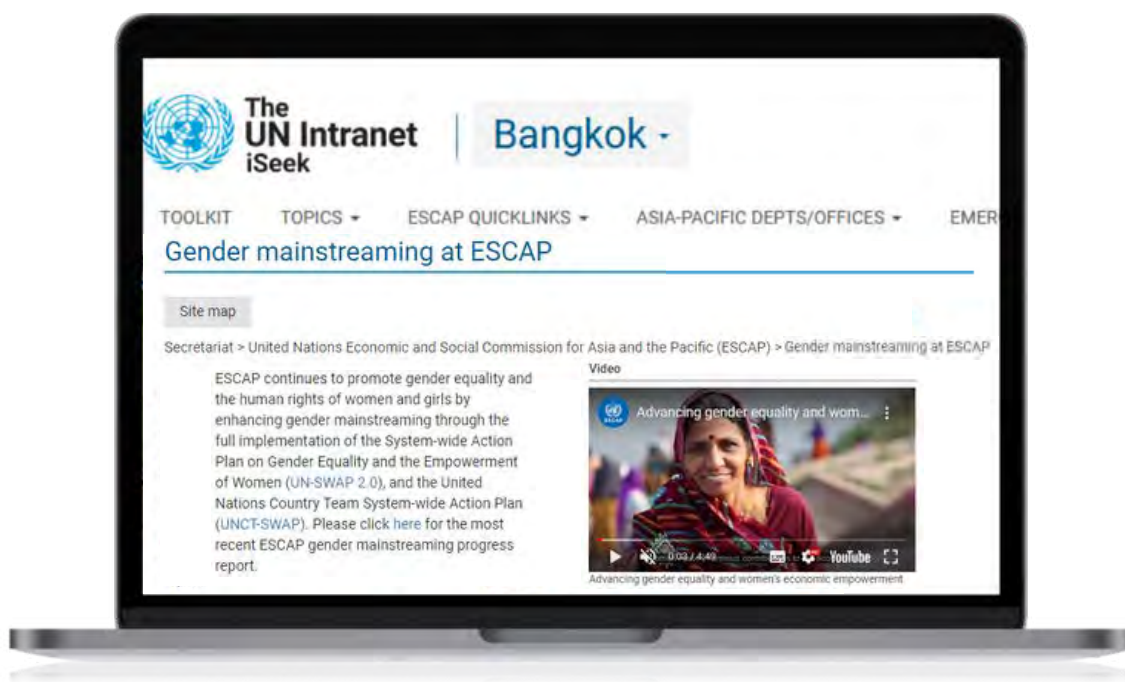
To assess the performance of ESCAP gender mainstreaming in the context of the current gender policy and UN-SWAP using the standard evaluation criteria, including relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact.

To identify and validate lessons learned, good practices and examples and innovations of mainstreaming gender in ESCAP.

To provide action-oriented recommendations for improving the impact and performance of ESCAP gender mainstreaming and guidance for the next phase of the ESCAP gender policy.

The reference group of the evaluation was the Executive Secretary, the director of Strategy and Programme Management Division, the director of the Social Development Division (SDD), the director of the Division of Administration (DA), the Chief of the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section (GESIS) and the Chief of the Evaluation Unit. SPMD's Evaluation Unit provided evaluation management, and SDD and Gender Focal Points provided substantive support.

UN Intranet iSeek



The video, “Advancing gender equality and women's economic empowerment: ESCAP's ongoing mission,” introduces ESCAP's work in each priority area, providing context, emphasizing significance, and providing a brief overview of the numerous programs, initiatives, and measurements ESCAP is implementing alongside national governments and partners to advance sustainable gender equality.

It shows that across Asia and the Pacific, women's ability to participate in the economy is constrained by various factors, including discriminatory laws and policies, entrenched socio-cultural norms, risks to personal security and unequal access to educational and employment opportunities. This economic inequality not only serves as a barrier to women's rights but also reinforces inequalities in other spheres of women's lives. It is, therefore, essential that countries across the region are doing their utmost to support and promote women's economic empowerment.

ESCAP strives to overcome these obstacles and promote women's economic empowerment throughout the region by focusing on three key priority areas of action: promoting women's entrepreneurship, reducing unpaid care and domestic work, and collecting gender data and statistics.

The video is published on iSeek and YouTube and aims to give the audience a visual, powerful and direct experience of women's lives that have been empowered through different means.

ESCAP Asia-Pacific Gender Portal



ESCAP has also been preparing for the launch of the new and improved Asia-Pacific Gender Portal. This portal will be a one-stop shop for qualitative and quantitative analysis of the region's progress on achieving SDG5 on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment.

Its key features include an SDG5 dashboard, with available Asia-Pacific data on its nine targets, updated country profiles broaching a wide range of GEWE topics, a webpage dedicated to the preparation process of the Beijing+30 Review, and various blogs and helpful resources to advance gender equality in the region.



Gender training

In 2023, ESCAP's Director of the Social Development Division and Director of Administration also briefed the Senior Management Group on gender parity. The briefing provided an overview of ESCAP's SWAP performance and the various ways ESCAP promotes gender parity and mainstreaming within the organisation. Topics included information on the Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship Programme, ESCAP's work on Unpaid Care and Domestic Work, Project Support Cost Funding, etc. During this meeting, both directors reiterated ESCAP's commitment to reaching gender parity and the need to nurture an enabling work environment that promotes a diverse, inclusive and respectful workforce as a precondition to the achievement and sustainability of gender parity.

Recognizing the significance of gender knowledge in promoting gender equality and effective gender mainstreaming in Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP developed induction modules on gender equality. These modules aim to provide staff with a comprehensive understanding of the principles, concepts, commitments, and challenges related to gender equality in the region. These modules will be accessible in video format to ESCAP employees and senior managers via the iSeek Page on gender mainstreaming and to the public through the upcoming Asia-Pacific Gender Portal. The modules include the various topics:

Key Conventions: This module provides a detailed exploration of pivotal conventions and international commitments pertaining to gender equality, encompassing significant agreements such as CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the 2030 agenda. Additionally, it sheds light on the Asia-Pacific Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment adopted by ESCAP member States in 2019 following the Beijing+25 review.

ESCAP's Gender Work: The training further includes elaboration on ESCAP's work to advance gender equality. It highlights the main streams of work, including catalyzing women's entrepreneurship; valuing and investing in the care economy; gathering gender statistics and gender mainstreaming within ESCAP.

ESCAP Gender Marker: This module was developed to support the adoption and implementation of the gender marker throughout ESCAP to track extrabudgetary and regular budget resource allocation on gender equality and women's empowerment. It furnishes participants with a detailed understanding of ESCAP's gender marker, offering practical guidance to project managers on its application through concrete examples.

Time-Use Survey (TUS):

This module serves as an insightful introduction to time-use surveys, offering a comprehensive exploration of their benefits and challenges. It delves into the intricacies of data collection tools employed in time-use surveys, showcasing the versatility of methods such as diary-based approaches and stylized retrospective questions.

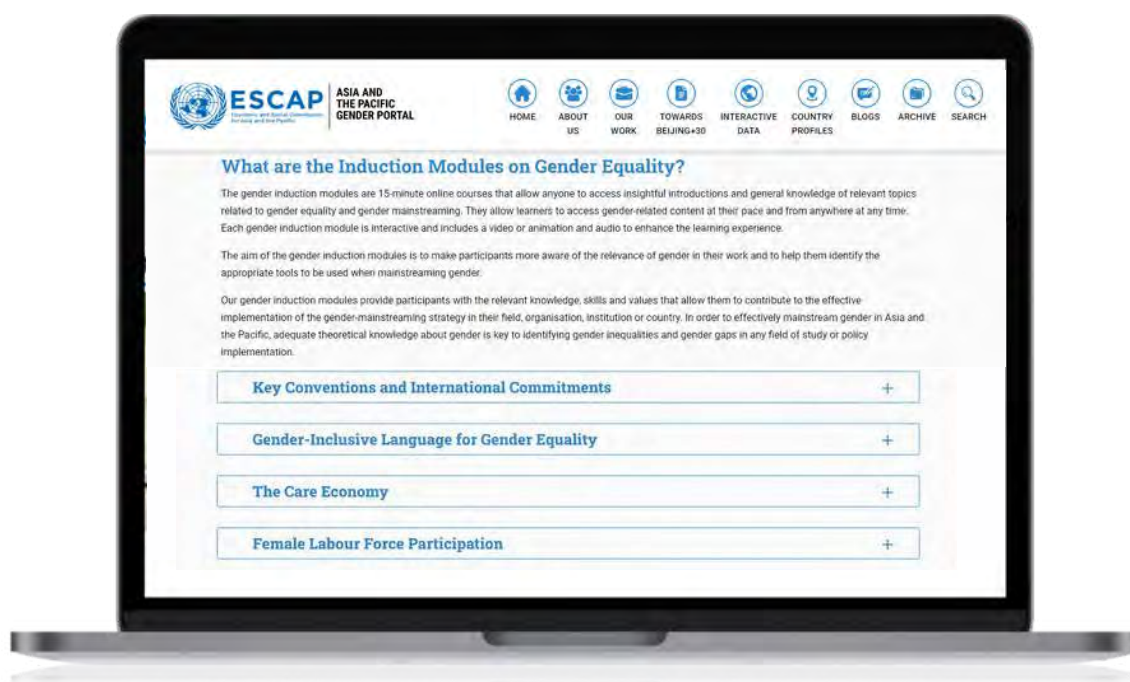
Female Labour Force Participation and its Relevance for Gender Equality:

This module offers a comprehensive overview of Female Labor Force Participation rates in the Asia-Pacific region. It investigates the connections between low women's labour participation, gender bias, and segmentation in both formal and informal sectors, as well as their correlation with persistent inequalities in care responsibilities. The module underscores the advantages of boosting female labour force participation for sustainable economic growth.

Women and the Care Economy: This module highlights the disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women and girls, affecting their social, economic, and political participation, especially during crises. It provides details of ESCAP's expansive analytical and normative work on the care economy.

Gender Discrimination in the Workplace: This module examines the causes and consequences of gender discrimination in the workplace. It concludes with recommendations for legislative measures and policy reform to address the issue. The module aims to empower participants to actively contribute to fostering workplaces that are inclusive, equitable, and free from gender-based discrimination.

Gender-Inclusive Language for Gender Equality: This module addresses the challenge of gender-discriminatory language and offers valuable insights into combating unconscious bias through gender-inclusive language. It provides comprehensive guidance on incorporating gender-inclusive language and emphasizes the importance of using correct pronouns.



Finally, the Gender Focal Point network has been reinforced through the arrival of new focal points, the initiation of mid-year bilateral meetings, the offering of capacity-building and peer learning, and the continuation of a yearly meeting gathering all gender focal points.

Gender tools

What is gender mainstreaming?

The 1997 agreed conclusions of ECOSOC defined gender mainstreaming as: “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.”

Gender Equality Marker

The Executive Secretary launched the ESCAP Gender Marker in November 2019. It is part of a UN system-wide initiative to incorporate gender perspectives into work, and a financial tracking mechanism for gender equality and women’s empowerment. In recognition of the multiplier effects of gender equality on achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development, it became a systematic requirement under the UN-System-Wide Action Plan for the Implementation of the Chief Executives Board. It is mandated by ECOSOC and the General Assembly resolutions on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR).

Project managers are required to review projects together with gender focal points to ensure that a project is gender-responsive and that the appropriate code of the Gender Marker is applied in the project. PME focal points further work with gender focal points to identify entry points for gender mainstreaming in the work of the respective Divisions/Offices. Throughout the project cycle, PME focal points can help ensure that the appropriate Gender Marker code is reflected and that the project continues to adhere to gender responsiveness as reflected in the Gender Marker. The PME focal point can also examine the implementation of the project, including ways to strengthen the gender dimension.

The ESCAP Gender Marker is based on the 4-point UNDG scale (0 – 1 – 2a – 2b) and was rolled out in two phases. The first phase (2019-2020) applied the Gender Marker for extrabudgetary projects and Development Account projects, while the second phase (2021-2022) addressed the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (Section 23) and the regular budget work programme (Section 19). As of 1 January 2021, the ESCAP Gender Equality Marker is applied to all projects across ESCAP without exception. An implementation plan and guidance note for staff were prepared to support the implementation of the Gender Marker.

On ESCAP's iSeek page on gender mainstreaming, launched in 2021, supportive background documents are provided, such as the ESCAP Gender Marker Guidance Note, an accompanying Quick Guide, a presentation and induction module on ESCAP's Gender Marker, and a memorandum on the implementation of the ESCAP Gender Equality Marker, issued by the Executive Secretary in July 2021.

Gender-inclusive language

What is gender-inclusive language?

Using **gender-inclusive language** means speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, social gender or gender identity, and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes. Given the key role of language in shaping cultural and social attitudes, using gender-inclusive language is a powerful way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias.

Some best practices:

- Use non-discriminatory language. When referring to or addressing specific individuals, use forms of address and pronouns consistent with their gender identity. Avoid gender-biased expressions or expressions that reinforce gender stereotypes.
- Make gender visible when it is relevant to communication.
- Do not make gender visible when it is not relevant for communication. Use gender-neutral pronouns where possible. Consider using plural pronouns and adjectives as well as the pronoun one where possible.



How-to one-pagers

ESCAP's iSeek page on gender mainstreaming, launched in 2021, also provides how-to one-pagers on gender issues ESCAP staff has raised. From gender questions in surveys, addressing panellists, gender parity in panels and eliminating workplace discrimination against the LGBTQI+ community, these one-pagers are living documents meant to support ESCAP staff in applying a gender lens in their day-to-day work and respecting diversity in the workplace.

How to ASK GENDER QUESTIONS IN SURVEYS

Gender and **sex** can be considered differently. Sex, usually, refers to the classification of a person as male or female. Most often, sex is assigned by a medical professional at birth and is based on a visual assessment. However, the term gender, which is most often meaning gender identity, is a person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender.

There are many ways to define gender apart from man and woman. This could include an internal sense of being a man, woman, both, neither, or anywhere along the spectrum. Knowing the gender of the survey respondents is considered to be critical since gender affects how a person sees and is seen by the world.

What gender do you identify yourself with?

- Woman
- Man
- Other/Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

Non-binary individuals might prefer a better alternative for themselves than "other". Trans men and trans women can also find the response options above limiting if they want to report their gender of male or female but also their trans status. Another possibility is therefore to add a **free text** question where the respondents themselves get to formulate their answer to the question freely. However, this is usually more complicated to compile and analyse.

ESCAP
Regional Development Network

HOW TO ADDRESS PANELLISTS

Using **gender-inclusive language** means speaking in a way that does not discriminate against any particular sex or gender identity, and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes. Gender-inclusive language is a powerful way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias, stereotypes, and social attitudes. First and foremost, use non-discriminatory language when addressing specific panellists or individuals through using forms of address and pronouns that conform with the person's gender identity.

To find out the appropriate **pronouns** of United Nations staff members, you may check the intranet or the staff directory. If the staff member appears as "Ms.", that is the form of address that should be used for her, and female pronouns are appropriate. Alternatively, if the panellist is not a United Nations staff member, and if the situation permits, you may ask the person you are addressing what pronoun and form of address are appropriate and should be used for them. Keep in mind that there are more pronouns than just she/her and he/him. Pronouns like they/them are commonly used to reflect non-binary identities, and also combinations (e.g. she/they) are being used.

USE NON-DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE

AVOID ASSUMING EVERY PERSON'S GENDER

ASK THE INDIVIDUAL IF YOU ARE NOT SURE WHAT PRONOUN IS APPROPRIATE

USE EQUAL FORMS OF ADDRESS

PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH TITLES

There should be **consistency** in the way panellists are referred to. If one of them is addressed by their name, last name, courtesy title, or profession, the other one should be as well.

ESCAP
Regional Development Network

How to AVOID PURELY MALE PANELS

Several UN offices have adopted a new policy to ensure the equal representation of women and LGBTQI+ persons in events. The **Parity Panel Pledge** is an initiative of the International Gender Champions, which requests staff to ensure panels are as gender-diverse as possible.

Make the composition of your panel or committee diverse

Write to the organizers and propose women panellists to avoid a "manel"

Promote equal representation, including other intersecting backgrounds

Ensure gender and diversity mainstreaming in all panels, events, and projects

All-male panels, or "manels", do not represent the diversity of the world we live in. They deprive us of a more holistic, innovative, and insightful perspective, and thus limit the understanding of a given topic. When only bringing in men's perspectives to a discussion, conclusions may likely be incomplete or even incorrect.

There is no shortage of qualified women and LGBTQI+ persons, and yet are they often still underrepresented in public discussions, forums, and panels. Their perspectives and voices are needed at all events and stages across the world. Panels also need to be diverse and inclusive regarding other **intersecting backgrounds**, such as age, ethnicity, origin, religion, training, profession etc.

ESCAP
Regional Development Network

LGBTQI+ LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS, QUEER, INTERSEX ETC.

All people have an equal right to live free from violence, persecution, discrimination, and stigma. **More than a third** of the world's countries criminalize LGBTQI+ individuals and those perceived to be LGBTQI+ by putting millions of people at risk of blackmail, arrest and imprisonment. Failure to uphold the **human rights of LGBTQI+ individuals** and protect them against abuses such as violence and discriminatory laws and practices, constitute serious violations of international human rights law and have a far-reaching impact on society.

Respect, promote and uphold the rights of LGBTQI+ persons, including colleagues

Adopt policies for trans inclusion, including recognizing the gender identity of trans staff

Extend LGBTQI+ inclusive workplace policies and practices, and ensure the safety and security of LGBTQI+ workers and their representatives

Ensure there is no discrimination in the recruitment, employment, working conditions, benefits, respect for privacy, or treatment of harassment

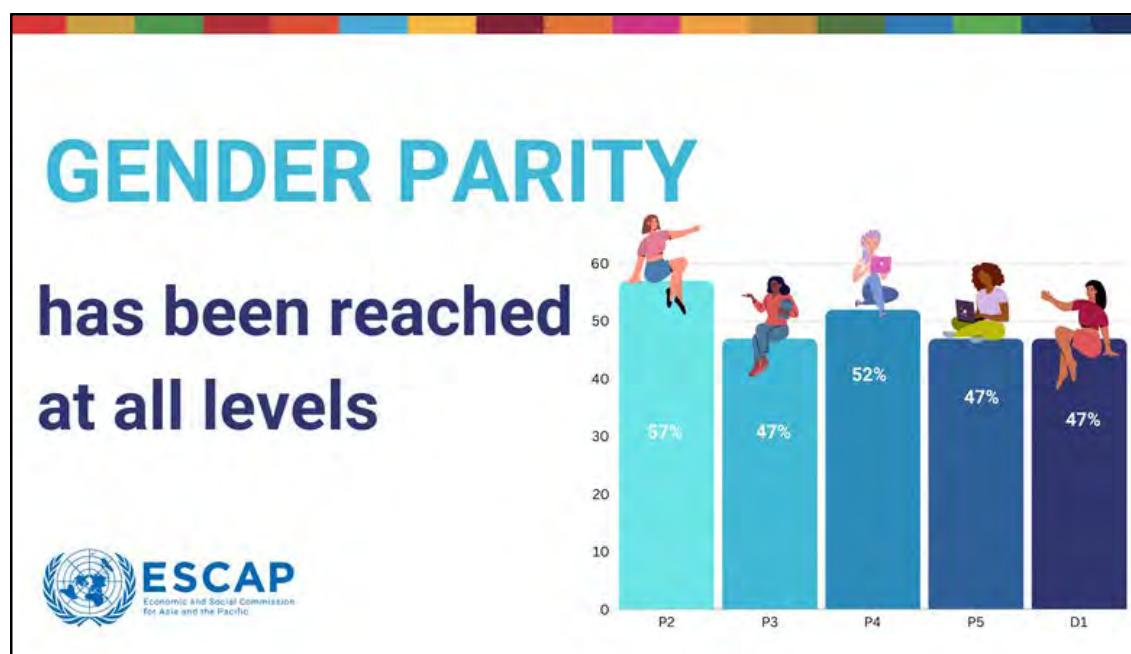
Provide a positive environment so that LGBTQI+ staff can work with dignity and without stigma

UN staff who want to better understand their potential impact on LGBTQI+ persons could begin by gaining an understanding of the situation of LGBTQI+ persons in countries where they operate. In addition, UN offices should review their non-discrimination policies to see whether LGBTQI+ individuals are specifically included.

The United Nations and the OHCHR have called on States to recognize that LGBTQI+ persons are among those particularly vulnerable in society and urged States to design and implement comprehensive procedures to assess the type, prevalence, trends, and patterns of violence and discrimination against LGBTQI+ persons. At the same time, the UN must also ensure and protect the rights of LGBTQI+ employees by eliminating workplace discrimination, making sure business operations do not contribute to discrimination, and work with business partners to address discriminatory practices up and down the supply chain.

ESCAP
Regional Development Network

Gender Parity at ESCAP



ESCAP achieved gender parity across all staffing levels, including D1, for the first time in 2023. The equal representation of women has been promoted through the implementation of ESCAP's gender parity strategy and plan, which is first targeted at gender parity at professional levels and then to gender parity at general service levels, in accordance with the Secretary-General's **UN System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity**. ESCAP's progress in increasing gender parity between 2020 and 2022, challenges and lessons learnt, and future action plans for the next two years are detailed in the **2020-2024 ESCAP's Implementation Plan for the Achievement of Gender Parity**.

Since 2020, ESCAP has focused on the following three priority areas: 1) transforming our organizational culture, 2) capacity-building and awareness raising, and 3) creating a data-driven culture. Through this, a senior management scorecard has been integrated into the Director's work plans and Directors are provided quarterly target infographic updates by grade level.

ESCAP's efforts and achievement of gender parity were notably highlighted as a good practice in recruitment, retention, progression and talent management in the UN Women's booklet entitled **"How can we reach gender parity at the United Nations by 2028?"**. This booklet celebrates significant milestones across all United Nations entities on gender parity, such as updated policies and practices to attract, recruit, and promote women, and improved work environments to support greater inclusion. ESCAP, in particular, was recognized for its effective implementation of gender strategies and action plans in terms of data-driven and inclusive recruitment strategy. Indeed, the booklet noted ESCAP's investment in talent-sourcing activities and in communications efforts to appeal to diverse audiences, including LinkedIn and other social media outreach, especially for traditionally male-dominated roles. Furthermore, the booklet acknowledged ESCAP's leverage of its data-driven culture to empower managers by providing relevant data, enabling them to make informed decisions in the selection of candidates. Finally, it highlighted the collaboration of the HR team with Heads of Entities in disseminating gender statistics, providing them with an overview of the impact that selection decisions have on ESCAP's representation of both genders.

Moving forward, ESCAP intends to continue its work to increase levels of gender parity at all levels. Targets include increasing male participation in discussions about gender, encouraging the sharing of personal stories and insights, educating employees on how to detect and report misconduct, facilitating career coaching, mentoring, and other effective staff development opportunities, and expanding initiatives for increasing female recruitment. To continue maintaining equal representation of women, ESCAP will continue to invest in talent-sourcing activities, including LinkedIn and other social media outreach, especially for roles that are traditionally male-dominated, as well as to continue to align ESCAP's outreach and inreach activities with the global Secretariat's to achieve gender parity. Plans have been introduced to encourage career progression amongst female staff members through the facilitation of career coaching, mentoring and other staff development opportunities. Targets to increase capacity raising by introducing training on how to detect and report misconduct have also been implemented.



Office of The Focal Point for Women in the UN System

Booklet

How can we reach gender parity at the UN by 2028?

Collection of good practices to mark five years of the Secretary-General System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity



Gender Focal Points

ESCAP continues to support its system of Gender Focal Points (GFPs), which are focal points in each Sub-programme that are responsible for coordinating and advocating for the substantive mainstreaming of gender within their thematic areas.

Bilateral Meetings

This year, ESCAP's Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section conducted a tour de table with each Gender Focal Point and their alternate to inform them of several opportunities and prospects to facilitate and enhance their work as GFP. During these bilateral meetings, GFPs were informed of upcoming gender training modules, financing opportunities, and prospects for the increased visibility of GFP and peer learning. It was also the occasion to collect information about their gender-related work and their feedback and ideas before the annual meeting.

Seventeen catch-up sessions were held from June to September and allowed for valuable feedback on the gender mainstreaming report, the annual meeting, the capacity development plan for GFPs and gender parity. These inputs shaped the programme of the annual meeting, ensuring that their experience, knowledge and opinion could be shared to the GFP network.

Annual Meeting

ESCAP's Annual Meeting for Gender Focal Points was convened on 31 August 2023, both on-site and on the Microsoft Teams platform, to share knowledge, experiences, and promising practices on effective gender mainstreaming. This year, the GFP meeting was structured in three sections. to share knowledge, experiences, and promising practices on effective gender mainstreaming.

In the first section after the opening remarks, the Social Development Division, the Strategic Programme Management Division and the Human Resources Management Section provided updates on ESCAP's commitment to Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEWE), the implementation of the System-Wide Action Plan on GEWE (SWAP 2.0), the upcoming Corporate Gender Evaluation, and Gender Parity at ESCAP. Dr. Srinivas Tata, Director of ESCAP's Social Development Division, notably emphasized ESCAP's position as a high performer under the SWAP 2.0, meeting or exceeding 94% of the Performance Indicators (PIs), yet cautioned against complacency. Thus, after further elaborating on ESCAP's 2022 progress on the SWAP, presenters outlined ESCAP's plans for exceeding the remaining PIs and improving its GEWE strategy, such as the ESCAP gender evaluation and gender parity efforts.

The second section featured presentations by gender focal points and project managers implementing gender-responsive projects. Three different departments in ESCAP were represented, starting with the work of the Trade, Investment & Innovation Division on integrating gender considerations into the field of foreign direct investment. TIID's presentation was followed by the Section on Sustainable Development and Countries in Special Situations, which introduced how it incorporates gender data and analysis into its country reports on LDC graduation assessment and structural transformation. Lastly, the Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia presented its various gender mainstreaming initiatives, such as its projects on E-Commerce Capacity-Building for Women-led MSMEs in South Asia, Women in the Transport Sector, Migrant Women in India, and Risk Resilience in the Maldives.

The third section provided a space for Gender Focal Points to discuss the opportunities and challenges to gender mainstreaming at ESCAP and to identify synergies for peer learning, future collaboration, and focused meetings. As such, the Transport Division provided their experience on gender mainstreaming in a traditionally male-dominated field and emphasized the importance of interacting with member States to initiate sex-disaggregated data collection and help them develop gender-sensitive transport policies. CSAM also shared some of their “lessons learned” on gender mainstreaming, notably the importance of seed funding, leveraging UNCTs, and collaborating with other divisions, subregional offices, regional institutions and potentially other UN agencies on cross-sector issues.

ANNUAL MEETING OF ESCAP GENDER FOCAL POINTS

09:00 - 12:00 hrs (UTC +7), 31 August 2023



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Interviews with ESCAP's Gender Champions



The untapped potential of Foreign Direct Investment to advance gender equality

Interview with Ms. Heather Taylor-Strauss,
Economic Affairs Officer,
Trade, Investment and Innovation Division

Integrating gender in all areas of sustainable development is key to advancing gender equality and empowering women. Indeed, women and girls in Asia and the Pacific continue to face significant barriers that restrict their economic participation and leadership. Currently, only 50 per cent of women of working age are economically active, with 64% of them employed in informal and vulnerable jobs. Enabling women's economic empowerment is thus crucial to achieving SDG5 and addressing the challenges women and girls face in the Asia-Pacific region. However, despite this precondition, the intersectionality of gender and investment remains overlooked.

Heather Taylor-Strauss, Economic Affairs Officer at ESCAP's Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, is spearheading the integration of a gender perspective into the realm of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). In **a recent blog post** published on ESCAP's website, Heather sheds light on the profound impact that FDI can have on gender equality. In this interview, Heather shares her journey of mainstreaming gender into FDI and how it has shaped her professional and personal outlook.

The journey began about four to five years ago when the division's gender focal point, Alexey Kravchenko, initiated the commissioning of a consultancy paper on incorporating gender into their divisional work. This paper provided valuable recommendations on integrating a gender perspective into projects and research analysis across different sections of the division. Inspired by the discussions generated by these suggestions, Heather started identifying opportunities to further mainstream gender into the division's work. When Heather assumed responsibility for FDI work in 2020, she shifted the focus from primarily conducting research to engaging in technical assistance work, allowing her to communicate directly with entrepreneurs and foreign investors. This direct line of contact provided an avenue to advocate for the inclusion of gender considerations in their investment decisions. Heather drafted a proposal that aligned with the work of the Canadian-funded ESCAP project on Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship (CWE), garnering significant attention and positioning ESCAP as a prominent player in the Asia-Pacific FDI field through capacity-building and technical assistance.

Since September 2022, TIID has collaborated with Bangladesh and Fiji's national investment promotion agencies (IPAs) to encourage foreign investors to actively support gender equality within their respective countries. Recognising the pivotal role of IPAs as intermediaries between governments, entrepreneurs, and investors, TIID engaged in extensive consultations with IPAs to better understand their working methods and the extent to which they integrate gender considerations. They also sought insights from various stakeholders, including governments, academics, civil society, foreign investors, and Chambers of Commerce, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the gender landscape and the initiatives being undertaken to promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment. Based on these consultations, TIID compiled a list of initiatives that could effectively mainstream gender considerations into IPAs' investment promotion and facilitation activities. An action plan with a carefully narrowed-down set of ten initiatives was proposed to each country, with the expectation that they would agree to implement at least three of them. However, both Fiji and Bangladesh demonstrated remarkable commitment by expressing a desire to implement eight of the ten initiatives. This unexpected success prompted TIID to provide support throughout the implementation process and assist in setting timelines for the initiatives.

Heather expressed her enthusiasm for working with Fiji's IPA, sharing how TIID identified challenges and opportunities to improve gender representation and participation in investment missions. Indeed, among the ten to fifteen entrepreneurs who travelled to other countries in the Pacific, Asia and America to meet with potential investors during the last four years of investment missions, only one local woman entrepreneur participated. Not only was the female participant intimidated by a room full of men, but she also lacked the training to effectively pitch her product. Furthermore, financial constraints prevent many women entrepreneurs from going on these missions, as they have to fund themselves to participate. Although a grant programme is underway to address this issue, the grants will only be available from 2024 onwards. Recognising the potential of ESCAP's CWE programme to remedy the issue, Heather collaborated with the Women's Entrepreneurship Council to secure funding for at least two women entrepreneurs for the next six missions. A comprehensive training programme is also being developed to equip these women with the necessary skills to pitch their products effectively.



Heather provided concrete examples of how FDI can nurture women's economic participation and empowerment. For example, one foreign-owned chemical company in Bangladesh provides gender-specific protective gear to ensure it fits both its female and male employees. Another foreign-owned subsidiary in Bangladesh has established an internal forum specifically addressing gender-related concerns raised by female staff. Additionally, a foreign subsidiary operating in Bangladesh offers gender-specific fitness courses to promote staff well-being. Sharing best practices, Heather highlighted that while business processing and outsourcing firms in Fiji provide transportation for female staff from their homes to their workplaces, they lack childcare facilities, resulting in resignations due to the inability to care for children while at work. In contrast, textile industry factories in Bangladesh provide daycare centres for women. Another Bangladeshi company organises a summer training programme for high school female students, introducing them to STEM courses and encouraging their continued involvement in the field. In another instance, a female entrepreneur in Fiji, with the help of Investment Fiji, has been able to secure contracts with major hotels across Fiji to supply them with her line of sustainable and organic goat milk soap. Investment Fiji is further supporting her in exporting her product to hotels and stores in the Asia-Pacific region. These contracts can enable her to grow her business and also employ additional women to help her meet the demand for her product. These examples highlight the various initiatives that can be promoted to encourage investors to support women and girls.



FDI AND GENDER SPOTLIGHT



CHEVRON

Ensuring a skilled workforce through trainings for women

Women and girls face **educational barriers** to access high-skill, high-wage jobs, particularly in the STEM sector.

Recognizing this, Chevron in partnership with Asian University for Women in Bangladesh **sponsored a summer school for young women in STEM.**

71 female high school students benefitted from focused courses in Math, Science and computer coding.

Courses were held for **5 weeks with top experts** from Stanford University and MIT.

Funding programmes that allow women and girls easier access to education, particularly in traditionally male-dominated fields. This is exactly what put Chevron on our FDI and Gender Spotlight. Bangladesh is proud to have foreign investors like Chevron as gender equality champions!

If your company has similar examples of programmes and policies focused on gender equality or women's economic empowerment, write to us to let us know at: (email address)



FDI AND GENDER SPOTLIGHT



ARLA FOODS

Ensuring a healthy workforce by ensuring a safe environment for women

Arla Foods in Bangladesh offers its employees **free exercise** classes for a mentally and physically fit workforce.

But **female** employees were often found to be **missing** from these classes.

To address this, Arla Foods now offers **separate free classes** only for its female employees to ensure their health and wellbeing.

Arla Foods now offers gym classes 4 days a week - **2 classes are for women only** and 4 are mixed!

Targeted action to ensure that the needs of women workers and employees are met is exactly what put Arla Foods on our FDI and Gender Spotlight. Bangladesh is proud to have foreign investors like Arla Foods as gender equality champions!

If your company has similar examples of programmes and policies focused on gender equality or women's economic empowerment, write to us to let us know at: (email address)



FDI AND GENDER SPOTLIGHT



NOVO NORDISK

Ensuring the voices of women are heard

Novo Nordisk recognizes the importance of listening to and taking note of the **unique challenges women face** in the workplace.

In Bangladesh, it regularly **hosts internal forums** targeted at female staff to discuss **problems related to gender!**

Novo Nordisk has also put in place **diversity targets** to promote the inclusion of women workers.

This also includes promoting more women in senior management. It has a **40% quota reserved for women** in senior management positions.

Putting systems in place that ensure that the voices of women workers and employees are heard is exactly what put Novo Nordisk on our FDI and Gender Spotlight. Bangladesh is proud to have foreign investors like Novo Nordisk as gender equality champions!

If your company has similar examples of programmes and policies focused on gender equality or women's economic empowerment, write to us to let us know at: (email address)

While IPAs have shown keen interest in integrating gender considerations into their work, Heather acknowledged challenges in ensuring women's economic empowerment. For instance, when organising investment forums to showcase opportunities, finding women panellists, especially female leaders in IPAs, can be difficult.

Reflecting on her journey, Heather noted the progressive impact of integrating gender into her work, transforming her mild enthusiasm into an area that brings her immense joy. This commitment spills over into all her projects, regardless of their direct relevance to gender issues. Beyond her professional life, Heather emphasized how integrating gender has had a profound impact on her overall outlook. She has become a passionate advocate for gender issues and aims to do more to support female entrepreneurs in her daily life.

Heather Taylor-Strauss's innovative efforts to integrate a gender perspective into FDI demonstrate the untapped potential of Foreign Direct Investment in advancing gender equality. With a focus on engaging IPAs, fostering women's economic participation, and sharing best practices, Heather's work contributes to the empowerment of women and girls in the Asia-Pacific region. As a gender champion, she exemplifies ESCAP's commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable society.



Heather Taylor-Strauss is an Economic Affairs Officer in the Trade, Investment and Innovation Division of the UNESCAP. She leads UNESCAP's technical assistance and policy advisory work on foreign direct investment (FDI). She primarily works with investment promotion agencies in the region to train them and support them in promoting and facilitating FDI that promotes gender equality, bridges digital divides and addresses climate change. She is currently running projects in these areas in over 10 ESCAP member States, as well as with the ASEAN Secretariat.

During her time at UNESCAP, Heather also worked in the Macroeconomic Policy team, undertaking research and analytical work on mobilizing financing for the SDGs, and she has also acted as a special assistant in the Office of the Executive Secretary.

Prior to joining UNESCAP, she worked at the Asian Development Bank and held researcher positions at Goethe University, Trinity College, and the Sadar Patel Institute for Economic and Social Research. At these institutions, she led four global research projects and authored several publications on the contribution of FDI to sustainable development. She holds a PhD with distinguished honours from Goethe University (Germany).



Harnessing Information and Communication Technology for Women's Empowerment

Interview with Mr. Ko Kiyong,
Director of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for
Information and Communication Technology for
Development (APCICT)

Recognising the impact of the digital gender gap on widening economic and social inequalities, the year's Session of the Commission on the Status of Women delved into the role of innovation, technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. According to the **UN Women's Gender Snapshot 2022 report**, women's exclusion from the digital world has shaved \$1 trillion from the gross domestic product of low- and middle-income countries in the last decade—a loss that will grow to \$1.5 trillion by 2025 without action. A gender-responsive approach to innovation, technology, and digital education can foster women's economic empowerment and create more inclusive and sustainable societies.

Ko Kiyong, Director of APCICT Incheon, is dedicated to enhancing women entrepreneurs' ICT capacities and creating an enabling environment for ICT-empowered women entrepreneurship. Launched in 2016, the **Women ICT Frontier Initiative (WIFI)** programme aims to promote women's entrepreneurship in Asia and the Pacific. By focusing on building the ICT capabilities of women entrepreneurs, WIFI aims to enhance the productivity, growth, and sustainability of their enterprises. This strategic approach enables women entrepreneurs to actively contribute to community development, as well as the local and national economy. In this interview, Kiyong shares more about the programme, its reach, and its prospects.

Kiyong emphasized the transformative power of digital skills for women entrepreneurs. Through ICT tools, women entrepreneurs gain the necessary capabilities to start and manage their businesses effectively. Automation of tasks, improved efficiency, and data analysis enable sound decision-making, paving the way for the success and growth of their enterprises. Moreover, these digital skills empower women entrepreneurs to access not only local markets but also tap into the global market, unlocking new opportunities and expanding their reach.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on the critical role of digital capabilities for business survival. Women entrepreneurs who integrate digital tools enhance their resilience during crises, ensuring continuity and adaptability. However, it is equally crucial to address the digital gender gap, where women have limited access to and utilisation of digital technologies. By bridging this gap, we can empower women to participate fully in society, unleash their untapped potential, and drive innovation, economic growth, and societal change.

To achieve meaningful change, an enabling environment for ICT-empowered women entrepreneurs must be established. Government policies and programs play a pivotal role in nurturing and supporting women entrepreneurs. By crafting policies that ensure equal access to critical resources such as finance, education, training, and technology, governments can break down barriers and create a level playing field. Additionally, regulations that reduce gender bias in business and entrepreneurship contribute to fostering an inclusive ecosystem. Social support programs can also alleviate women from some domestic responsibilities, enabling their active engagement in economic activities.

By providing training and capacity-building opportunities, WIFI equips women entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge necessary for success. Simultaneously, WIFI supports policymakers in creating an enabling environment for ICT-empowered women entrepreneurs, fostering sustainable economic growth and community development. APCICT's recent training and workshops have yielded remarkable outcomes, reaching a total of 21 countries in the region. In Thailand, WIFI activities have successfully reached various beneficiaries, including women entrepreneurs, students, youth, older individuals, and persons with disabilities. The WIFI programme focuses not only on on-site training but also provides e-learning courses in the local language, promoting accessibility and lifelong learning. Collaborations with governmental agencies and educational institutions have further amplified the impact of WIFI, ensuring its comprehensive reach across diverse sectors of society.

APCICT has been collaborating with ESCAP's Social Development Division and Trade, Investment and Innovation Division in the implementation of a Canada-funded 5-year project on "Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship." The programme aims to address key barriers faced by women entrepreneurs in six countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Nepal, Samoa, and Viet Nam) through interventions in policy development and regulatory environment, access to finance and credit, and access to ICT and capacity-building. In Fiji, Nepal and Viet Nam, training activities focus on assisting women entrepreneurs in using e-commerce platforms and digital marketing tools in their businesses. In Bangladesh, Cambodia and Samoa, training focuses on increasing digital literacy to use ICT tools in business planning and management, particularly in financial management and bookkeeping.





By revamping WIFI to be a comprehensive and holistic capacity-building program, APCICT aims to empower women entrepreneurs in the digital age. With the rapid transformation of the technology landscape, increased connectivity, affordability of digital devices, and technological advancements, women entrepreneurs now have unprecedented opportunities. E-commerce platforms, social media, digital marketing tools, and mobile banking innovations have opened doors to global markets and enhanced access to finance. Through the new WIFI programme, APCICT will focus on practical training modules such as e-commerce and digital marketing, financial management, e-business planning, data analytics, and trust and security in digital technologies. Kiyong expects the new programme to be fully developed by the end of the year and shared his excitement about beginning to roll it out to member States starting next year.

As an advocate for gender equality in the ICT field, Ko Kiyong shares his personal interest in participating in the global effort to achieve gender equality. Recognising the underrepresentation of women in ICT careers and leadership roles, he highlights the importance of challenging stereotypes, improving education in STEM subjects, and fostering inclusive workplace cultures. By increasing diversity and inclusivity in the tech industry, we can harness untapped potential, foster innovation, and promote gender equality.

Kiyoung's leadership in promoting ICT-enabled women's empowerment with initiatives like the WIFI exemplifies APCICT's commitment to gender equality and inclusive development. By building women entrepreneurs' digital skills and creating an enabling environment, APCICT is unlocking the untapped potential of women in the digital age. Through collaborations with governmental agencies, educational institutions, and stakeholders, APCICT is paving the way for women entrepreneurs to thrive in local and global markets. Kiyoung's dedication to integrating gender into ICT considerations and his efforts to challenge norms and foster inclusive workplace cultures are instrumental in driving inclusive and sustainable development and fostering innovation.



As the Director and Head of APCICT, Mr. Ko has led the Centre for more than five years to provide practical and impactful support to ESCAP member States in their human and institutional ICT capacity. The Centre's main target audience groups are policy makers/civil servants and vulnerable populations, such as women, older persons, and persons with disabilities. In particular, to address gender mainstreaming issues, the Centre developed a programme called 'Women ICT Frontier Initiative (WIFI)' for women's economic empowerment through ICT skills. Mr. Ko holds a Ph.D. in Technology Policy from Yonsei University and a Master's degree in Management Science from Stanford University.



Mainstreaming gender in statistics for evidence-based policymaking and assessing progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals

Interview with Ms. Sharita Serrao,
Statistician, Statistics Division

While the Sustainable Development Goals have a stand-alone Goal 5 to promote gender equality, achieving sustainable and inclusive development hinges on integrating gender across several other goals and in various aspects of development. One critical aspect of this comprehensive approach relies upon mainstreaming gender into official statistics, a pivotal tool for informing policymakers and evaluating progress towards Agenda 2030. However, the availability of quality and coherent data for gender indicators and statistics remains largely insufficient across world regions, including Asia and the Pacific.

Although efforts are made to collect and compile sex-disaggregated data, the latter fails to capture gender-specific issues such as violence against women, women's reproductive health, as well as issues with underlying gender implications, such as unpaid work or the use of unclean fuels, which disproportionately affect women. Therefore, selecting topics for data collection, capturing diverse population groups and their specific issues/challenges, providing relevant training to national staff, and producing gender indicators are essential to overcome this data gap and accelerate progress towards gender equality and inclusive development.

Sharita Serrao, Statistician at ESCAP's Statistics Division, is leading efforts to bring gender statistics to the forefront of the Statistics Division's work. Committed gender focal point with a substantial background in gender research, she has played a significant role in coordinating the development of a **regional core set of gender indicators** and spearheaded work on **gender-policy data integration** in the context of women's economic empowerment, **gender mainstreaming in environment and climate change statistics, gender data communications** and the development of **e-learning on gender data use, communication, and analysis**. She believes gender data and statistics can only be improved through the systematic integration of gender considerations across all statistical domains and processes. In this interview, Sharita shares activities she has partaken in to mainstream gender in official statistics.

Sharita began her interview by sharing her unwavering interest in gender mainstreaming. While she has undertaken diverse roles and engaged in various areas of population and social statistics within the Statistics Division, such as disability statistics, informal sector statistics, migration statistics, and CRVS, gender statistics has consistently captured her enduring interest and dedication.

Sharita expressed her particular interest in advancing gender mainstreaming in environment and climate change statistics. As such, she partnered with UN Women, UNEP and IUCN to identify and document regional priorities and needs, continually updating them to align with emerging policy needs and the latest statistical developments. Indeed, women and men face differing vulnerabilities and impacts and have unique adaptive capacities related to climate change, disasters and the use of natural resources. However, the links between gender and environment remain insufficiently understood, and gaps in data availability impede progress assessment. Therefore, their **research paper** provided an overview of initiatives aimed at measuring the gender-environment nexus, identified priorities and assessed existing data and capacity gaps in the Asia-Pacific region. As a result, it proposed a Gender-Environment Indicator Set for Asia and the Pacific, encompassing indicators from the SDG framework and beyond, and capturing issues of particular relevance for the gender-environment nexus in the region. A **second research paper** co-authored by Sharita with UN Women documents recent initiatives in this area of work and provides an updated set of indicators for the region. In her efforts to further promote the gender-environment linkages and related measurement, Sharita also co-authored with UN Women a chapter on mainstreaming gender in environment goals across the SDG Monitoring Framework available in the **book Interlinkages between the Sustainable Development Goals (Edward Elgar Publishing)**.

Sharita highlighted that, given the limited dedicated funding for gender statistics within ESCAP, collaboration with external partners and experts has been indispensable for sustained engagement in this field. These collaborative efforts have proven useful for keeping current with the most recent advancements, actively participating in discussions aimed at enhancing statistical methodologies to yield improved gender data, and providing inputs at the technical level.

Sharita discussed the many benefits of participating in global and regional gender data networks and inter-agency groups. Her engagement extends to several of these networks. She had previously coordinated the inter-agency Working Group on Gender Statistics as part of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism, serves as the ESCAP focal point for the global Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS) reporting to the United Nations Statistical Commission, and is actively engaged in extending the **Gender Data Network** to the Asia-Pacific region in partnership with ECA, Data2X, Paris21 and Open Data Watch. As a member of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics and related advisory groups reporting to the United Nations Statistical Commission, Sharita has been involved in implementing the **Global Survey of National Gender Statistics Programs** in Asia-Pacific both in 2012 and 2022 as a foundation for building regional gender statistics work. Sharita highlighted how these partnerships and collaborative actions have not only fostered connections, peer learning and collective improvements but have also strengthened individual skills and confidence.

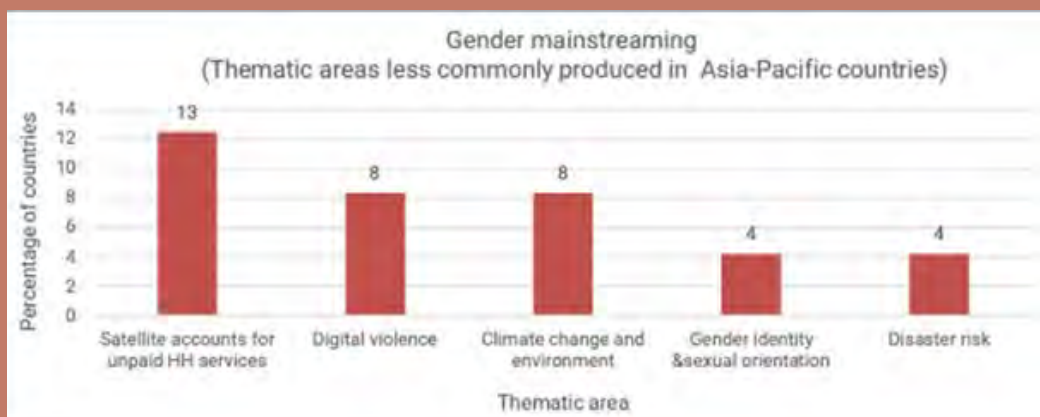
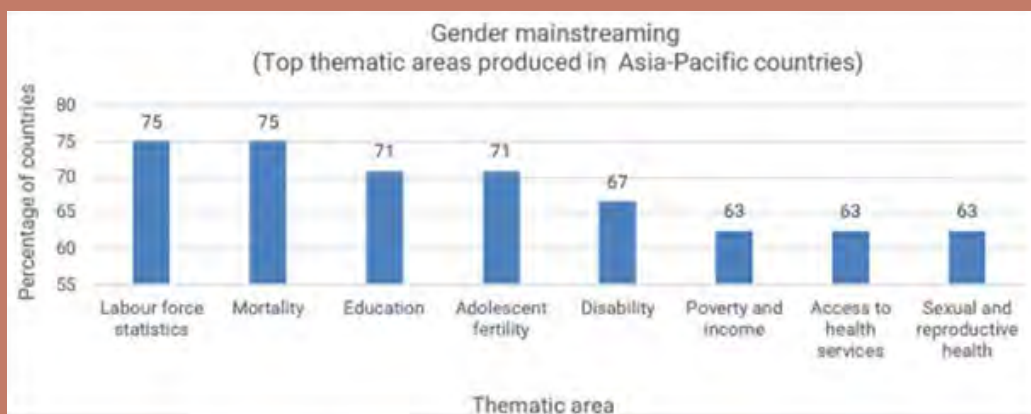


Overview of the status of Gender Statistics in Asia and the Pacific

The 2022 Global Survey of Gender Statistics aggregated responses from 24 countries in the region to understand their progress in producing and using gender statistics.

Less than 50%

of respondent countries have a gender statistics entity within the National Statistics Office, though the majority do have a gender equality law/regulation and a mandate to conduct specialized surveys such as on Gender-based Violence, Time-use, Labour Force etc.



Most reported challenges and areas for improvement in the context of gender statistics



The lack of dedicated funding



The lack of a dedicated entity



The need to improve gender indicators



Insufficient collection, compilation, and analysis of sex-disaggregated data



The need to improve the dissemination of gender statistics

Sharita has also provided significant inputs to the development of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) and UN Women’s **gender statistics training modules** and has taken the lead in the production of **eLearning materials** currently hosted on SIAP’s platform. She also engaged with the **Gender Equity Unit** at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health to develop a **Coursera** (Module 4) on integrating gender perspectives in data communication for public health professionals.

Additionally, Sharita emphasized the importance of advocacy to enhance gender data production and the use of gender data for policy-making. The Statistics Division notably established the Asia-Pacific Stats Café series, offering countries a platform to exchange knowledge and experiences related to national statistical systems. In this context, Sharita organized Stats Cafés on two key topics: **“Mainstreaming Gender in Official Statistics”** and **“Harnessing Time-use Data for Evidence-based Policy.”** In the context of expanding the Gender Data Network in the Asia-Pacific region, she also organized and presented in the recent Stats Café titled **“Reinvigorating the SDGs through Gender and Inclusive Data: Harnessing the Power of Networks and Data.”** Furthermore, Sharita contributed her expertise as a panellist in this year’s UN World Data Forum, notably during the event focused on **“Moving Gender Data Up the Value Chain: From Production to Impact.”** This event recognized the critical role of gender data in understanding the lived experiences of women and girls, informing policy development, and monitoring progress over time. It also spotlighted promising solutions and good practices from across national statistical systems to advance gender data up the data value chain, ensuring no one is left behind.


Sharita shared her personal insights as a woman working in the field of statistics, traditionally a male-dominated domain, akin to many STEM fields. She acknowledged the persistently low representation of women at senior levels within the statistical field. Nonetheless, she expressed her gratitude for the unique opportunities she has had to work under the guidance and mentorship of female leaders in statistics. These influential women played a pivotal role in nurturing her interest in official statistics, with a particular focus on gender statistics. She specifically highlighted her appreciation for her first supervisor at the ESCAP Statistics Division, Ms. Haishan Fu, currently Chief Statistician of the World Bank and Director of the World Bank’s Development Data Group, as well as Margarita Guerrero, previously director of the ESCAP Statistics Division, who imparted valuable knowledge and expertise in gender statistics.

Moreover, Sharita is working under the guidance of the current Director of the ESCAP Statistics Division, Ms Rachael Beaven, to coordinate and support a network for female heads of national statistical offices/chief statisticians in the Asia-Pacific region. This network offers a safe space for female chief statisticians to provide and receive peer support and aims to create a conducive environment that empowers and encourages female leaders within national statistical offices.


Gender statistics is not necessarily a discrete field; rather, it cuts across other fields of statistics to reflect the realities and differences in the lives of women and men. Good data is data that integrates a gender perspective.”

As a final comment, Sharita reiterated the need to integrate gender considerations in all stages of data production, compilation, use and analysis. To effectively mainstream gender in statistics, she emphasized that this mandate must come from the highest echelons of organizations, ensuring widespread adoption across all organizational levels. Furthermore, she recommended that comprehensive sensitization and training initiatives be implemented across all tiers of staff, reinforcing the understanding that gender integration is an intrinsic and fundamental aspect of their responsibilities. To raise awareness of the crucial importance of mainstreaming gender into statistics, Sharita has written several insightful blogs that she warmly invites us to explore.


**Beyond buzzwords:
Actioning gender
mainstreaming in
official statistics**



**Harnessing time-use data
for gender equality policies
and beyond**



**Progressing women's economic empowerment: enhancing
user-producer engagement for policy responsive data and
effective data-driven policies**



Sharita's dedication to mainstreaming gender into statistics exemplifies her commitment to fostering inclusive development and gender equality. By actively engaging in various initiatives, advocating for comprehensive gender data, and leading collaborative efforts, she strives to advance the understanding and integration of gender considerations in the statistical field. Her contributions are pivotal in creating an inclusive and empowering environment that unlocks the potential of gender-responsive statistics, ensuring that voices, experiences and needs of all population groups are duly represented and considered. Sharita's work underscores the significance of gender data in shaping informed policies.

Sharita Serrao is currently working as a Statistician at the Population and Social Statistics Section of ESCAP's Statistics Division. She has over 18 years of experience in international development, having started her career with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, now UN Women) before joining the ESCAP Statistics Division. At ESCAP, she has been leading the work programme on gender data and statistics. In addition, she has worked on statistical development and capacity building, covering several domains of social statistics, including disability, informal sector, and migration statistics, as well as civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS). Sharita has undertaken initiatives to strengthen national statistical systems, including using data for policy, as well as on developing e-learning on using gender data for analysis, communications, and policy making. Sharita holds a Master of Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Economics, Mathematics and Political Science, and is currently pursuing an advanced degree in Gender and Development Studies.



Efforts behind the scenes: How did the gender marker come into shape at ESCAP?

Interview with Ms. Zeynep Orhun Girard
Chief of Section, Programme Management
Strategy and Programme Management Division

Mainstreaming gender issues into the work of ESCAP is crucial for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the region. Gender equality has significant multiplier effects on achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development. Integrating a gender perspective throughout the lifecycle of all ESCAP initiatives, from design to implementation, monitoring and evaluation, can help dismantle systemic barriers that hinder women's full participation, leadership, and decision-making power. Devising tools to monitor the gender responsiveness of projects is essential for ensuring that the gender dimensions of ESCAP's work are substantively analysed and addressed.

Zeynep Orhun Girard, Chief of ESCAP's Capacity Development and Partnerships Section, has greatly contributed to mainstreaming the ESCAP Gender Equality Maker across all deliverables. Recognising the cross-cutting nature of gender in ESCAP's core working areas, the Strategy and Programme Management Division (SPMD) successfully integrated the Gender Equality Marker ratings into their project design and programme monitoring tools. These tools notably aggregate information on funding sources, SWAP indicators, and results in a consolidated manner to respond to the needs of decision-makers. In this interview, Zeynep shares the SPMD's process of mainstreaming the Gender Marker across ESCAP's work, highlighting the organisation's commitment to promoting gender equality and empowering women in the region.

According to Zeynep, gender equality and women's empowerment have become one of the most mature frameworks at ESCAP in terms of cross-cutting themes and results. However, achieving this level of maturity required years of dedicated effort. Indeed, the Gender Marker was initially applied to capacity development projects and focused on long- and medium-term projects. Over time, it began to be used to mark short-term projects, regular activities, and outputs. Building on the successful implementation of gender marking for capacity development projects, ESCAP piloted the Gender Equality Marker methodology for other deliverables, such as publications and meetings, to assess the contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment.



It is only further down the line that the Marker was integrated into a data collection tool. Indeed, Zeynep explains that after having decided to upgrade the ESCAP programme monitoring tool to reflect current and growing demands, an opportunity arose to develop a new tool with additional features to track programme progress on cross-cutting issues, including gender equality, disability inclusion, and countries with special needs. Thus, the programmatic dashboard, launched in 2020, incorporated the Gender Equality Marker, as a test at first, to evaluate how ESCAP colleagues perceived their work's contribution to gender outcomes. This inclusion of the Gender Marker sparked conversations among colleagues, triggering discussions on how to assess such contributions.

"This is the added value of the gender marker because it really changed the focus of the conversation. Hopefully, this gendered lens will be integrated into our daily life and work."

After a successful year-long trial period, Zeynep was encouraged to see colleagues asking questions related to gender in their work. Furthermore, she was pleased to see that the decision to apply the Gender Equality Marker to all projects across ESCAP without exception from 1 January 2021 was overwhelmingly well received. Initiating the conversation earlier had facilitated a widespread understanding that gender is a concern for everyone and all projects.

ESCAP Executive Secretary Memorandum on the Gender Equality Marker

On July 2021, ESCAP Executive Secretary, Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, issued a **Memorandum on the implementation of the ESCAP Gender Equality Marker**, a financial tracking mechanism on gender equality and women's empowerment.

In this memorandum, the Executive Secretary informed of the use of the programmatic dashboard to report on the marking of projects and deliverables and announced that starting 1 September 2021, all ESCAP projects should at least contribute to gender equality/women's empowerment in a limited way and have a minimum rating of 'GEM1'.

A project proposal with a rating of 'GEM0' ('Project is not expected to contribute to gender equality/women's empowerment') must be accompanied by a strong justification in writing.

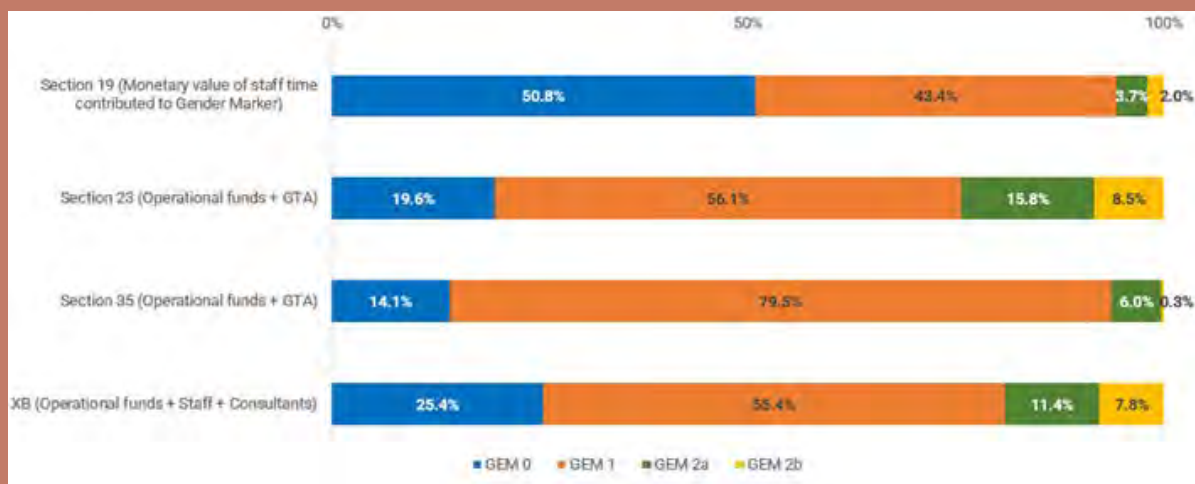
Zeynep shared how mainstreaming gender into her work has made a meaningful impact on her professional life. Reflecting on her statistics background, she recognized the transition from mere sex-disaggregated data to the creation of gender statistics with differentiated indicators for men and women, measuring variables that reflect women's realities and needs. Looking at the journey of implementing the Gender Marker across all ESCAP initiatives, she expressed satisfaction in witnessing a similar transition from gender mentions to gender mainstreaming.

Implementing the gender marker is only one step towards achieving gender outcomes through ESCAP's work. Moving forward, Zeynep emphasized the critical importance of striving to incorporate an even stronger gender lens across ESCAP and throughout the project and programme cycle.

The programmatic dashboard as an analytics data tool for ESCAP's SWAP 2.0 Reports

The programmatic dashboard is a crucial data tool to analyze the gender-responsiveness of projects and deliverables for **ESCAP's SWAP 2.0 reports**.

Performance Indicator 9 of the SWAP 2.0, Financial Resource Tracking, requires a financial resource tracking mechanism in use to quantify the disbursement of funds that promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The Gender Equality Marker, which serves this purpose and is now applied to all projects across ESCAP, is captured by the Programme Monitoring Tool. It is used for financial tracking of budgets, planning and capacity-building.

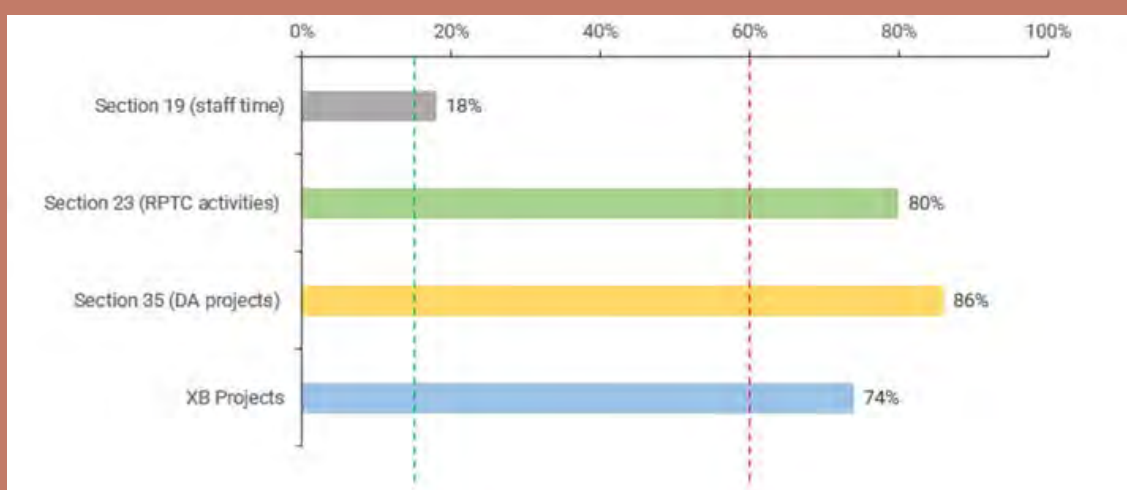


PI 9 - Financial Resource Tracking (2022)



Performance Indicator 10, Financial Resource Allocation, requires a financial benchmark for resource allocation for gender equality and women’s empowerment mandate. The Programme Monitoring Tool records the GEM code of all XB projects, DA projects, RPTC activities and Section 19 deliverables. For capacity development projects, the total budget is factored in if they are rated GEM1 and above. Staff time is used as a proxy to calculate the financial resources allocated to Section 19 deliverables assessed GEM1 and above.

In 2022, the total contribution of posts to deliverables/activities assessed GEM1 and above was \$9,249,985, representing 19% of the total regular budget post resources, which exceeded the ESCAP benchmark for 2022. The total budgeted amount for technical cooperation projects was \$28,325,794. The percentage of budget allocated to activities/projects rated GEM1 and above is, on average, 72%, also exceeding ESCAP’s 2022 benchmark.



PI 10 - Financial Resource Allocation (2022)

Zeynep Orhun Girard is an experienced professional with nearly two decades dedicated to statistics and programmemanagement. Her expertise spans the development of methodologies and standards, focusing on household income, expenditure, labour, employment, and economic statistics. Ms. Orhun Girard has collaborated with national statistical offices across Europe, Asia, and Africa, demonstrating solid data analysis skills and providing on-the-job training. She is known for her problem-solving abilities, project management skills, and proficiency in organizing expert group meetings and intergovernmental forums. Ms. Orhun Girard holds a Master in Economics from the Toulouse School of Economics and a Master in Development Management from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Gender in ESCAP communications

Gender in ESCAP news

In 2023, ESCAP published several news pieces related to gender equality and women's empowerment. From press releases to news announcements and media advisories, ESCAP has made significant efforts to inform the broader audience of all its gender-related activities and findings.

The screenshot shows the ESCAP website's news section. At the top, there are logos for ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) and the Decade of Action (2016-2025). Navigation links include ABOUT, COMMISSION, 2030 AGENDA, OUR WORK, KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS, and MORE. A search icon is also present. Below the navigation is a 'More' button and a 'Filter' button. The main heading is 'News'. Five news items are listed, each with a date, a title, a short description, and a photo. The items are: 1) 20 Dec 2023: 'Childcare incubation programme launched to empower Fijian women entrepreneurs in the care economy' with a photo of a group of people. 2) 15 Dec 2023: 'Partnership initiated to enhance climate resilience of micro and small women-led businesses in Bangladesh' with a photo of a woman in a pink headscarf. 3) 17 Aug 2023: 'UN forum paves the way for a regional vision of feminist finance' with a photo of a large audience at a forum. 4) 09 Aug 2023: 'UN forum drives action to close the gender-finance gap in Asia and the Pacific' with a photo of a woman speaking at a podium. 5) 28 Jul 2023: 'ASEAN forum emphasizes valuing and investing in the care economy as key to advancing gender equality' with a photo of a group of people on a stage.

20 Dec 2023 **Childcare incubation programme launched to empower Fijian women entrepreneurs in the care economy**
News

15 Dec 2023 **Partnership initiated to enhance climate resilience of micro and small women-led businesses in Bangladesh**
News

17 Aug 2023 **UN forum paves the way for a regional vision of feminist finance**
Organised by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Feminist Finance Forum closed in Bangkok today with a rallying call to accelerate efforts and...
News

09 Aug 2023 **UN forum drives action to close the gender-finance gap in Asia and the Pacific**
Some 70 per cent of women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) globally lack adequate access to financial services, perpetuating gender inequality with significant consequences for...
Media Advisory

28 Jul 2023 **ASEAN forum emphasizes valuing and investing in the care economy as key to advancing gender equality**
Women and girls in Asia and the Pacific spend a disproportionate amount of time on unpaid care and domestic work – four times more than men. This gendered division of labour limits their...
News

05
Apr
2023

New tech challenge and training mobilises women innovators in Cambodia

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has partnered with the Cambodia University of Technology and Science (CamTech), Khmer Enterprise (KE) and Techo...

[News](#)



Photo credit: Cambodia University of Technology and Science

08
Mar
2023

Digital gender divide prevents the Asia-Pacific region from benefiting from untapped talent in women and girls - UN

A regional commemoration on International Women's Day hosted by the UN in Bangkok today called upon countries to reaffirm their shared commitment to "leaving no one offline" and accelerating efforts...

[Press Release](#)



Photo Credit: UNESCO

03
Mar
2023

Promoting and upscaling digital solutions for enhancing women enterprise growth and resilience

Through the Women Enterprise Recovery Fund, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has supported innovative business models and digital solutions that...

[News](#)



Photo credit: International Women's Federation of Commerce and Industry, Mongolia

09
Feb
2023

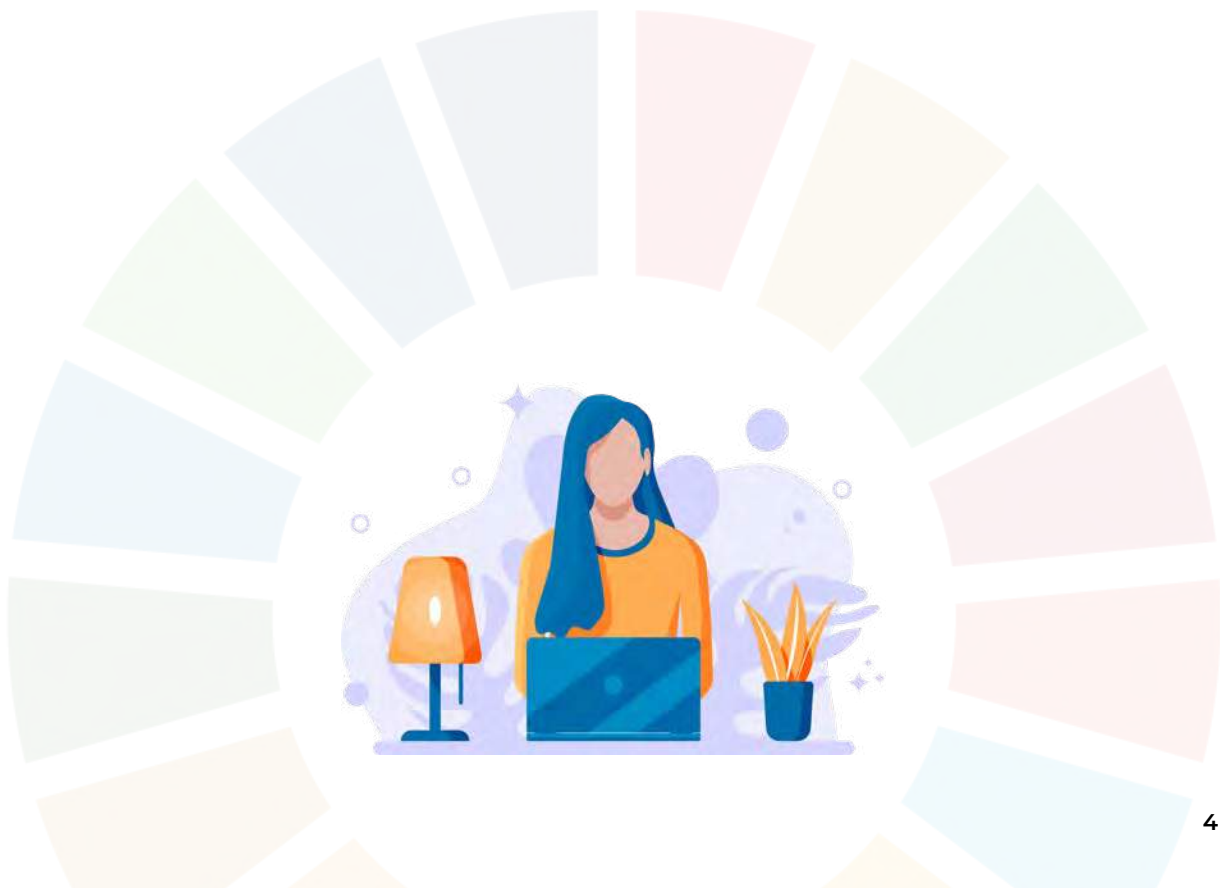
Innovate, educate, empower: Regional consultation explores policy solutions to advance gender equality in the digital age

Women and girls continue to be held back by persistent discrimination and outdated stereotypes, yet the digital revolution has substantial potential to generate great socio-economic benefits and...

[News](#)



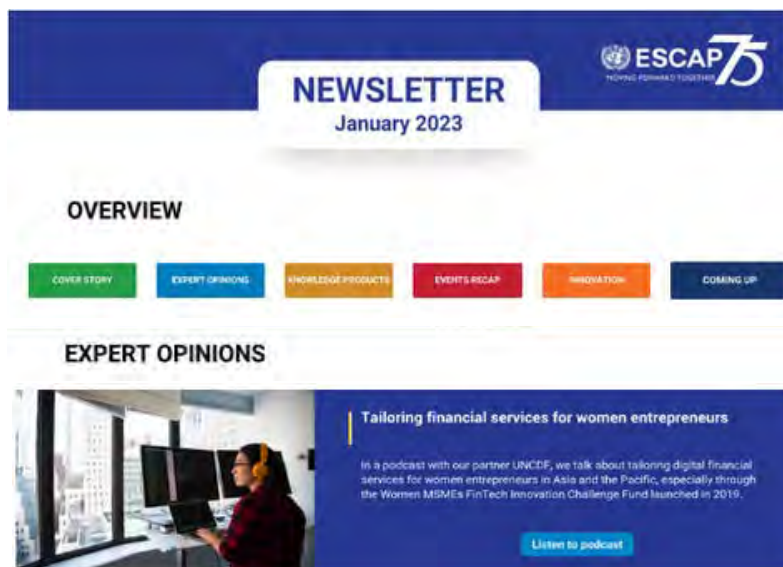
ESCAP/Calc Perini



Gender in ESCAP newsletters

In 2023, gender made multiple appearances in ESCAP's biweekly newsletter. As a window to share valuable and relevant information, the newsletter helps ESCAP's efforts to increase the visibility of gender equality for a wider audience.

The year's **first newsletter** showcased a podcast presenting ESCAP's Women MSMEs FinTech Innovation Challenge Fund, implemented in partnership with UNCDF. It talked about tailoring financial services for women entrepreneurs in Asia and the Pacific.



In February 2023, the Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on the priority theme for the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67), jointly convened by ESCAP and UN Women, **made ESCAP's Newsletter**.



EXPERT OPINIONS

Advancing gender equality through foreign direct investment


Speeding up progress and meeting gender equality targets requires explicitly incorporating gender initiatives into areas where they have traditionally been overlooked. One of these areas is foreign direct investment (FDI) and the role that it can play in host countries in improving gender equality.

[Read blog](#)



This newsletter further highlighted an ESCAP blog on the nexus between gender equality and foreign direct investment. Read more about this topic in Ms. Taylor-Strauss' interview (page 25).

In March 2023, the regional commemoration on International Women's Day calling upon countries to reaffirm their shared commitment to "leaving no one offline" and accelerating efforts towards building a more secure, accessible, inclusive and equitable digital world for women and girls was also showcased in **ESCAP's Newsletter**, along with an op-ed on harnessing the digital age to empower women and girls.



NEWSLETTER

20 March 2023

OVERVIEW


- [COVER STORY](#)
- [EXPERT OPINIONS](#)
- [KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS](#)
- [EVENTS RECAP](#)
- [INNOVATION](#)
- [COMING UP](#)

COVER STORY

Digital gender divide prevents region from benefiting from untapped talent of women and girls

Only 54 per cent of women in the Asia-Pacific region use the Internet, compared with 59 per cent of men. Although some women and girls own digital devices, they often live in contexts where they do not have the autonomy to use them and, thus, are unable to leverage digital tools to benefit themselves. Speakers at the regional commemoration on International Women's Day (8 March) urged countries to "leave no one offline" and accelerate efforts towards building a more secure, accessible, inclusive and equitable digital world for women and girls.

[Read more](#)




EXPERT OPINIONS

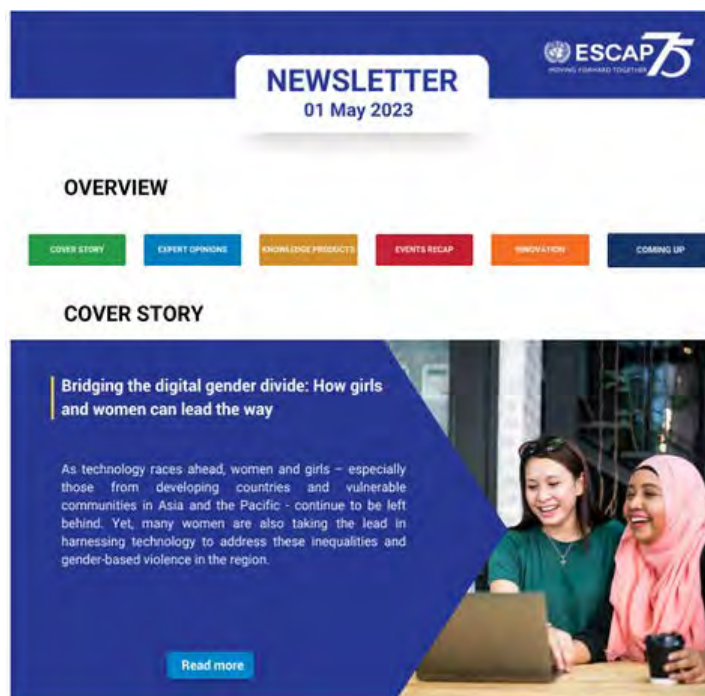
Harnessing the digital age to empower women and girls

When and where women and girls are discouraged from studying and working in STEM fields, we let them down. And we have left a whole generation of women and girls behind. We need the talents and voices of women and girls brought to the boardrooms and coding rooms. Today many innovations in AI, medicine, entertainment, transportation, work and other fields treat men as the standard and ignore women's physical and social differences – to the detriment of half of the world's population.

[Read op-ed](#)



ESCAP further emphasized gender equality and the necessity to bridge the digital gender divide in its **May 2023 Newsletter**. Linking to an **ESCAP news article**, it underlined how women can take the lead in harnessing technology to address inequalities and gender-based violence in the region.



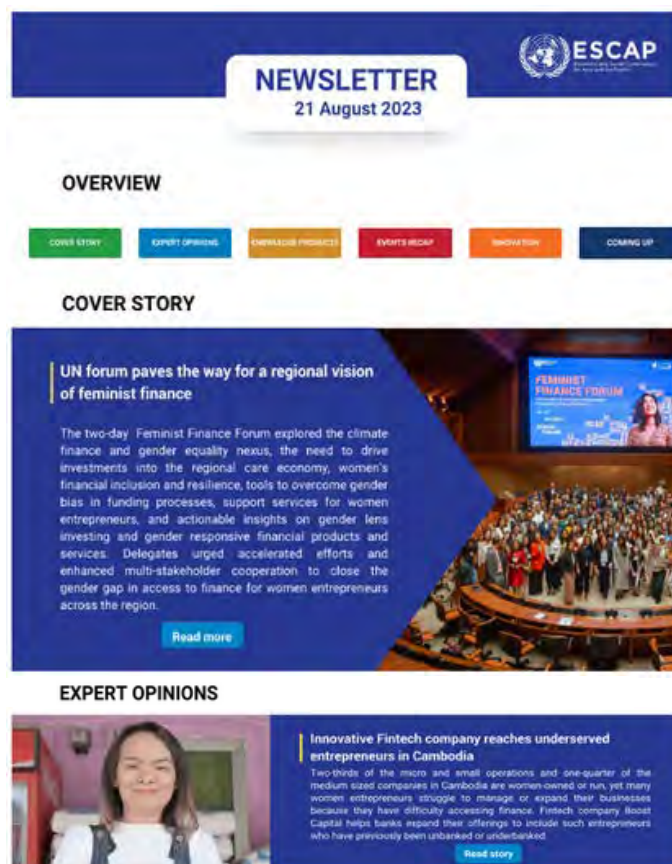
In June 2023, the ESCAP **newsletter** included a news story on an inclusive business that has participated in empowering women micro-entrepreneurs in Bangladesh's beauty industry.



The **July newsletter** highlighted other ESCAP expert opinions by including a blog on advancing gender equality for sustainable infrastructure development and a news story on how a Cambodian social enterprise is working to tackle the challenges women-owned MSMEs face in understanding and accessing finance.



In August 2023, ESCAP’s **newsletter** showcased the two-day Feminist Finance Forum organized by ESCAP and the Government of Canada to accelerate efforts and enhance multistakeholder cooperation to close this gender gap in access to finance for entrepreneurs across the region. The newsletter further highlighted a news story about how a Fintech company expanded its offerings to reach women-owned MSMEs.



To mark the first-ever International Day of Care and Support, on October 29, ESCAP published two expert opinions on the care economy, as highlighted in the early **November newsletter**.

NEWSLETTER
6 November 2023

EXPERT OPINIONS

'CARE'-FULLY designed policies increasing progress towards gender equality

Imagine you are a woman residing in a rural community. Your daily existence is a relentless juggling act, balancing meagre paid work with a multitude of domestic responsibilities. In the Philippines, like other countries in the region, women bear a significant care burden, dedicating up to 11 hours daily. A new ESCAP blog elaborates on some 'care-full' initiatives undertaken by local governments, which have empowered women by alleviating time burdens.

[Read blog](#)

Unpaid care and domestic work: The silent backbone of Asia and the Pacific

Countless mothers, wives and daughters across the region on average spend up to 11 hours a day on paid and unpaid care work – more than 4 times more than men. Their love and dedication, only visible and valued within the confines of the family walls, are critical to human life and societal well-being. However, the unequal distribution of care work has far-reaching consequences for women.

[Read blog](#)

The second **November newsletter** underscored two gender-related blogs and one news story, gender mainstreaming being more than ever at the forefront of ESCAP's communications.

NEWSLETTER
20 November 2023

EXPERT OPINIONS

Cambodian fish farming entrepreneur challenges gender barriers to grow her business and community

Women, especially in agriculture, face investment barriers due to perceived risk and lack of collateral. Penny Lim's thriving fish business defies gender bias in Cambodian agriculture. Support from Chamroeun Microfinance & Good Return aided her success. ESCAP's Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship Program empowers women entrepreneurs, fostering inclusive business practices.

[Read blog](#)

Innovative gender bond series uplifts rural women to drive climate action in Asia

Rural Asian women are pivotal in agriculture and the management of key natural resources, yet they often face barriers due to gender bias. ESCAP and the UN Capital Development Fund have partnered with Impact Investment Exchange (IIX) to offer the Women's Livelihood Bond Series, aiding rural women's access to finance, impacting more than 1.3 million women across Asia and Africa. The partnership and its innovative financing model also propels SDG progress and helps tackle climate change.

[Read story](#)

We Owe it to Aleta

In striving for the 2030 Agenda, gender equality and health are pivotal. Yet, women like Aleta face barriers to accessing reproductive health and equality. COVID-19 reversed gender progress, escalating violence, and impeding health access. Aleta's tragic story epitomizes these inequalities, her lack of access to prenatal care which emphasizes urgent needs for social protection, healthcare investments, and equitable work redistribution.

[Read blog](#)

Finally, the **December newsletter** presented a blog on the climate-care nexus in the context of COP28 and ten years after Typhoon Haiyan, as well as a news story on rural women's entrepreneurship and access to finance.



EXPERT OPINIONS



Weathering the storm: Navigating the climate-care nexus in the Philippines

In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan devastated Maria's community. Like many women in the Philippines, Maria had to juggle the responsibilities of rebuilding a home, providing for her children, and ensuring their survival. A new ESCAP blog highlights how Haiyan's aftermath exposed the vulnerabilities of caregivers to climate change, yet the Philippines has emerged as a pioneer, embarking on a journey to address the intricacies of climate and care.

[Read blog](#)

A woman entrepreneur's journey to financial inclusion and agribusiness success in rural Cambodia

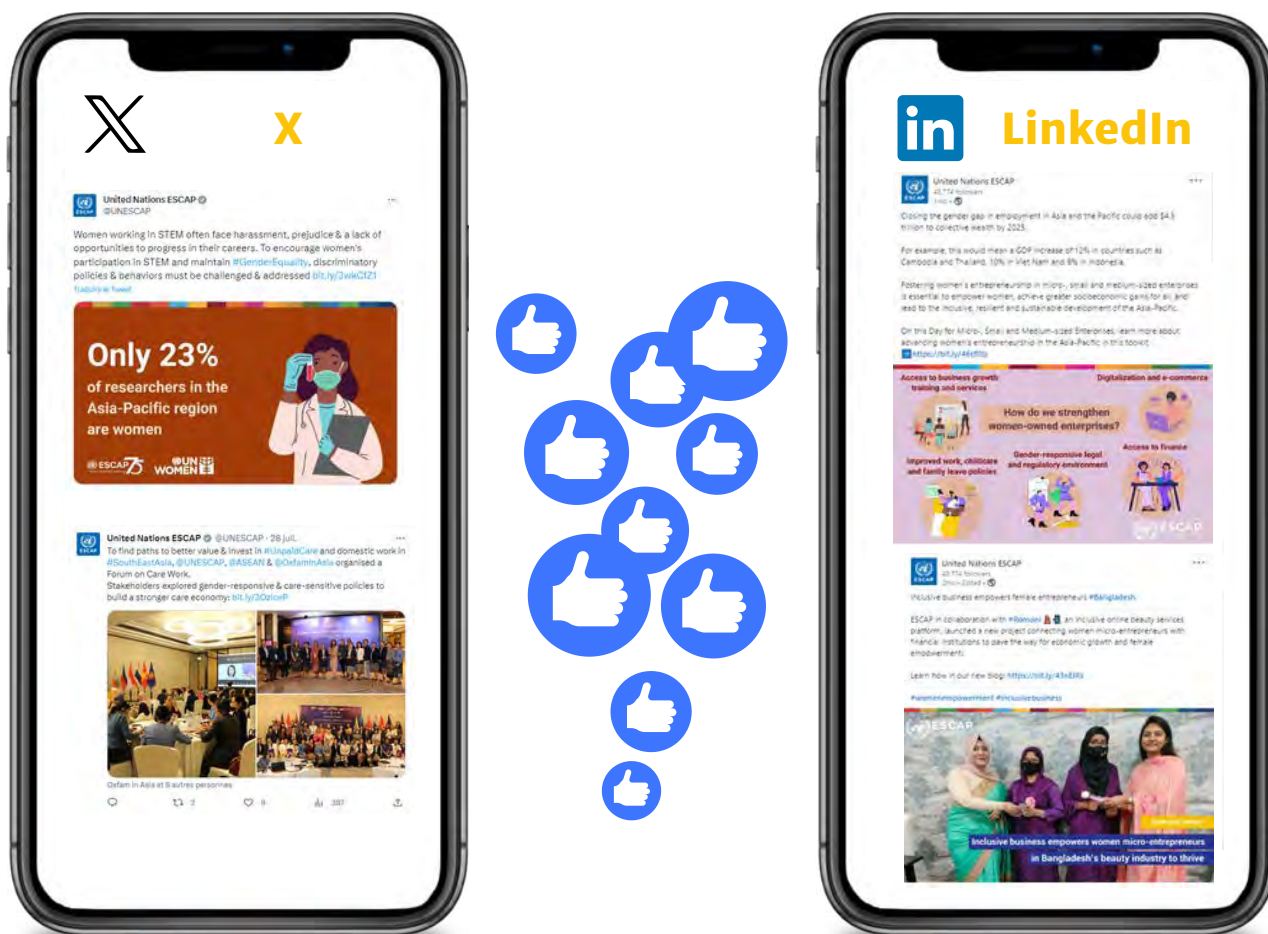
In emerging economies across Asia and the Pacific, many women - especially in rural areas - are not able to access finance due to gender discriminatory norms and practices. Despite these disparities, there is a growing drive among women entrepreneurs across the region to expand their businesses and claim an equal stake in the economy. 48-year-old Sarom Meas from Kampong Thom Province in Cambodia embodies this drive.

[Read story](#)





Gender in ESCAP Social Media



Social media has proved to be a powerful vehicle for bringing women’s rights issues to the attention of a wider public, galvanising action on the streets of cities around the world and encouraging policymakers to step up commitments to gender equality. In 2023, ESCAP consistently promoted and advocated for gender equality through its social media platforms (Twitter/X, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram), notably for **International Women’s Day 2023** and the **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**. For more details, please refer to the “Gender in Social Media 2023” annexe.

This year, ESCAP has prepared its regular engagement in international observances in 2024, mainstreaming gender into crucial topics and bringing visibility to gender equality and women empowerment. Such observances include, for instance, the International Day of Education, the International Day of Women and Girls in STEM, the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, the International Day of Families, MSMEs Day, etc.

Gender mainstreaming across ESCAP

ESCAP works to ensure that gender equality is addressed holistically in order to develop forward-looking strategies and contribute to efforts towards gender equality, poverty reduction and economic growth in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the implementation of the Gender Marker across extrabudgetary and regular budget projects enabled ESCAP management to review current financial allocations on gender mainstreaming to ensure sufficient resources to implement the GEEW activities.

ESCAP-wide efforts

Project Support Cost Funding

A few years ago, ESCAP management approved USD 60,000 to develop staff capacity on gender mainstreaming in the organization under the PSC funding stream. This was utilized to support efforts across ESCAP's divisions, subregional offices, and regional institutions in line with the ESCAP Gender Equality Policy and Implementation Plan 2019 – 2023 and within the context of the ESCAP Staff Capacity Assessment on Gender Mainstreaming, a survey between December 2019 and March 2020.

This year, the final portion of the PSC funding was utilized at the request of the Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division to further integrate gender considerations into the analysis of their reports. The objective is to enhance awareness of the relevance of gender in the macroeconomic field and incorporate gender equality and women empowerment considerations into policy options and recommendations to foster sustained, inclusive and sustainable development. Therefore, with the remaining USD 10,000 from the funding, MPFD recruited two gender expert consultants to integrate a gender dimension into three reports: the 2024 edition of the flagship report, the "Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific", and two reports on financing Nature-based Solutions, specifically for Samoa and the Maldives.

79th ESCAP Commission

The **seventy-ninth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**, held from 15 to 19 May 2023 in Bangkok, was guided by the theme "Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development". Gender inequality in access to resources, decision-making power, and opportunities exacerbates the adverse effects of climate change on women and girls. To address the intersection of gender and climate change, it is crucial to foster an inclusive and gender-responsive approach to climate policies and actions. During this year's Commission, several government speakers and key stakeholders made significant and appreciated efforts to recognize the disproportionate burden placed on the most vulnerable people faced with climate change.

Agenda item 4, Segment B: Social Development, 18 May

ESCAP's Executive Secretary, Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, opened this agenda item with a strong statement: "As we progress towards the SDGs, we simply cannot lose sight of those further behind." During her speech, she emphasized the persistent gender gap in labour force participation, notably because of disproportionate unpaid care work, and underlined the necessity of social protection systems, notably for the 700 million persons with disabilities in the region.

Several country representatives highlighted the importance of high-quality, integrated long-term care systems in a context where vulnerable groups, such as children, women and girls, and people with disabilities, are most affected by the threats posed by environmental challenges.

Moreover, the Representative of Thailand emphasized the need to empower women in disaster management plans and to mainstream gender in climate change. The Representative of China reiterated its support for the China-ESCAP cooperation programme to implement programs to reduce the burden of unpaid care work for women. Finally, the Representative of Bangladesh highlighted its continued commitment to ensuring a well-organized social security system to reduce gender inequality.

Side event "Women, Gender Equality and Climate Change in Asia and the Pacific", 18 May

Organised by ESCAP, the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Affairs, Maldives, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Asia-Pacific Regional Office, this event addressed the challenges faced by women and girls in the context of climate change in the region.

All panellists agreed that women and girls experience the greatest impact of climate change as their livelihoods often depend on natural resources, half are engaged in the informal sector, they are often the first responders to climate-induced disasters, and social norms push them to stay and caretake in more rural areas with a lack of information on climate prevention and mitigation.

They warned of the gender-specific consequences of climate-induced disasters, from the lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services protection to the rise of child marriages, domestic violence and the number of girls dropping out of school.

Several issues were underlined, such as the need for better gender data collection, promoting shared household and family responsibilities as women's workload and caregiving responsibilities significantly increase after disasters, and closing the digital divide and improving digital literacy as mobile apps can provide crucial information, banking, and basic social protection services, even in the most isolated places.

Overall, the panellists called for mainstreaming gender across climate mitigation and adaptation.



© ESCAP Photo/Philip Janikowski

The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2023

The 10th session of the annually held forum was organized from 27-30 March 2023 under the theme "Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels in Asia and the Pacific".

Side event "Building Accessible and Inclusive Cities and Communities in Asia and the Pacific", 28 March

Organised by ESCAP's Social Development Division, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the Ministry of National Development Planning, Indonesia, this event addressed the lack of physical and digital accessibility in cities and communities, often hindering persons with disabilities from living independently and with dignity. It took place in the context of last year's High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities 2013-2022, in 2022, which outlined six strategic areas for increased investments in the new Decade, including a gender-responsive life cycle approach to disability inclusion. The event called for building accessible and inclusive cities and communities that support more adequate and equitable work-life-play-learn opportunities for all and eliminate intersectional marginalisation and discrimination experienced by persons with disabilities.

UN Gender Equality Network

In 2023, ESCAP also joined the UN Gender Equality Network together with the other UN regional commissions. The overall objective of the network is to contribute to strengthening gender mainstreaming and strategic results across the 2030 Agenda and the UNDS Reform implementation. The Gender Equality Network (GEN) was set up as an offshoot of the UNSDG Task Team on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment to continue the work of contributing to strengthening gender mainstreaming and strategic results across the 2030 Agenda and the UNDS Reform implementation at the regional level as well as the global level. UN GEN advocates for a stronger gender equality agenda at the regional level and within the UN system and is a venue for regular information sharing, including lessons learned and strategic planning, among UN Agencies. The network meets regularly, on an every-other-month basis, and establishes subgroups for specific deliverables as needed.

Global Alliance for Care

This September, ESCAP joined the Global Alliance for Care to bring their urgent call to take concrete action to recognize and invest in care and domestic work to Asia and the Pacific. This partnership gathers 130 members from different governments, civil society and philanthropic organizations, the private sector, and international organizations, such as UN Women, ECLAC, UNDP and the ILO, to inspire worldwide change for women and girls' economic justice and rights. ESCAP looks forward to sharing good practices and cooperating with other members to develop specific projects within the Global Alliance for Care.

Divisions

Gender issues have been addressed throughout the multidisciplinary programmes at ESCAP to build the evidence base for gender-responsive policymaking.



Office of the Executive Secretary



Gender Focal Point for the Division of Administration: Mr. Nyngtob Norbu, Economic Affairs Officer

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Mr. Nyngtob Norbu can be contacted for advice, information sharing, coordination, and collaboration on gender mainstreaming issues.

The Executive Secretary's speech for International Women's Day, 8 March

For this year's International Women's Day on the theme "**DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality**," ESCAP's Executive Secretary delivered a speech acknowledging the power of women in harnessing innovation and technology and called to accelerate progress towards gender equality in the digital age. She emphasized the benefits and challenges of technological advancements, highlighting the increasing socio-economic gaps that leave women and girls behind. To bridge the gender digital divide and overcome barriers women face in accessing technology and education, the ES called for inclusive and equitable approaches, emphasizing the importance of policies that increase access to technology, promote female representation in STEM fields, and support women entrepreneurs. This speech was delivered in front of the young winners of the "Ambassador for a Day" initiative, which enabled young people in Thailand to shadow ESCAP's Executive Secretary for the day.

The Executive Secretary's special address at the World Women Economic and Business Summit on "Advancing Women's Leadership and Championing Diversity, Inclusion & Equality", 15 May

On 15 May 2023, the KSI Strategic Institute for Asia Pacific organized the 2nd edition of the World Women Economic & Business Summit (WWEBS), supported by the ASEAN Economic Club (AEC), World Business Chamber, Women Institute of Management (WIM) Malaysia and National Council of Women Organizations (NCWO). The summit aimed to highlight and celebrate women's achievements in the economy, business, management, and entrepreneurship. Women leaders from across the region, as well as internationally, were invited to share their knowledge, insights and experiences on leadership and women's empowerment. In this capacity, H.E. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of ESCAP, was invited to deliver a special address.

The special address of ESCAP's Executive Secretary at the World Women Economic and Business Summit emphasized the significant contribution of women to economic growth, political and soc-

ial transformation, diversity, and inclusion. Indeed, she highlighted the Asia-Pacific region as a dynamic area driven by investment, technology, innovation, and productivity, where women have played a crucial role in promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth. In light of persisting gender gaps, she called for advancing women's economic empowerment, particularly their participation and leadership in business management, to achieve gender equality and foster future women leaders. She emphasizes the need for gender-responsive approaches across various sectors, including research, policymaking, and advocacy for breaking down barriers, addressing discriminatory social norms, closing gender pay gaps, and investing in initiatives that reduce unpaid care and domestic work burdens on women.

Section on Countries in Special Situations

The Office of the Executive Secretary holds the Section on Countries in Special Situations, which has been doing impressive work to mainstream gender considerations in the structural transformation process of Least Developed Countries (LDC). Indeed, to counterbalance the overwhelming focus on the economic implications of LDC graduation, the Section highlighted the gendered dimensions of LDC graduation in two draft reports on Timor-Leste and Nepal to inform the participants of its subregional workshop in Kathmandu in April 2023.

Indeed, although the three broad indicators used to assess LDC's eligibility to graduate – income per capita, human assets, and economic and environmental vulnerability – contain sex-disaggregated data, the Section highlighted the need to also provide a more qualitative analysis of the advancement of women's empowerment in LDCs. Its draft report on Nepal thus finds that women have been largely left out of the structural transformation process of the country. While 1.8 million new wage jobs were added in the 2008-2018 period, the paper points out that these jobs have predominantly gone to male workers and that a large share of women still occupy unpaid or self-employed farm jobs. It further notes that accessing wage employment is disproportionately harder for women, with only about 13 per cent of working women employed as wage employees compared to 38 per cent for working men. Women's participation in the labour market as employers or self-employed is severely limited. Gender norms that compel women to shoulder a disproportionate share of household chores, in turn, reducing their availability for wage employment, and other factors, including those partly rooted in gender inequality and discrimination, contribute to women's significant exclusion from the structural transformation process. The paper also underlines that Nepal performs poorly on the Gender Inequality Index, with a maternal mortality rate of 186.0 per 100,000 live births, an adolescent birth rate of 65.1 per 1,000 women aged 15–19, and 23 per cent of women having at least some secondary education, compared to 44.2 per cent for men.

The Section's draft report on Timor-Leste, in collaboration with the Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division, emphasizes the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment for promoting equitable development and inclusivity. It notes some significant improvement in the country, with women representing 38 per cent of total seats in the National Parliament – one of the highest percentages in Asia and the Pacific. Additionally, women's representation in public institutions has increased, with 35 per cent in the civil service, 15 per cent in policy roles, and 10 per cent in the military force. To further strengthen gender equity and women's empowerment, the government has taken steps such as establishing a Secretary Estate of Gender and Inclusion, ensuring gender mainstreaming in the government's plan and budget thr-

ough the budget committee review. Moreover, the creation of National and Municipal Gender Working Groups enhances coordination, resource allocation, and monitoring of government gender commitments at all levels. Timor-Leste has also made progress in tracking public resource allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment through gender-responsive budgeting, which integrates gender equality into planning, budgeting, and monitoring processes. However, the paper also notes some persisting challenges relating to gender-based violence and the labour force gender gap and calls for gender-responsive programme-based budgeting, inclusive economic development targeting women-owned micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, improved access of rural women to employment and health care, and a national action plan to prevent gender-based violence.

The **back-to-back subregional workshop** of the Section in Nepal on "A sustainable graduation from the category of least developed country" and "Strengthening the capacity of LDCs in South South-West Asia to facilitate Structural transformation" put the spotlight on gender equality and social inclusion issues in the context of LDC graduation and structural transformation during its fifth session. Coordinated with UN Women in Nepal, the panel had a diverse representation, including Nepalese CSOs and the World Bank. It broached the many ways in which gender needs to be mainstreamed in the LDC graduation process, such as in fields of trade, business, banking, agriculture, FDI, electricity, and tax reform.

Furthermore, the OES Gender Focal Point, Nyintob Norbu, presented his section's efforts to mainstream gender at this year's Annual Meeting for Gender Focal Points. He introduced how the Section on Sustainable Development and Countries in Special Situations has incorporated gender considerations into the LDC graduation assessment and structural transformation. He notably informed that the LDC graduation criteria include three indicators, integrating the gender parity index for secondary school completion and the maternal mortality rate in the Human Assets Index since 2020. However, Mr. Norbu underlined that women have been largely overlooked in the structural economic transformation process, analysis, and research. Therefore, he shared his section's efforts to integrate gender analysis in its LDC country reports and notably presented some of Nepal's results on labour force participation and wage jobs.





Division of Administration



Gender Focal Point for DA: Ms. Margo Acker, Administrative Officer

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The DA is actively engaged in mainstreaming gender and inclusion throughout ESCAP's work culture. The division has notably pushed for more mandatory gender training of staff and senior management and is making tremendous efforts to ensure gender parity within the organization. These efforts are visible in ESCAP's SWAP results, meeting or exceeding 94 per cent of requirements.

This year, ESCAP was selected as a Diversity Champion Finalist for the LinkedIn Talent Awards. The LinkedIn Diversity Talent Awards finalists are based on analytical data indicating the number of ESCAP staff posting and engaging with Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging content on LinkedIn. This recognition reflects the United Nations' commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion, integral to its values and its mission of building a sustainable and prosperous future for all.

Gender parity efforts

Following DA guidelines, directors are asked to monitor and oversee recruitment in line with gender targets in view of the vacancy management policies of ESCAP and support staff work-life balance and their use of Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA).

Aligned with the Secretariat's framework of delegated authority, the ESCAP gender parity strategy stipulates that the delegation of authority for the selection of candidates will be removed from Directors for the specific level where the target is not met for one year. As per secretariat-wide policy, when the qualification of one or more female candidates matches the requirements for the vacant post and the entity recommends a male candidate, the department or office shall submit a written analysis with appropriate supporting documentation to demonstrate the qualifications and experience of the recommended candidate are clearly superior to those of female candidates to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. Following the delegation of authority, the ASG/OHR's approval is required prior to the head of entity or designated officials making the final selection decision.

ESCAP continues to partner with the hiring managers to promote equal representation of women via the policy on temporary special measures, ST/AI/2020/5, in identifying qualified women prior to the posting of the job opening at levels where parity has not been reached.

The DA's alternate Gender Focal Point, Milica Markovic, discussed recent gender parity efforts at ESCAP during the Annual Meeting for Gender Focal Point. She provided an update on gender parity initiatives at the UN System-wide level, including the UN Common System Parental Leave Scheme, a gender parity dashboard, the launch of a knowledge hub on addressing sexual harassment, and UN SWAP 2.0 Performance Indicator 12, which focuses on equal representation of women. Ms. Markovic then provided more data on gender balance among international ESCAP staff and reaffirmed HRMS' commitment to maintaining accountability with its gender targets, utilizing dashboards, leveraging internal talent, and following ESCAP's Implementation Plan for the Achievement of Gender Parity. Finally, she highlighted some of ESCAP's internal talent initiatives, such as providing executive coaching, offering mock interview sessions, upskilling staff through networking, mentoring, and training series, as well as showcasing staff's work through the Discovery Series.

Gender-related training

The DA has mandated an increase in the uptake of mandatory training, including four related to gender. Additionally, the reform of Human Resources' approach to staff induction resulted in the addition of a briefing on this necessary training, during which onboarding senior managers now meet with the HR Chief of ESCAP for a tailored briefing on gender parity.

Furthermore, this year, the DA produced a **video presentation**, in collaboration with ESCAP's SDD, on "Addressing sexual harassment," now available on the newly launched **UN System-wide Knowledge Hub on Addressing Sexual Harassment**. This hub serves as a repository of resources on addressing sexual harassment as part of the efforts of the **Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment** to strengthen the UN system's zero tolerance for inaction on sexual harassment, focusing on victim-centred prevention and response efforts and fostering a safe, equal and inclusive working environment across the UN system. The video intends to offer guidance on policy and practice on preventing and dealing with sexual harassment and does so within the context of current policies in the United Nations Secretariat. It is accessible to all UN personnel, member States and civil society.



ESCAP's video presentation on "Communicating empowerment, respect and dignity"

Division Director performance plan

The Division Director performance plan consists of the e-Performance for Division Directors and the ESCAP implementation plan. E-Performance for Division Directors ensures that division directors are held accountable for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. In the e-Performance for Division Directors, under Goal 1, the following action is required: "Demonstrate leadership to mainstream UN-wide strategic priorities into Division's work, including on gender, disability and innovation."

Success criteria include: "Mainstreaming: a) ESCAP's Gender Equality Policy 2019-2023, Gender Equality Implementation Plan and Gender Marker Guidance Note implemented and reported on through SWAP; b) United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy implemented and reported on; c) ESCAP innovation roadmap supported and staff time made available to work on coordination and implementation of the roadmap."

On recruitment, it is also stipulated that senior managers ensure that a) recruitment is completed within 120 calendar days, as possible given the measures to mitigate the secretariat's cashflow crisis; b) adequate outreach for all vacancies that require gender and geographical diversity; c) ES/DES involved on the short-list phase of recruitments that affect gender and geographical representation; d) gender parity at professional levels improved through all new vacancies; e) ensure each shortlist includes applications by candidates from un- and under-represented countries.

In the ESCAP implementation plan, a gender parity performance measure is included, which requires "progress towards achieving the goal of gender parity at each internationally recruited staff level (FS, P-1 to D-1) within available positions." Accordingly, a senior management scorecard has been integrated into the Director's work plans, and Directors are sent quarterly target infographic updates by grade level. Division directors are asked to monitor and oversee recruitment in line with gender targets in view of the vacancy management policies of ESCAP and support staff work-life balance and enhanced productivity using Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA).

Performance Management Workplan

The Performance Management Workplan indicates that gender parity has been an indispensable criterion for determining successful work planning.

In the e-performance template, Key Focus 3.3 proposes "mainstreaming gender, disability and innovation into Division's work." To achieve this, work plans have to fulfil the criteria "leadership in implementation of the ESCAP Gender Policy and Plan as well as Gender Marker in line with UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) as evidenced in new projects (rated at GEM1 or above);" and "Subprogramme strategy includes a contribution to SDG5, with planned activities/deliverables contributing to gender equality outcomes."



Strategy and Programme Management Division



Gender Focal Point for SPMD: Mr. Edgar Dante, Programme Management Officer

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Mr. Edgar Dante can be contacted for advice, information sharing, coordination, and collaboration on gender mainstreaming issues.

Oversight of the Gender Equality Marker coding

SPMD programme officers evaluate the GEM coding selected by project officers when reviewing and guiding the formulation of project proposals across all budget sources. They also review the coding during project implementation and at the reporting stage. As such, they may occasionally revise the GEM coding either upward or downward (in particular towards the end of a project cycle at the project terminal report stage) and/or suggest recommendations to increase the GEM coding, as appropriate. By doing so, SPMD ensures the projects' logical frameworks align with the result-based management approach, reviewing that the project goals align with the chosen GEM coding throughout the entire project cycle.

SWAP reporting

Each year, SPMD provides substantive support to ESCAP's UN-SWAP reporting. Thanks to the establishment of the programme monitoring tool, quality data can be provided to inform PI 1 on Strategic planning gender-related SDG results, PI 2 on Reporting on gender-related SDG results, PI 3 on Programmatic gender-related SDG results not directly captured in the strategic plan, PI 4 on Evaluation, PI 5 on Audit, PI 6 on Policy, PI 9 on Financial Resource tracking, PI 10 on Financial resource allocation, and PI 11 on Gender Architecture.

ESCAP Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation

SPMD's Gender Focal Point, Edgar Dante, presented ESCAP's Gender Mainstreaming Evaluation process at the 2023 Annual Meeting for Gender Focal Points. This evaluation is taking place in the context of the UN-SWAP Performance Indicator (PI) 4, according to which such evaluation should be conducted every 5-8 years to exceed requirements. This year, ESCAP management thus commissioned a gender mainstreaming corporate evaluation to be undertaken by an external evaluator. The external evaluator assessed ESCAP's internal performance on gender mainstreaming to provide actionable recommendations for improvement. Indeed, this evaluation aims to provide an impartial and credible body of evidence regarding ESCAP's performance on gender mainstreaming and areas for improvement that will inform or guide the formulation and implementation of the next phase of the ESCAP Gender Policy and Implementation Plan.

Programme Plan for 2025

For the development of the proposed Programme Plan for 2025, SPMD developed detailed guidance for the division to further improve the integration of cross-cutting themes, including strengthening the gender dimension in their planning. The team analyzed the Gender Marker tag-

-ging of each division for the years 2021 and 2022 and shared the data as a starting point for discussion on how to move the needle further. Additionally, SPMD conducted a gap analysis on the results divisions had presented in the previous Programme Plan to incentivize Divisions to consider highlighting gender-specific results. This gap analysis was completed with concrete suggestions on gender-specific results taken from the ESCAP Gender Mainstreaming Report 2022 for each division’s consideration.

A revised Programme Monitoring Tool

In the first quarter of 2024, SPMD will launch the third edition of the ESCAP programme monitoring tool (PMT). During the 2023 Annual Meeting for Gender Focal Points, several GFPs remarked that although there are four options for gender identifications in nomination forms, only the number of female participants was reported in the previous PMT. Taking into account this feedback, SDD and SPMD collaborated to integrate a third option for reporting on gender identification. As such, the new PMT includes the following options: “Number of Male Participants”, “Number of Female Participants”, and “Number of Participants (Prefer Not to Say / Other than Male or Female).” The third category groups “Prefer Not to Say” and “Prefer to Self-describe As” to ensure those at risk of being left behind and marginalised are included without endangering their anonymity.

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordination Team Meeting

ESCAP’s Strategic Planning and Management Division convened the annual Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Coordination Team Meeting in September 2023 to bring together ESCAP’s PME coordinators to discuss the Programme Planning for 2025.

For the first time, gender focal points (GFP) and disability focal points (DFP) were invited to join the meeting to raise awareness of the cross-cutting themes, such as gender equality and disability inclusion, for the 2025 plan. Two options to mainstream such issues were presented:

Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEEW):

1	Showcase in the strategy ✓ Providing programme specific information on activities, policies and strategies derived/in line with the UN SWAP 2.0
2	Showcase in the results ✓ Results and performance measures which contribute to GEEW ✓ Performance measures which include indicators specific for measuring progress for GEEW

Disability inclusion:

1	Showcase in the strategy ✓ Providing programme specific information on activities, policies and strategies derived/in line with the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy
2	Showcase in the results ✓ Results and performance measures which contribute to an improvement in the situation of persons with disabilities ✓ Performance measures which include specific indicators for measuring progress on disability inclusion

PME coordinators were encouraged to seek an internal review on gender and disability inclusion mainstreaming in the strategy and results narratives from their divisions/sub-regional offices/regional institutions’ GFP and DFP.



Energy Division



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ESCAP's Energy Division has made noteworthy efforts to mainstream gender into their work. Indeed, ensuring women's equal access to universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy is essential to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. Despite current efforts, it is estimated that 63 million people in the Asia-Pacific region will be without access to electricity and 1.6 billion people without access to clean cooking by 2030. Vulnerable groups, such as women in rural areas, are disproportionately impacted by this lack of access.

Phase II of the Energy Division's project on "Promoting Sustainable Energy in the Asia and Pacific Region to Support the implementation of SDG7 and the Paris Agreement" particularly noted that women in many contexts are excluded from energy planning and decision-making. It thus underlines the importance of the equal participation of men and women in capacity-building, consultation, and planning activities. Furthermore, the project proposal explicitly refers to the disproportionate burden borne by women from the lack of access to electricity and clean cooking.

Its DA 14 project document on "Strengthening energy policies of Countries with Special Needs to build back better from COVID-19" further stresses the need for strengthened energy policies to ensure women's access to clean cooking fuels and technologies. Indeed, it states that the achievement of universal access to modern energy supply could provide socio-economic opportunities and benefits for the most vulnerable groups in rural communities, particularly women and children. Furthermore, in this document, the Energy Division also underlines the impact of unsafe cooking on women's health. It explains that women in rural areas use biofuel as an energy source for cooking, which creates indoor air pollution – a known cause of pulmonary diseases and immature deaths, particularly affecting women and young children. This is one of the major problems in countries like Bhutan, Kiribati and the Federated States of Micronesia, where more than 120 million people are exposed to indoor air pollution from cooking with biomass. This project thus aimed to end this challenge by supporting policymakers to develop enabling policies to switch to clean cooking options. As a result, millions of women and children would be protected from indoor air pollution and risk of premature death.

Therefore, as part of this broader project on clean cooking, the Energy Division developed a GEM 2a Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation for “Capacity Building for Clean Cooking using Electric Cookstoves in Bhutan.” This programme, running from February to December 2023, includes in its core outcomes policy recommendations for the provision of universal access to clean cooking fuels and technologies, delivering improved gender equity and women’s empowerment. ESCAP’s Energy Division will collaborate with Modern Energy Cooking Services (MECS), the Royal Government of Bhutan and the UN country team to support clean cooking in Bhutan using electric cooking technologies – an affordable, clean and accessible energy alternative to fuelwood and liquefied petroleum gas. This will involve a MECS-funded technology trial for 2000 households and capacity-building activities in support of the electric cooking technology rollout. Indeed, given the lack of knowledge of new technologies and on how to integrate new cooking technologies with the culture of traditional cooking, overcoming these barriers requires enhancing the capacities of users – most often women in the household – and policymakers to develop strategies for their deployment and long-term use.



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Environment and Development Division



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EDD has integrated gender perspectives in several of its ongoing projects and recent events, showcasing its efforts to mainstream gender in all aspects of environment and urban development.

Smart City Innovation Lab

Its Smart City Innovation Lab project aims to contribute to enhancing the innovation ecosystem in Asia-Pacific by bringing together cities, start-ups, and large technology companies and development actors to work together to implement and scale up technology solutions for sustainable urban development. In line with its commitment to promoting gender equality, the project incorporates various gender-related indicators in its reporting. These indicators encompass the representation of female entrepreneurs within smart city solution providers, judges, and the community of practice. Additionally, communication materials must highlight the gender dimension of smart cities. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of achieving gender parity in all workshops, events, and within the community of practice.

Asia-Pacific Urban Forum and Flagship Report on Cities

The 8th edition of Asia-Pacific Urban Forum, the region's leading forum on sustainable urban development held every four to five years, also took place in October 2023. The forum's pre-events included a Women's Assembly, which underscored the need for institutionalizing gender equality and the implementation of policies promoting women's empowerment to ensure the effective and consistent enforcement of policies for sustainable urban development, and a Grassroots Assembly, which highlighted the pivotal role of grassroots initiatives in gathering data for city-wide mapping, establishing community finance systems, empowering women, and assisting informal settlements with housing challenges. A concerted effort was also undertaken to ensure gender parity across all high-level plenaries and parallel events. The ESCAP-UN-Habitat flagship report on cities, launched at the forum, features significant gender analysis across four key themes (Urban Transformation and Planning, Climate Resilience, Digital Innovation, and Financial Inclusion) and promotes cases of regional cooperation on gender-responsive urban development, such as the Women4Climate initiative by C40.



Asia Pacific Mayors Academy

The division also launched the Asia Pacific Mayors Academy in 2019 with UN-Habitat and United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific, in cooperation with the United Nations University, Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability, the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, to engage newly elected or appointed city mayors/governors in the Asia-Pacific region to participate in annual fellowships and build their capacities to develop and implement sustainable urban solutions in their communities. In line with their efforts to have gender-balanced sessions, with equal representation of male and female mayors, the 2023 academy class comprised 11 mayors, of which 6 were women.

Urban-Act

The Integrated Urban Climate Action for Low-Carbon and Resilient Cities (Urban-Act), funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK), is a regional project running for the period of April 2022 to September 2026 to support the transformation towards low-carbon and resilient urban development in Asia-Pacific while also contributing to countries Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Urban-Act is implemented in China, India, Indonesia, Philippines, and Thailand.

The Urban-Act programme has integrated a comprehensive Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) strategy across its five key areas of action. In terms of governance, scope, and accountability, it has established a dedicated GEDSI task team responsible for guiding the implementation of this strategy in project countries, ensuring a strong commitment to GEDSI sensitivity and responsiveness. All project processes and activities are mandated to be inclusive, gender-sensitive, and responsive, actively contributing to the eradication of gender-based discrimination and disadvantages. All Urban Act staff must be supported in acquiring relevant competence and gender and cultural sensitivity in line with the implementation of the Urban Act GEDSI strategy. In terms of knowledge management and communication, the GEDSI strategy should be effectively communicated to all stakeholders and professionals in the field through pertinent events and forums. Lastly, resources should be provided for capacity building and sufficient personnel, and for the planning and implementation of gender-responsive and gender-transformative measures in the projects.

Development Account 12: “Leave No One Behind” in urban areas

Under the umbrella of the DA12, EDD is working to strengthen national governments and local urban institutions to centre inclusion, disability and safety in national policies and facilitate evidence-based localization of national policies and SDGs 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities” & 6 “Ensure access to water and sanitation for all” in urban areas.

As such, EDD supported UN-Habitat’s regional efforts to integrate GEDSI considerations into national strategies for urban development. These efforts include a 2023 Gender and Social Inclusion Operational Guideline in Nepal, a National Conclave on “Gender and Disability Inclusion in Indian Cities” in 2022, and a policy brief on “Gender and Disability Inclusion in Urban Development” in India.

Voluntary Local Reviews

In 2023, ESCAP provided support to Suva City in Fiji and Nusantrara, along with West Java Province in Indonesia, in their efforts to develop Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). These VLRs constitute a voluntary process wherein sub-national governments conduct comprehensive assessments of their progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, the VLRs are set to contribute to the ongoing review and necessary updates of Suva, Nusantara, and West Java's development planning documents in line with the new cycle of goals.

Both of these sub-national governments have recognized the paramount importance of conducting an in-depth review of SDG 5, which centers on Gender Equality. Notably, in the case of West Java Province, SDG 5 has been identified as one of the goals that requires significant attention due to its lagging progress. Consequently, the recommendations stemming from the VLRs regarding SDG 5 hold the potential to significantly impact the development planning of West Java Province, bridging the existing progress gap.

In Suva, the VLR team is actively collecting sex-disaggregated data and pertinent gender-related information from official sources such as the Ministry of Women's Affairs and civil society organizations. This data encompasses various facets of local development, including the situation of women in the informal economy (particularly market traders), women-headed households, education, healthcare, formal employment, and income levels. The aim is to identify gender disparities and inequalities in different neighbourhoods. Furthermore, the VLR is exploring the concept of gender-responsive municipal budgeting, which will inform Suva City Council's forthcoming 10-year development plan.

In the context of the new Indonesian capital, Nusantara, specific gender-related goals and targets have been delineated to assess investments with a direct or indirect impact on gender equality and women's empowerment. An inclusive monitoring and evaluation framework featuring gender-sensitive indicators to track progress on SDGs related to gender is also incorporated into the VLR.

Each VLR report comprehensively analyzes disparities in various areas, including education enrollment, labour force participation, access to healthcare, and local political representation, among others.

Asia-Pacific Regional Action Programme on Air Pollution

EDD is actively engaged in operationalizing the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Programme on Air Pollution. This initiative builds upon ESCAP's prior work, which underscored the gender-specific impacts of air pollution. It is imperative that this new project incorporates a gender-sensitive analysis into the framework of the Regional Action Programme. Drawing from previous and ongoing efforts to advance gender equality, this project aims to further enhance Gender Equality and Environmental Well-being (GEEW) by pinpointing gaps at the intersection of science and policy.

The project's core objective is to identify actionable steps at the policy level to address these gaps through strengthened regional cooperation. The urgency of this endeavour has been underscored in recent research, including the 2019 joint report by UNEP, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, and APCAP, titled "Air Pollution in Asia and the Pacific: Science-based Solutions." This report, a comprehensive scientific assessment of air pollution across 23 countries in the region, outlines 25 policy actions (referred to as the "25 Clean Air Measures") aimed at achieving safe air quality levels for one billion people by 2030.

Particular attention is placed on specific measures, including promoting clean cooking and heating options, instituting bans on open burning of household waste, and providing incentives for improved energy efficiency in households. These measures hold special significance in addressing gender and health-related issues associated with air pollution. They are primarily focused on preventing household air pollution resulting from the use of solid fuels like wood, dung, and coal in open fires and stoves, as well as the burning of household waste. It's crucial to recognize that household and indoor air pollution disproportionately affect the quality of life for women and children.

Advancing Environmental Rights in Asia and the Pacific

The Environment and Development Policies Section of EDD is implementing a project to reduce the negative impacts of growth on the natural environment and to improve human well-being in urban and rural environments through building the capacity of member States to strengthen climate action and sustainable resource use, realize sustainable urban development and eliminate pollution and waste.

EDD was particularly cognisant of gender considerations during the development of this GEM2a-rated project. Indeed, their gender analysis emphasized that even though women are disproportionately affected by environmental phenomena such as extreme weather events, they are still underrepresented in decision-making processes regarding the environment. Thus, it called for gender-responsive policies to be put in place to bridge the gender gap and increase the representation of women and other expressions of gender in public participation.

For instance, Asia Pacific countries can engage women further by opening civic spaces, providing due access to information, and securing their access to justice in environmental matters.

Specific gender mainstreaming strategies in this project include, among others:

- Securing the inclusion of women and other expressions of gender in the composition of the ASEAN Environmental Rights Working Group.
- Increasing the participation of women and other expressions of gender in meetings and workshops.
- Empowering women and other expressions of gender, acknowledging their agency, and including them in capacity development activities as resource persons.
- Facilitating the inclusion of gender references in the text of the ASEAN Leaders Declaration and in the Strategy for the Pacific.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) reviewed the project proposal before extending its financial support. The project proposal was thus evaluated by both their Environment and Human Rights team and Gender Equality team to assess its compatibility with their Gender Equality and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment guidelines. To facilitate this review, EDD shared the “Secretary-General’s bulletin on Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority” and the ESCAP gender mainstreaming report. These documents showcasing the United Nations and ESCAP’s commitment to gender equality and the project proposal’s gender analysis were thus an important part of securing funding for this project.

Recent activities under this project included the **3rd Asia-Pacific Environmental Human Rights Defenders Forum**, held from 20-22 September 2023 in Bangkok and co-hosted with ESCAP, UNEP and OHCHR, which mainstreamed gender throughout its discussions.

Protection of the Ocean

EDD mainstreams gender equality throughout its activities related to the protection of the ocean. As such, it underscores issues that disproportionately affect women and other expressions of gender, including extreme weather events, small-scale fisherfolk, and the unequal representation of women across the different phases of the value chain. It thus works closely and intersectionally with the ocean youth and for women’s empowerment.

For instance, its **Asia-Pacific Ocean Youth Championship** received multiple nominations from young women, and its champions in 2022 and 2023 were women (Thailand 2022 and Fiji 2023). Additionally, EDD makes efforts to maintain a gender balance in its ocean-related events, including our annual Asia-Pacific Day for the Ocean.

Enhancing Investments for Equitable and Accelerated Climate Action in the Post-COVID-19 Recovery

EDD also continuously promotes gender mainstreaming in projects with multiple implementing partners, such as its Development Account 15 project. For example, in this project, which aims to enable beneficiary countries to implement Nature-based Solutions in support of green post-COVID-19 recovery strategies, Output 2.1 specifically targets developing gender-sensitive guidance and providing technical assistance on green and climate finance instruments and support mechanisms (i.e., taxonomies and guidelines) such as debt for climate swaps and green, blue, and climate bonds.





ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division



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Digital inclusion

In 2023, IDD advanced digital inclusion through the creation of knowledge products and the implementation of capacity-building workshops.

The insights derived from ESCAP research, notably the flagship report 'Shaping Our Digital Future – Asia-Pacific Digital Transformation Report 2022,' reveal that the 'digital divide' within member States in the Asia-Pacific region is the most pronounced compared to other regions. Attaining a specific level of digital inclusion necessitates not only the presence of technologies like mobile banking and digital legal identification but also ensuring the affordability, security, and accessibility of devices and data usage for all, irrespective of their income level or location.

IDD further contributed to addressing the challenges of the digital divide by conducting a research paper titled "The Digital Divides and the COVID-19." IDD also scrutinized the gender gap in internet use indicators, focusing on the ICT's role in data management for e-resilience readiness (Connectivity for All Pillar of APIS Action Plan 2022-2026). These knowledge products highlighted the following key points:

- Strengthening the ICT Infrastructure resilience pillar in selected economies of East and North East Asia and South Asia should prioritize the human aspect of e-resilience. This involves improving levels of e-participation, especially in rural villages and among women, allowing the population to fully utilize the currently available and widespread network coverage by 2026.
- To bridge the digital divide in both gender and income aspects, practical applications include promoting social media use and online financial accounts. Governments may also encourage the consumption of local content in national languages to facilitate access to Internet services and content consumption for the public.
- Selected economies of North and Central Asia may need to collaborate, pooling resources and expertise to jointly develop educational programs and training initiatives. This aims to build a skilled workforce capable of managing and utilizing advanced ICT technologies while supporting the emergence of common regional skill standards.

IDD organized a regional workshop in Bangkok on 18-19 September 2023, focusing on good practices in digital inclusion and community development while celebrating the SDGs Digital Day. The workshop emphasized that women, particularly those in rural areas, often lack opportunities to leverage digital technologies for employment, climate action, and resilience. It recommended

providing information on climate risks to women, especially those with disabilities and elderly women, as their awareness is limited. Given the scarcity of engagement opportunities in gender-responsive policy measures and innovative solutions, enabling access to limited resources and expanding their access to legal, policy, and decision-making processes becomes crucial.

Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, 25-27 July

The eighth session of the **Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction**, held from 25 to 27 July, highlighted the disproportionate impact of disasters on women, the need for inclusive disaster risk reduction efforts, and the role of women in disaster risk preparedness.

Agenda Item 3 of the Committee, “Building resilience to cascading risks, including disasters, climate change and health crises” (ESCAP/CDR(8)/3), underlined marginalized groups (e.g. women and girls, persons with disabilities, people in rural areas and older persons) are often excluded from early warning and post-disaster recovery. It was thus recommended that member States address the needs of women and other marginalized groups when mobilizing resources, technology and capacity to implement and extend the reach of multi-hazard early warning systems. It also highlighted that women represent a higher ratio among older persons, who are particularly vulnerable to disaster- and health-related issues.

Side events to the Committee also broached the role of women in disaster risk reduction and preparedness with a side event on the role of women in early warning systems, organized by IFRC on 26 July, and another on the regional learning platform with an expert spotlight session on facilitating disability- and gender-inclusive disaster risk reduction. The first event underlined how empowering women in disaster preparedness and establishing inclusive early warning systems can proactively reduce risks and save lives. The second event stressed the importance of inclusive disaster risk reduction efforts, especially as persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by disasters and excluded from many aspects of services as well as participation at various stages of disaster risk reduction. Ms. Villaney Remengesau, Co-Chair of the Pacific Disability Forum and moderator of the spotlight session, called for recognizing the need of women and girls with disabilities in preparedness and recovery efforts from disasters, especially as they are usually even further marginalized and vulnerable.

Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR)

IDDR, in collaboration with the Social Development Division’s Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, launched the Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction e-learning tool in July 2023 for disaster risk reduction policymakers and professionals to incorporate disability perspectives into all phases of disaster risk reduction: prevention; preparedness, response, and recovery. The 2.5-hour course includes a section on gender that explores why women and girls with disabilities face unique and disproportionate risks in disaster situations. Indeed, it provides specific examples of the intersection of gender and disability in disaster risks, from limited access to resources due to gender-based wage gaps and roles, elevated susceptibility to violence, including sexual exploitation, inadequate evacuation and shelter options, disrupted support systems as both recipients and providers of care, and heightened stigma leading to exclusion from critical data and support, collectively heightening their vulnerability to disasters.



Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division



Gender Focal Point for MPFD: Ms. Lin Zhuo, Economic Affairs Officer

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Ms. Lin Zhuo can be contacted for advice, information sharing, coordination, and collaboration on gender mainstreaming issues.

In 2022, MPFD's gender focal point, Lin Zhuo, presented how the division integrated a gender dimension into its 2022 Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific at the annual meeting for gender focal points.



First, MPFD incorporated a gender analysis in several chapters of the Survey. Indeed, it underlines how women in Asia and the Pacific bore a disproportionate burden due to the pandemic. This disparity arose primarily because a significant portion of women were employed in sectors severely affected by the pandemic, and many were engaged in informal employment. The Survey also highlighted an estimate from the International Labour Organization (ILO), indicating a 3.8 per cent decrease in women's employment compared to a 2.9 per cent decrease for men in the region during the pandemic. Furthermore, the Survey addressed the constraints placed on women's labour force participation by caregiving responsibilities during periods of school and care service closures. It emphasized that women were likelier to leave their jobs to fulfil caregiving duties for their families and children amid prolonged business, school, and care service closures.

The survey also presents gender-related policy recommendations. It advocates for policies aimed at bolstering the participation of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Secondly, it suggests that central banks should be mindful of the distributional im-

pact of central bank policies on men and women. Concerning structural policy, it underscores that the potential automation of labour-intensive manufacturing and office jobs may disproportionately affect women. Consequently, governments are encouraged to proactively guide, shape and manage the structural transformation process to ensure inclusive development.

Second, MPFD integrated gender considerations into all its multimedia products. An example of this can be seen in its promotional animation video, which introduces the key ideas and findings of the 2022 Survey. In this video, gender perspectives are thoughtfully incorporated into the storytelling. The central character, a woman, plays dual roles as a journalist in the present day and as a grandmother, envisioning the future 30 years ahead. Additionally, the female characters encountered at the ESCAP Conference are depicted as strong leadership figures with influence over political and economic resources.



Lastly, the division incorporated gender-sensitive representation into its outreach efforts. During her presentation, Lin emphasized the importance of this approach, stating, "Considering that economics has traditionally been predominantly associated with men, we believe it's essential to integrate gender considerations into reshaping societal norms, portraying women as active participants and leaders. Challenging gender stereotypes plays a pivotal role in mitigating women's disadvantages within this specific professional domain." As a result, in addition to featuring gender-inclusive content in social media posts, the division prioritized female speakers.



This year, MPFD has set about recruiting two gender expert consultants to integrate a gender dimension into three of their reports. Supported by ESCAP's PSC funding, the aim is to enhance awareness of the relevance of gender in the macroeconomic field and incorporate gender equality and women empowerment considerations into policy recommendations to foster inclusive and sustainable development.

One of the consultants will notably provide a gender lens to their 2024 edition of the flagship report, the "Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific." Critical inputs from gender perspectives are expected to be incorporated into the chapter on "Macroeconomic prospects, challenges and policies."

Indeed, recognizing that women are disproportionately impacted by the difficult current macroeconomic conditions, MPFD emphasized the importance of identifying in more depth how these adverse economic and non-economic shocks have affected the well-being of women in Asia and the Pacific. For instance, issues such as high inflation and borrowing costs, sluggish economic and employment prospects, heightened economic uncertainty, reduced fiscal policy support, and scarring effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have led to losses of low-skilled jobs for women, increased school drop-outs among girls due to increased financial hardship with long-term educational impacts, and increased malnutrition amid higher food prices.

The second consultant will work under the Development Account 15 project on green and climate finance instruments and support mechanisms. Their mission will be to ensure that gender perspectives are adequately included in two reports centred on financing Nature-based Solutions, specifically for Samoa and the Maldives.

The consultant will explore the gender-specific aspects of climate change risks, vulnerabilities, and impacts, focusing on the countries of Samoa and the Maldives. Specifically, the consultant will consider gender differences in the barriers for women and men as individuals and entrepreneurs to access, use or benefit from financing for nature-based solutions and other types of climate finance.

Moreover, the consultant will investigate contextual factors, such as structural constraints like legal gender disparities, unpaid care responsibilities, and informal economic arrangements, which impact financial access, utilization, and control. These insights will be instrumental in integrating a gender perspective into the reports' recommendations, ensuring a more inclusive and equitable approach to Nature-based Solutions financing.





Social Development Division



Gender Focal Point for SDD: Ms. Cai Cai, Chief of the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section

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Ms. Cai Cai can be contacted for advice, information sharing, coordination, and collaboration on gender mainstreaming issues.

Gender Mainstreaming Advisory Services

SDD's Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section provides advisory services on gender mainstreaming to various ESCAP divisions, subregional offices and regional institutions.

This year, the Subregional Office for the Pacific sought SDD's input in their efforts to mainstream gender in their project. The project's primary objective is to develop and pilot guidelines for producing and using key national indicators for national, regional and global reporting in small islands developing States. This initiative aims to address the challenge of producing adequate and coherent data to report progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. To support this endeavour, SDD reviewed the project document and shared a Gender Analysis briefing document. These materials offered detailed comments and guidance on the draft gender analysis. The recommendations emphasized the importance of explaining the impact of the lack of coherent and consistent sex-disaggregated data collection on gender equality and women's empowerment, underscoring how supporting states in producing indicators is crucial for providing the necessary data for monitoring progress towards SDG5 and ensuring the meaningful involvement of women stakeholders.

The Information and Communication Technologies for Development Section also requested SDD's input on their new project concept note and document. They asked for SDD's support in identifying the gender considerations in digital infrastructure development. This project targeting countries in Central Asia focuses on the upgrade of integrated digital infrastructure for development. SDD provided a Gender Analysis briefing document outlining key ideas on incorporating gender into the project, notably with regard to the underrepresentation of women in the ICT and STEM workforce and the digital literacy gender gap.

Furthermore, SDD was invited to review the country studies on transport and women in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal conducted by ESCAP's Sub-regional Office for South and South-West Asia. These studies seek to assess the status of women's involvement in the transport and logistics sector, examining the safety and accessibility of existing transport services for fostering women's mobility and enhancing their participation in the labour force. SDD actively provided insights and feedback during SSWA's Expert Group Meeting "Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in South Asia through Inclusive Transport," held on December 13, 2023.

SDD also provided inputs to the position paper on “Gender Mainstreaming in Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Asia and the Pacific” by ESCAP’s Center for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM). This paper highlights women’s position in agrifood systems, the challenges they face due to changing contexts (male outmigration, climate crisis, external shocks) and the opportunity presented by sustainable agricultural mechanization to improve their livelihood and agrifood systems. Therefore, it recommends the development of a gender-responsive sustainable agricultural mechanization and presents integrated approaches to ensure this strategy benefits smallholder women farmers and their clients’ demands and needs.

Additionally, SDD’s Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section has provided advisory services to external partners. Indeed, it participated as a peer reviewer in the **Economies that Dare to Care** report, published by the Hot or Cool Institute in partnership with **SERI, Climate Outreach, and Global Action Plan UK**. The report’s findings cover a broad spectrum of perspectives and experiences from 18 months of literature review and consultation with a commission of over 30 experts in the field of social and environmental care from Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and South America. The report advocates for an alliance of individuals and organizations dedicated to care-centred, equitable, low-consumption societies to start shifting the set of ideas that are generally considered feasible and relevant by policy practitioners.

Jakarta Roundtable on Building a Caring Economy Across ASEAN, 26 January

On 26 January, representatives from ASEAN governments (including Laos, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Indonesia), ASEAN secretariat representatives, the Asian Development Bank, INGOs, NGOs, and feminist organisations gathered for a roundtable event held under the theme 'Building a Care Economy across ASEAN'. The roundtable sought to steer momentum on policies on care at the regional and national level amongst ASEAN countries as well as increase cooperation on the care agenda. On behalf of ESCAP's Social Development Division, Ms. Channe Lindstrøm, delivered a presentation on ESCAP's work on the care economy, drawing attention to several regional reports, case studies and primers that the Social Development Division has produced. She also introduced ESCAP's conceptual framework for care policies, highlighting important enabling factors and identifying levers for change.

Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on the Priority Theme of the 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) "Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls", 9-10 February

The consultation was jointly convened by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, in collaboration with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). The consultation provided a forum for ESCAP member States and key stakeholders in Asia and the Pacific to consider possible areas for joint interventions to accelerate progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The objective was to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and ideas among state and non-state actors and generate a set of recommendations to feed the CSW67 and inform membership contributions to the Agreed Conclusions.

Their recommendations focused on ensuring meaningful connectivity and the promotion of gender-transformative technology design, development and deployment, promoting women and girls in STEM education and careers; implementing appropriate economic, labour and social policies that ensure that women are not left behind in the digital age and addressing online and technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

Asia Pacific Regional Commemoration of International Women's Day 2023 (IWD 2023) "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for Gender Equality", 8 March

ESCAP, in collaboration with UN Women's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, organized the annual commemoration of International Women's Day. To address 2023's theme of "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality", an interactive discussion was held with speakers from civil society and the private sector. Key recommendations from the event focused on increased public and private sector investments to bridge the gender digital divide, inclusive and quality education in STEM subjects, and increased programmes supporting women and girls' digital literacy. Following the event, two of the panellists were interviewed for an ESCAP feature story, which was published online in conjunction with the Girls in ICT Day on 23 April. Video excerpts were published on ESCAP's Youtube Shorts and Social Media channels. The 2023 IWD Commemorations also included a video montage of submissions to the Ambassadors for a Day Competition, a video contest in which young people in Thailand submitted a video answering the question—"How can technology and innovation help improve gender equality?".

Following the video, the winners of the competition delivered statements on the importance of including youth voices in discussions related to gender equality and digital inclusion.

IWD Panelists Ms. Kirthi Jayakumar and Ms. Rhea See appeared in ESCAP Youtube Shorts



Do Not Shrink! A Message to Women and Girls Going...

Actions for Gender Equality you Can Take Right Now

Why We Need to Empower Women in Tech

Advice to Women and Girls Pursuing a Career in Tech

APEC Workshop on Women's Empowerment through Inclusive and Gender-responsive Climate Policymaking, 25-26 April

The APEC Workshop on Women's Empowerment through Inclusive and Gender-responsive Climate Policymaking was held on 25-26 April 2023. On behalf of ESCAP, Ms. Cai Cai, Chief of the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section, delivered a presentation on Strengthening Cooperation in Gender-responsive Climate Action in the Asia Pacific. In her presentation, she drew attention to the recommendations made at the Asia Pacific regional consultation on the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which had as its priority theme: Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies and programmes. She provided examples of several gender-responsive climate change initiatives in the region and highlighted ESCAP's Theme Study, "Accelerating Climate Action in Asia and the Pacific," and additional policy briefs and regional papers that the Social Development Division has produced on the topic.

18th Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development "Accelerating the Implementation of ASEAN's Commitments for Gender Equality through Gender Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion", 23 May

The meeting comprised ASEAN member States' senior government officials representing the national ministries in charge of social welfare and development. Its mandate is to implement ASEAN's commitment to fostering cooperation in social development aimed at raising the standard of living of disadvantaged groups while seeking the active involvement of all sectors of society. This session emphasized the role of gender mainstreaming and social inclusion towards realising gender equality, calling for the integration of gender perspective into the content of policies, addressing the issue of representation of women in all phases of the policy-making process and improving their opportunities and terms of participation in society. Ms. Channe Lindstrøm, on behalf of ESCAP's Social Development Division, stressed the crucial importance of ensuring women's social protection and economic empowerment in Asia and the Pacific. She reiterated ESCAP's support to governments in ASEAN and presented examples of technical assistance provided by ESCAP to various ASEAN member States, such as Bhutan, the Philippines, and Thailand, to enhance their capacity to realise inclusive and equitable societies.

17th ASEAN GO-NGO Forum on Social Welfare and Development "Accelerating the Implementation of ASEAN's Commitments for Gender Equality through Gender Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion", 22 May

Held under the leadership of Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development, the forum serves as a multi-stakeholder platform and avenue for the ASEAN member States, NGOs, CSOs, private sector, academia, and relevant stakeholders to share knowledge and experiences on measures and resources needed to advance social welfare and development in ASEAN. On behalf of ESCAP's Social Development Division, Ms. Channe Lindstrøm participated as a speaker in "Session 2: Perspectives from the ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and Partners" to share views on the planned and ongoing initiatives under ESCAP. She presented the division's key priorities of work to empower women and girls in the region and acknowledged the role CSOs have played in various sets of regional frameworks for achieving gender equality, such as their participation in the Beijing+25 review, their valuable contribution to the 67th Commission on the Status of Women and to the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023-2032. She reiterated ESCAP's commitment to work closely with CSOs to create stronger and more equal societies that prioritise the well-being of all individuals.

Regional Forum on Care Work in ASEAN Countries, 27-28 July

The Regional Forum on Care Work in ASEAN Countries, held from 27 to 28 July in Vientiane, shed light on the undervalued but essential work carried out by caregivers and emphasized the need for increased investment and recognition in this sector. The forum was jointly organized by ESCAP, the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW), Oxfam and the ASEAN Secretariat. Bringing together participants from across ASEAN member States, regional organizations, the private sector and technical experts, the consultation represented a significant stride towards advancing gender equality and promoting sustainable development, delving into gender-responsive and care-sensitive policies and programs in the Asia-Pacific region. Recommendations from the Forum were shared for the consideration of Indonesia as the 2023 ASEAN Chair and Lao PDR as the incoming 2024 ASEAN Chair. Ms. Cai Cai gave opening remarks while Ms. Channe Lindstrøm presented at Panel 1 on the need for a Care-Responsive Policy Ecosystem and Panel 5 on the importance of building strategic partnerships. ESCAP released a **news announcement** for the occasion.



Regional Forum on Care Work in ASEAN Countries © Oxfam/Vanida Souvannavong

Valuing and Investing in Unpaid Care and Domestic Work: Consultation with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Cambodia, 4 and 9 August

ESCAP successfully held a capacity-building workshop on the care economy for over 30 officials for the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) in advance of the national consultation that took place later in October this year. The consultation aimed to provide expertise on the care economy, for MoWA to be better prepared to spearhead and organize inter-ministerial collaboration on valuing and investing in unpaid care and domestic work. Based on inputs from MoWA, ESCAP identified four specific priority issues: access to water and sanitation, non-contributory cash transfers for social assistance, childcare centres/creche facilities, and parental leave policies, with time-use surveys as the fifth priority issue. This workshop allowed ESCAP to identify the most appropriate ministries for action on these policy areas.

Valuing and investing in unpaid care and domestic work: country case study Indonesia," September 2023

ESCAP released a new country case study on valuing and investing in unpaid care and domestic work, focusing on Indonesia. It explores how Indonesian policymakers can build stronger and more resilient care systems by valuing and investing in the care economy.

Philippines National Consultation on valuing and investing in unpaid care and domestic work, 28 to 29 September 2023

The Philippines National Consultation on valuing and investing in unpaid care and domestic work was jointly convened by the Philippine Commission on Women, ESCAP, and Oxfam Pilipinas, with support from the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement. Participants, including both governmental and non-governmental entities, assessed current conditions and identified potential areas for joint interventions aimed at valuing and investing in the care economy in the Philippines, promoting women's economic empowerment and participation in the labour force, and advancing the collection of gender data. The outcome of this national consultation resulted in a set of recommendations aligned with the discussions, guiding future actions for accelerated action in these areas.



Philippines National Consultation © Adrian Morales

Cambodia National Consultation on valuing and investing in unpaid care and domestic work, 03 to 05 October 2023

Following ESCAP's capacity-building in Cambodia in August, ESCAP held a three-day **consultation on valuing and investing in unpaid care and domestic work** in Phnom Penh from 3 to 5 October. The model framework for action was introduced to relevant line ministries and one-on-one consultations were held with each line ministry to identify areas for potential collaboration to implement a plan for each of these policy priority issues. Following the consultation, ESCAP is drafting a national action plan on the care economy for Cambodia and developing a policymaker handbook and facilitators guide for ministries to conduct their own capacity-building workshops and training and for other countries interested in working on the care economy to be able to replicate it.



Cambodia National Consultation

International Day of Care and Support, 29 October

ESCAP organized an **Asia-Pacific virtual commemoration** for the first commemoration of the International Day of Care and Support on 30 October 2023, in collaboration with ILO, UNDP, and UN Women. The objective was to raise awareness of the importance of care and support, and its key contribution to the achievement of gender equality, healthy ageing and the sustainability of our societies and economies. This day aims to emphasize the importance of caregiving, recognize the contributions of caregivers and care workers, and advocate for increased investments in comprehensive care policies and delivery models that support and enhance care in all its forms to advance gender equality and leave no one behind as per the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The one-hour virtual commemoration of the International Day of Care and Support was associated with the Global Alliance for Care. Panellists included H.E Chhun Hak, Director General, Cambodia MoWA, Susan Nio, CEO & CTO LoveCare, Indonesia, and moderator Ms. Panudda Boonpala, Deputy Regional Director of the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, with recorded messages from Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of ESCAP, Ms Chihoko Asada-Miyakawa, Regional Director of ILO, and Ms. Alia El-Yassir, Regional Director, UN Women.

To commemorate this day, ESCAP also produced a 15-minute video featuring a compilation of messages from partners under the auspices of the Global Alliance for Care, including representatives from governments, UN Agencies, academia and CSOs.



Philippines Subnational Consultation on valuing and investing on unpaid care and domestic work, 6-7 November

As a follow-up to the Philippines national consultation, ESCAP conducted a subnational consultation in Ormoc City, Leyte, Philippines, from 6 to 7 November, jointly with the National Economic Development Authority-Region 8, the Philippine Commission on Women, the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement and Oxfam. Taking place on the 10-year anniversary of Typhoon Haiyan, this consultation will focus on data and evidence-building in care, the climate and care nexus and local policies aimed at valuing and investing in the care economy.

“Leaving no one behind: don’t forget deaf women! Importance of reproductive rights of deaf women and sign language-based communication” at the Asian and Pacific Population Conference, 17 November

On the occasion of APPC7, the Social Development Division organized a side event with the Nippon Foundation to raise awareness of the issues faced by Deaf women and enhance the use of sign language to enable Deaf women’s access to reproductive health services. Indeed, Deaf women tend not to be allowed to make their own decisions about their reproductive health, including family planning. Some may even be deprived of their right to parenthood. This deprivation is worsened by the lack of access to sign language-based communication. Therefore, this event aimed at encouraging policymakers and organisations of persons with disabilities to work together to enhance Deaf women’s access to reproductive health services, including through the promotion of sign language-based communication.

Advancing gender equality in Asia and the Pacific in the context of climate change policy paper, October

ESCAP published a policy paper, ‘Advancing gender equality in Asia and the Pacific in the context of climate change’. The paper examines the risks and challenges that climate change poses for women and other marginalized groups in Asia and the Pacific and provides policy recommendations for a "whole-of-government" approach to mainstreaming gender in climate policies and strategies in the region. The paper was developed with inputs from the ESCAP Environment and Development Division and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

Roundtable on China Care Economy Policy Actions and International Cooperation, 23 November

The Roundtable on China Care Economy Policy Actions and International Cooperation will be jointly convened by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Center for International Knowledge on Development (CIKD). The roundtable will serve as a critical platform to deliberate on the pressing issues surrounding the care economy, especially the disproportionate care burden for women, in the contexts of current and emerging megatrends such as population ageing and the shrinking labour force. It will also aim to solicit inputs on how these issues could be addressed by more proactive policy solutions in China that could contribute to more inclusive, just and sustainable growth.



Statistics Division



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Ms. Sharita Serrao can be contacted for advice, information sharing, coordination, and collaboration on gender mainstreaming issues.

Asia-Pacific Stats Café: Using Big Data to Measure the Nexus Between Environment and Gender in Asia and the Pacific, 10 April

The Statistics Division organized a Stats Café on practical approaches to using big data to fill gender data gaps. Countries in the Asia-Pacific have made significant strides in generating the SDG indicators, but environment and gender indicators, in particular, still require additional attention. In 2022, ESCAP developed a pilot project specifically targeted at supporting National Statistics Offices in Asia and the Pacific to pilot the use of big data for producing a sample of environment-gender indicators related to the SDGs. This Stats Cafe session enabled two participating NSOs (Cambodia and Mongolia) to share their experience experimenting with big data to produce environment-gender indicators.

“Moving Gender Data Up the Value Chain: From Production to Impact” at the UN World Data Forum 2023, 26 April

The Statistics Division was a speaker at the session of the UN World Data Forum. Gender data are critical to understanding the lived experiences of women and girls, informing policy development, and monitoring progress over time. However, significant gender data gaps persist. Therefore, this session aimed to highlight promising solutions and practices from across the national statistical system to move gender data up the data value chain and ensure that we leave no one behind. The session drew on recent research to shift the conversation from identifying gender data problems to finding practical solutions to gender data gaps.

Asia-Pacific Stats Café "Reinvigorating the SDGs through gender and inclusive data: Harnessing the power of networks", 30 May

This Stats Cafe provided an overview of the current state of gender statistics within the Asia-Pacific region based on the results of the Global Review of Gender Statistics 2022. It notably underlined the limited collaboration of national statistics offices with other entities such as think tanks, NGOs or academia. The session proceeded to showcase innovative strategies, opportunities, and relationships current members of the Gender Data Network (GDN) have built through participation in its activities, particularly in the Africa region. It then discussed the value proposition of the expansion of such a network to the Asia-Pacific region.

United Nations 9th Global Forum on Gender Statistics, 29-31 August

The Statistics Division participated in “**Session VII: Legal identity for all, to achieve gender equality – Interregional dialogue**”. This session highlighted that, in countries where gender inequalities are most prevalent, lack of legal identity further marginalizes women and hampers progress toward gender equality. Ensuring legal identity for all, underpinned by access to birth, marriage and death registration across the life course, is a crucial layer of protection against social exclusion. Civil registration is also a crucial data source for sex-disaggregated vital statistics. Therefore, the session focused on countries' experiences in the establishment and maintenance of civil registration and identity management from birth to death and efforts to ensure interoperability in accordance with international standards and compliance with a human rights approach.

National Capacity Building Workshop on Using CRVS-Related Evidence to Inform Gender-Sensitive Policies in Fiji, 21-22 September

This national workshop in Fiji provided training for relevant data producers and users on bridging the gap between evidence and policy/practice in the Fiji Evidence to Action cycle. The workshop aimed to engage with a core group of CRVS data producers, data users, and decision-makers in Fiji, and other relevant stakeholders, such as representatives from the national statistics office, national focal points for CRVS, interior ministry and/or ministries of health, justice, women's affairs and other key users of CRVS data. Going forward, as part of this work, relevant national stakeholders, with support from ESCAP, will generate relevant gender-sensitive knowledge products and dissemination materials based on the selected priority topics. Some of these priority topics, as identified by Fiji and Bangladesh, include teenage motherhood and reasons for delayed civil registration among specific population groups.

Working Paper: Efforts towards measuring the gender-environment nexus in Asia and the Pacific, December 2023

This paper builds on **previous work to advance the measurement of the gender-environment nexus in the Asia-Pacific** region, undertaken by UN Women and ESCAP and examines methodological advances that have occurred since. As women and men interact with the environment differently, measuring these interactions is important to understand their roles in environmental conservation and degradation, their diverse levels of preparedness and capacity to cope with disasters, and the enablers and inequalities that make them vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The paper thus proposes a revised set of regional gender-environment indicators based on consultations with experts and national agencies in the region. It also describes country experiences in generating gender-environment data and outlines next steps to advance the production and use of gender-environment statistics across the region and beyond.





Trade, Investment and Innovation Division



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Committee on Trade, Investment, Enterprise and Business Innovation, 22-24 February

The **first session of the Committee on Trade, Investment, Enterprise and Business Innovation** made significant efforts to mainstream gender into several aspects of trade, investment and entrepreneurship.

Agenda item 2, “Making trade in Asia and the Pacific more competitive, sustainable and inclusive” (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/2), notably touched upon the benefits of digital trade facilitation and paperless trade measures for marginalized stakeholder groups in international trade, including women traders and micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises. Indeed, beyond the full implementation of digital trade facilitation potentially cutting average trade costs in the Asia-Pacific by more than 13 per cent, digital solutions can aid sustainable trade facilitation by lowering barriers for less advantaged groups. Digital technology not only improves women entrepreneurs’ access to international markets and external finance but can also enhance their ability to handle both domestic and cross-border business by reducing administrative costs and enhancing efficiency and productivity, such as through online back-office tools.



CTIEBI1 Agenda item 1: Opening Session ©ESCAP/Caio Perim

Agenda item 3, “Advancing public-private partnerships and private sector networks to accelerate climate action and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/4), also broached the importance of fair access to infrastructure to advance gender equality. Indeed, it affirmed the importance of providing equal, reliable and safe utilities, such as education, power supplies, healthcare services, sewage networks, and water and sanitation systems. For example, it highlighted that providing reliable and robust public transportation can ease the burden for women in remote areas to participate in the workforce; when well designed, it also provides them with safety and security, and ensures that they have equal access to opportunities and services. TIID later released a blog post on the ESCAP website on the topic, titled “**Advancing gender equality for sustainable infrastructure development in Asia and the Pacific.**”



Additionally, gender consideration was also stated as a critical component of the private-public partnership Network with the goal of enhancing gender responsiveness by developing various inclusive and sustainable finance instruments for social infrastructure development (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/INF/1). Indeed, a comprehensive gender-sensitive approach has been established for the implementation of Network activities, by (a) engaging with companies that disclose gender-sensitive information, (b) encouraging women's representation at the highest decision-making level to engage during the stakeholder consultations and scoping missions, (c) disaggregating all data collection by gender, (d) promoting women's representation as part of the research staff and team composition, (e) ensuring representation from women entrepreneurs association or equivalent networks related to socio-economic infrastructure development to better support gender considerations during the project transaction process, and (f) including the promotion of infrastructure projects that mainstream gender considerations, promote women's empowerment and addresses poverty, especially for women and rural populations.

As such, ESCAP requested its member States to identify gender issues of concern that can be discussed at the Network events and encourage the nomination of female representatives from members of the Network to participate and speak at the Network events. This is in addition to the routine disaggregation of data by gender that the Network has done since its inception in 2018. The female participation rate significantly increased from 19 per cent (the First Network Meeting in 2018) to 48 per cent, and the female government focal point rate reached 41 per cent.

Agenda item 4, “Mobilizing impact investment and foreign direct investment for sustainable development” (ESCAP/CTIEBI(1)/5), also underlined the role of FDI in promoting gender equality. Indeed, it highlighted how the relationship between FDI and gender affects four areas of the host economy. There is the impact on gender in leadership and management, the impact on gender at the “factory floor” level, the impact on and the links to women entrepreneurs and the impact on promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment within the broader local community. The first two both happen internally within the operations of the firm receiving FDI, and the latter two happen externally to the operations through contracts and activities in the wider community, for example. Additionally, women entrepreneurs who own or lead foreign firms can act as sources of FDI and impact gender equality in host economies.

In more specific terms, the committee noted that FDI can have a positive impact on gender equality by increasing labour demand and technological spillovers and by promoting the integration of women-owned and women-led small and medium-sized enterprises into global value chains. Equity forms of FDI can help increase access to much-needed capital for women entrepreneurs. Joint ventures, another type of FDI, can also be valuable in helping women-owned and women-led firms to expand into new markets and distribution networks, build their capacity, share the risks and costs of expansion and, potentially, provide access to new knowledge and expertise.

Finally, it noted the importance of mainstreaming gender both within investment promotion agencies and their activities. Some of the avenues to incorporate gender considerations in the efforts to attract, promote and facilitate investment include: a) Identifying investment opportunities that can have an impact on women and promote gender-responsive investments; (b) Ensuring that men and women have equal access to capacity- and supplier-development programmes and opportunities; (c) Supporting women entrepreneurs in understanding how to reach out to foreign investors and pitch to them; (d) Showcasing women entrepreneurs to foreign investors at both national and international investment fairs, as well as at road shows for foreign investors; (e) Working with finance ministries to develop special incentives to encourage foreign investors to make a contribution to women’s empowerment when investing; (f) Developing promotional material and image-building activities that are gender inclusive and also reflect national strides and commitments on gender equality and women’s empowerment; (g) Targeting women-owned and women-led firms as potential foreign investors; (h) Targeting foreign investors that have a track record of investing in gender equality; (i) Facilitating reskilling and upskilling training programmes for women by foreign investors. TIID also released a blog post on the topic, entitled “**Advancing Gender Equality through Foreign Direct Investment – Often an Overlooked Avenue.**”



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Advancing Gender Equality through Foreign Direct Investment – Often an Overlooked Avenue

As countries in Asia and the Pacific build back from the COVID-19 pandemic, they have a unique opportunity to empower women and advance gender equality by putting women at the heart of the recovery...

 Heather Taylor-Strauss

Promotion of Inclusive Business

Another prong of TIID's commitment to mainstreaming gender into its work relates to its project on promoting inclusive business. Indeed, from its initial project proposal to the development of its toolkit and coaching materials, TIID has made deliberate efforts to integrate gender considerations across the entire lifecycle of this project.

Inclusive businesses exemplify the possibility of delivering goods, services, and livelihood opportunities to often marginalized individuals and communities while maintaining commercial viability, going beyond purely profit-driven business.

As such, the project proposal ensured that a gender lens would be applied to improve market systems in agriculture and food systems. The objective was to ensure that both male and female small-scale producers would experience improvements in their income, productivity, and nutritional status. The project recognized the unique challenges faced by female small-scale producers and underscored the importance of involving women's business associations, associations addressing the needs of female small-scale producers, and partners who incorporate a gender perspective into their work. The project set forth specific requirements for integrating gender criteria into assessment tools and incorporating gender perspectives into the project's manuals, training sessions, and coaching activities.

One of the major outputs of this project is a toolkit for inclusive business coaching. This toolkit, while adaptable to national contexts, includes a dedicated section on "reaching women-led and women-focused enterprises" within its overarching coaching programme and addresses the theme of "gender mainstreaming" in its coaching topics. Moreover, it provides valuable content on facilitating access to financial resources tailored to the needs of women-led and women-focused enterprises.

TIID's coaching activities are organized along a 1-year roadmap, designed to be used by the coach and the company in developing a customized coaching roadmap. The coaching includes four webinars that allow for relevant inputs from international sector experts, group exchange, learning and reflection, and ten customized, individual coaching sessions with each company to identify, design, test and implement inclusive business opportunities. Between coaching sessions, the companies are expected to work on agreed-upon tasks to advance the development and implementation of their inclusive business model.

As of 2023, TIID has provided coaching to 30 companies, 20 in India and 10 in Viet Nam, with a particular emphasis on female farmers and entrepreneurs in the latter. Beyond coaching sessions, TIID also led peer exchange and networking opportunities throughout the year.



Additional activities to bolster women's entrepreneurship were thus introduced in Viet Nam. These activities aimed to enhance the capacity of inclusive businesses in Viet Nam to engage more effectively with women entrepreneurs. This includes facilitating access to finance and providing technical assistance. These specific measures seek to economically empower women entrepreneurs by equipping inclusive businesses with the tools to engage with women entrepreneurs through their business models. This entails offering gender-inclusive coaching and training and facilitating access to finance for inclusive businesses seeking to expand their engagement with women entrepreneurs or smallholder farmers. Furthermore, the project strives to strengthen institutional capacity to engage women entrepreneurs in inclusive business. It supports a business intermediary in Viet Nam in developing a strategy to offer inclusive business coaching services to firms looking to develop inclusive business models to enhance their engagement with women entrepreneurs or smallholder farmers.

One of the Vietnamese businesses receiving such coaching, Vinasamex, shared how it has transitioned into an inclusive business model for both profit and to create social benefits. It notably built three factories in the mountain areas, creating an additional 600 jobs, primarily benefitting women, with an increased income for farmers from USD 250 per hectare to USD 5,000 per hectare per year. This increased income has far-reaching positive effects, empowering women employees to afford their children's education and providing them with more life opportunities. The firm also offers business training so that farmers, 95 per cent of which being women, can get bank loans. Indeed, it introduced gender equality projects for both men and women and held various training courses, reaching 1,225 women. It also created a specialized course for women farmers, focusing on the technical processing of cinnamon after harvest. In parallel, they have trained 1,000 women to navigate the process of securing financing. This empowerment enables them to invest in more seedlings and fertilizer, expand their cultivation efforts, and consequently increase their profits.

Lastly, gender considerations are integrated into the project's monitoring and evaluation framework. Specific indicators are designed to gather gender-disaggregated data. This includes tracking the number of small-scale producers reached through the developed and/or expanded inclusive business models. Additionally, it encompasses the participation of individuals from various sectors, including government agencies, business associations, facilitators, development partners, businesses, and academic institutions, in ESCAP-hosted regional investment and promotion forums.



Sixth ASEAN Inclusive Business Summit ©Dony Hartono

Feminist Finance Forum, 16-17 August 2023

Organised in collaboration with the Government of Canada, the Feminist Finance Forum brought together women entrepreneurs, investors, financial service providers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to generate action towards closing the gender-finance gap in Asia and the Pacific. It sought to facilitate the expansion of networks among women entrepreneurs, investors, financial service providers, policymakers, and other essential ecosystem participants. It provided a platform for knowledge exchange, enabling participants to learn from and share their experiences, tools, and opportunities geared towards enhancing gender-responsive financing in the Asia-Pacific region. Finally, the Forum aimed to drive concrete outcomes, fostering meaningful actions and forging a collective regional vision dedicated to closing the gender finance gap in Asia and the Pacific. The Feminist Finance Forum adds to ESCAP's efforts in closing the gender finance gap and advancing a feminist entrepreneurial ecosystem in Asia and the Pacific.



Gender Equality and Climate Change - Translating Policy into Action, 4 December

TIID, supported by SDD, organized a COP28 side event on the nexus between gender equality and climate actions and policies. Indeed, women and girls, in all their diversity, are powerful agents of change that can drive the ambitious action we need to limit global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees. Enabling their more robust participation and representation drives ambitious gender-responsive climate actions across mitigation, adaptation, and building community resilience. As such, this side event shared and discussed policies at the nexus of gender equality and climate change action and the strategies and policies countries are implementing to achieve gender equality and an equitable gender-responsive just transition to a net zero future.





Transport Division



Gender Focal Point for TD: Ms. Katrin Luger, Chief of the Transport Research and Policy Section

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Ms. Katrin Luger can be contacted for advice, information sharing, coordination, and collaboration on gender mainstreaming issues.

Project on Enhancing Social Inclusion and Innovations in Urban Transport Systems in Asia-Pacific Cities

In December 2021, the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026) was adopted by ESCAP member States with the priority to encourage accelerated use of digital technologies, deployment of smart transport systems, and transitioning towards more efficient, resilient, inclusive and low-carbon transport systems for passenger and freight transport. Inclusive transport was included as an objective, as well as one of the thematic areas. As a result, the “Enhancing Social Inclusion and Innovations in Urban Transport Systems in Asia-Pacific Cities” project, supported by the Republic of Korea, was launched in 2022 to address universal accessibility and social inclusion in the transport sector.

This project, graded GEM2a and running until July 2024, aims to accelerate progress towards target 11.2 of the SDGs: “By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.”

The project document (2022-TD-004) notably highlights that while women, as a growing segment of the population, are the largest users of public transport in cities, their needs are still not reflected in transport strategies and policies. In this sense, this project aims to enhance the capacity of policymakers and planners in order to plan for and operate more accessible, socially inclusive and innovative urban transport systems by integrating active mobility and utilization of emerging technologies in selected Asian cities and countries. Target countries of the project include Azerbaijan, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Mongolia, and Nepal.

This project would mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in several ways. Firstly, it aims to advocate universal accessibility and barrier-free access and planning for public transport catering to the needs of women and different vulnerable users. Secondly, it would encourage national, city and local authorities to develop gender-responsive and women's empowerment policies to plan and operate public transport systems that would be more convenient and safer for women and differently-abled and aged populations. Finally, it would seek to increase opportunities for the participation of women in planned project activities.

Virtual Expert Group Meeting on Enhancing Social Inclusion and Innovations in Urban Transport Systems in Asia-Pacific Cities, 11 October

As part of this project, an Expert Group Meeting was held to bring governments, international organizations, multilateral development banks, and academia together to discuss and share best practice knowledge on inclusive transport and innovation in Asia and the Pacific, as well as to seek feedback on the regional inclusive transport guidelines to be developed.

Two of the three expert group meeting's sessions contained presentations on gender-inclusive transport and gender mainstreaming in transport. Session 2 notably included a presentation by the Asian Development Bank's Gender Equality Division titled "Gender-inclusive transport services and infrastructure in ADB operations". It noted the gender differences in travel patterns, use of transport, women's time use and time poverty, mobility and safety, and access and use of transportation in rural versus urban areas. Moreover, it highlighted women's low representation in the sector and the impact of inaccessible transport on their workforce participation. As such, they presented several areas in which gender can be mainstreamed in transport sector projects (transport design and spaces, consultation, planning and governance, safety and security, accessibility, employment and decent working conditions, skills training, affordability, etc.). Finally, they introduced the key gender design features in their project in India, Pakistan and Tajikistan.

TD and SDD also collaborated to present gender mainstreaming in transport during session 3. This presentation underscored ESCAP's transport mandate and how it relates to ESCAP member States' commitment to GEWE as enshrined in the Asia Pacific Beijing+25 Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Indeed, paragraph 16g of the Beijing+25 Declaration calls for: "Promoting the mobility and empowerment of women and girls, and ensuring that urban, rural and peripheral public transport, including land and water transport systems and infrastructure, are sustainable, accessible, safe, affordable and gender-responsive". They noted that women often have shorter and more frequent trips, relying on public transport more than men and travelling more often with children, older persons or persons with disabilities. They then highlighted the gendered barriers to transport as shown below.

Gendered Barriers to Transport



The presentation also emphasized the benefits of gender mainstreaming in transport. They include boosting income and economic growth, increasing women's autonomy and participation, reducing time burdens, improving service quality and efficiency for all, and reducing environmental impact.

Side event “Advancing Gender Equality in Transport Climate Action” at COP28, 11 December 2023

This side event, jointly organized with ESCAP’s EDD and SDD, the ILO, the FIA Foundation and the International Transport Forum (ITF), emphasized the need for accelerated gender mainstreaming for a successful zero-carbon transition in the transport sector. The transport sector is male-dominated across all regions and is currently not on track to meet its net zero carbon target. In Asia and the Pacific, less than 10 per cent of the transport workforce is constituted of women.

Following the findings of ESCAP’s policy paper on “Advancing Gender Equality in Asia and the Pacific in the Context of Climate Change”, this side event focused on better understanding the nexus of gender equality, transport and climate change and how gender mainstreaming principles could support the decarbonization of transport. The highlighted examples include strengthening sectors’ interaction, improving data availability, establishing a monitoring and accountability framework, enhancing regional cooperation to amplify women’s voices, and providing accessibility training opportunities for women.

The event also highlighted the mainstreaming gender principles in decarbonizing transport policies as identified in the ITF and FIA Foundation’s publication “Gender Equality and the Role of Women in Decarbonising Transport” and in ILO gender equality Conventions to support a gender-balanced transport workforce while ensuring a just transition. Overall, this event aimed to strengthen the awareness of the linkages between gender equality and zero carbon transport, as well as highlight follow-up action for countries.

Gender Focal Point participation

During this year’s Annual Meeting for Gender Focal Points, GFP alternate Wei-Shiuen Ng volunteered to provide opening remarks to the third section on the challenges and lessons learned from mainstreaming gender. She highlighted the difficulties of integrating gender perspectives into traditionally male-dominated fields, such as the transport sector, and emphasized the need for more gender-related projects. Indeed, Dr. Ng pointed out that the majority of transport infrastructure in many Asia-Pacific cities does not adequately address the needs and preferences of women transport users, a situation that similarly affects women in the transport workforce. Therefore, she offered some strategies for improvement, including the collection of sex-disaggregated data, the inclusion of gender discussions in project workshops and events, and the integration of gender considerations into project outcome documents like guidelines and reports. She stressed the importance of reminding colleagues of these strategies and overarching GEWE goals and initiatives.

Furthermore, she presented her division’s good practice in interacting with member States. To address the lack of gender data, her division initiated its own data collection by assisting member States in designing questionnaires and surveys tailored to project needs, helping them develop and implement gender-sensitive transport policies.

Lastly, she emphasized the importance for gender focal points to work in close collaboration with the PME coordinator to ensure gender mainstreaming is integrated throughout the entire project lifecycle, from proposal development and implementation to monitoring and evaluation.

Subregional offices

All of ESCAP's subregional offices (subprogramme 8) plan to advance gender equality and the economic empowerment of women in their strategies for 2023, with subregion-specific foci, for example, on gender equality in the technology industry for the Office in North-East Asia.

Their gender mainstreaming work is intrinsically linked with that of ESCAP's divisions as they often act as the intermediary to the implementation of projects in each sub-region.



Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia, Incheon



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Urban Innovation Challenge: Citypreneurs

ENEA is a partner of the Citypreneurs programme, a city-based start-up competition that promotes innovation-driven solutions to solve urban challenges and accelerate the achievement of the UN 2030 Agenda. Citypreneurs aims to create an international ecosystem and a platform for young entrepreneurs and start-ups worldwide interested in creating positive social, economic, and environmental impacts. This year's edition contained a presentation aimed at enterprises on the importance of developing women's employment in the workforce and encouraging more flexible employment systems, notably to allow post-maternity return to work. The Citypreneurs website notably includes a "**Diversity & Inclusion**" webpage highlighting the benefits of tapping into different perspectives, experiences, knowledge and approaches to develop smarter tech and tap into new markets.

Looking ahead

ENEA is in the process of developing relations with the gender representative of UNDP Seoul and attended several activities held by the newly opened UN Women Center of Excellence for Gender Equality in Seoul on women's economic empowerment and cybercrime issues.



Subregional Office for North and Central Asia, Almaty



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Expert Group Meeting on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action in the North and Central Asia, 7-8 June

The Expert Group Meeting (EGM), organized by the Subregional Office for North and Central Asia, had for objectives to (i) review progress and gaps in achieving specific objectives of the Vienna Programme of Action in North and Central Asia, (ii) address the impacts of multiple crises on Landlocked Developing Countries' progress and their National Development Strategies, (iii) provide expert opinions on national and subregional development needs and gaps in implementing key action areas of the Roadmap pertaining to transport and energy connectivity, clean energy, trade facilitation and digital trade.

Session 4 of the EGM on Accelerating Trade Facilitation and Digital Trade in North and Central Asia had a significant gender angle as it broached digital and inclusive trade with a focus on SMEs and women's participation. Indeed, it highlighted that traditional cross-border trade procedures represent disproportionate barriers for small-scale and women traders due to their lack of transparency, high complexity and costs, as well as gender-specific safety risks. Therefore, speakers noted that digital and gender-responsive trade facilitation offered women multiple benefits, such as protection from security risks and discrimination, time-saving, and easier access to information and qualified customs brokers. They thus underlined the importance of empowering women through gender-responsive trade facilitation for the Vienna Programme of Action to be inclusive.





Subregional Office for the Pacific, Suva



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Pacific perspectives 2023: advocating the aspirations of Small Islands Developing States

In its 2023 report on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), EPO mainstreamed gender into several aspects of SIDS's development. Firstly, it presented one of the challenges to social, inclusive and equitable development. Indeed, it highlighted that most of the Pacific SIDS have high levels of emigration, with some of the most productive citizens seeking 'better work opportunities' overseas and sending remittances back to their families. One result of the high level of 'outmigration' is that the proportion of elderly people, people with disabilities, specific vulnerabilities or long-term illnesses, and women and children are often a significantly higher proportion of the total population of the SIDS.

Secondly, it introduced how SIDS can synergize strategic regional and national approaches while including gender considerations. For instance, Pacific SIDS are working to strengthen the institutional, regulatory and domestic policy environment to prepare against future shocks. Key policies have thus been developed to enable business environments to receive private sector investment and harness entrepreneurship and enterprise development, especially for women and youth. The report highlights that women's economic empowerment must be synergized across sectors to accelerate dynamic and inclusive economic growth.



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Subregional Office for South-East Asia, Bangkok



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Ambassador for a Day 2023 at ESCAP's International Women's Day commemoration, 8 March

For the **Asia-Pacific Regional Commemoration of International Women's Day**, ESCAP's Subregional Office for South-East Asia supported the UN in Thailand in holding their 3rd annual **Ambassador for a Day competition**. This video contest aims at promoting gender equality in Thailand for International Women's Day. This year, young participants were required to submit a video answering the question: "How can technology and innovation help improve gender equality?" The project, targeted at young people from 16 to 25 years of age, both Thai and non-Thai nationals residing in Thailand, is widely inclusive and encourages youth from the LGBTQ+ or non-binary community, young people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups to enter the contest.

Winners of the contest had the opportunity to learn and experience diplomatic life and real-world engagements with women ambassadors and women leaders from the United Nations in Thailand. Tailored as a 'day-in-the-life,' this youth mentorship initiative involves shadowing an ambassador or UN women leader in their organizations and attending ESCAP's International Women's Day commemoration on 8 March 2023 in Bangkok. This year, winners notably shadowed ESCAP's Executive Secretary, Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana.

The head of the Subregional Office for South-East Asia, Ruhimat Soerakoesoemah, took this opportunity to brief the young contestants on the power of youth to drive the Sustainable Development Goals. The briefing notably presented the Asia-Pacific Youth Forum, a dedicated space for young people from across Asia and the Pacific region working on diverse, sustainable development issues to discuss and deliberate on the theme of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development every year. It also broached the different ways in which the youth can get involved with the UN's work, such as UN Volunteers, internships, and the Young Professionals Programme.



Subregional Office for South & South-West Asia, New Delhi



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South Asia is a rapidly growing subregion accounting for almost a quarter of the world's population. An important channel for realizing inclusive and sustainable regional development is the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) within South Asia, which serve as the backbone of all sectors of the economy.

Despite the relatively high presence of women in South Asian MSMEs, they still face many challenges in expanding their businesses and becoming part of regional and global supply chains due to the lack of requisite knowledge and the smaller scale of their businesses. They notably have issues accessing technology, finance, and ICT knowledge. E-commerce platform for South Asian women entrepreneurs can be a powerful tool for empowering them socially and economically since it addresses the outmoded barriers of geographic isolation and limited access to information and financing.

Project on E-Commerce Capacity Building for Women-led MSMEs in South Asia

The sub-regional office for South and South-West Asia is implementing the project “E-Commerce Capacity Building for Women-led Small and Medium Enterprises in South Asia” to empower and equip women entrepreneurs to use e-commerce and digital marketing tools to promote their businesses. ESCAP, under the project, has undertaken a multifaceted approach towards enabling South Asian women entrepreneurs to expand their reach and participate in local, regional, and international supply chains. It has developed online e-learning courses on e-commerce and digital marketing, an e-commerce training portal for women entrepreneurs, and an e-commerce manual. Additionally, ESCAP has conducted a series of virtual and in-person workshops on e-commerce and digital marketing for women entrepreneurs among fellow female participants through a Facebook group with more than 1,100 members, respectively. Additionally, a Facebook page, with currently more than 727 followers, has been established to encourage female entrepreneurs to share their entrepreneurial stories as well as products and services.

Between 2019 and March 2023, this training programme in e-commerce and digital marketing benefitted 3000 women entrepreneurs of micro, small and medium enterprises in all ten countries of South and South-West Asia. The trainings not only improved their knowledge and skills, but also instilled confidence in them that they can do online business. As a result of the project, many women received international orders, including from other women through the network, and diversified their production and supplies.

The women entrepreneurs who participated in the training series discussed what they gained from the programme. Ms. Thinley Yangzom, Founder of Bhutan Superfoods and Herbs, shared, "Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, my business was hugely impacted and had to shut down. But thanks to these trainings, I learnt about e-commerce and digitally marketing my business to expand my reach."

"In today's world, it is essential to be able to showcase products online, and we appreciate the effort that ESCAP has made to support women entrepreneurs to this end. The ESCAP training platform has enabled us to practise showcasing our work and products on e-commerce sites." Ms. Sujata Chatterjee, Founder of Twirl.store India, further elaborated.

Ms. Tazima Hossain Majumdar, Owner of Needle Craft, Bangladesh, echoed the sentiments of the other women entrepreneurs, "I learned how to upload my product profile on e-commerce platforms for women entrepreneurs. The training helped me learn about using digital marketing sites to generate and connect with new customers from South Asia."

The project has been recognized as a success story for women-to-women (W2W) business model and South-South Cooperation.

E-commerce and Digital Marketing Training programme for Women Entrepreneurs, 21-27 January

The sub-regional office held an online training on E-commerce and Digital Marketing for women entrepreneurs on 21 January, followed by four in-person workshops: at Mysuru, Karnataka, on 24 January 2023; at Mangaluru, Karnataka, on 1 February; at Bidadi, Karnataka, on 17 February 2023; and at Kagalburagi, Karnataka, on 27 February 2023. The training and workshops discussed digital marketing using social media platforms, search engine optimization to promote businesses, as well as the basics of running online businesses. Additionally, hands-on training sessions were organized to help participants utilize and register on e-commerce platforms and networking sites. Exhibitions on site provided opportunities for the entrepreneurs to display their products and services and network with fellow women entrepreneurs. The workshops brought together various stakeholders with varied expertise for capacity building and dialogues, with heads of international organizations, senior government officials, ambassadors, high-level managers, and leaders of women's organizations sharing their skills and knowledge in workshops.



January training © ESCAP SRO SSWA/Rajan Sudesh Ratna

Training of Women Entrepreneurs on Enhancing Business Opportunities Through Digital Tools, 20-21 March

Under the project “E-Commerce Capacity Building for Women-led MSMEs in South Asia”, the ESCAP-SSWA conducted this joint training with UN Women to assist rural women entrepreneurs of India and Nepal to enhance business through the use of digital tools, product and market development, and networking. Ms. Kanta Singh, Deputy Representative of UN Women, India, and Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head of ESCAP-SSWA, opened the workshop. During the training, participants were invited to share experiences and exhibit their products with other women entrepreneurs.



March training digital tools © ESCAP SRO SSWA/Rajan Sudesh Ratna

Training for Women Entrepreneurs on Promoting Business through E-commerce and Digital Marketing, 23-24 March

Under the project “E-Commerce Capacity Building for Women-led MSMEs in South Asia”, the ESCAP-SSWA conducted the training to introduce women entrepreneurs to various issues related to e-commerce, digital marketing, and financial viability, such as the use of social media platforms and product development and branding. The training was opened by Dr. Rajni Aggarwal, President of the Federation of Indian Women Entrepreneurs (FIWE) and Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head of ESCAP-SSWA.



March training e-commerce © ESCAP SRO SSWA/Rajan Sudesh Ratna

Training of Trainers Programme for Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka: Enhancing Skills on Digital Marketing and E-commerce, 7 June

SSWA organized a training of trainers programme for women entrepreneurs from Karnataka, India. The online meeting consisted of two sessions led by Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head of ESCAP-SSWA. The first session discussed an online e-learning course on e-commerce and digital marketing, while the second session provided guidance to trainers on how to train participants on using social media platforms for digital marketing.

Other SSWA projects to mainstream gender in its work

This year, SSWA's gender focal point, Leila Salarpour Goodarzi, showcased her sub-regional office's commitment to gender mainstreaming during the annual meeting for gender focal points. In addition to introducing the e-commerce capacity-building project, Leila highlighted various other areas where SSWA incorporates gender considerations.

First, in partnership with ESCAP's transport division, the High Commission of Canada and India's National Institute of Urban Affairs, the sub-regional office is developing a GEM 2B project related to the impact of the transport sector on women's labour force participation. As such, it is conducting a subregional analysis, starting with case studies of Bangladesh, India and Nepal, to accelerate progress towards three objectives:

Increasing **women's labour force participation** in the transport sector

Enhancing the **accessibility** of public transportation for women, including those from vulnerable groups

Providing recommendations on promoting **women's economic empowerment** through the transport sector

To finalize these country studies, an Expert Group Meeting was organizing in December to present the main findings and solicit feedback from relevant transport actors, thereby strengthening the validity and relevance of the studies.

Second, SSWA is actively engaged in another GEM 2B project, to run until April 2024, to collect data to understand the challenges migrant women face in India. It identifies that 80% of women migrating internally do so because of marriage or for employment, predominantly within the garment sector and typically occupying lower decision-making positions. The study aims to analyze migrant women's socioeconomic background, the push and pull factors to work and migrate, the barriers and risks they face, the appropriate public and private interventions, and to examine if the international and national labour and wage standards are applied. Partners of this project include the International Organization for Migration, UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF, among others.

Lastly, SSWA is also conducting gender-related initiatives with IDD to build risk resilience in the Maldives. As such, they are developing gender-responsive decision-making tools for disaster risk reduction to be integrated into the **ESCAP Risk and Resilience portal**. The sub-regional office thus collected sex-disaggregated data and data on the female populations exposed to different risks, such as floods and rising sea levels, to assess the associated impacts. SSWA held focus group discussions to understand women's roles in decision-making and implementation processes in the Maldives. This effort will ultimately result in policy recommendations and capacity-building training to fortify gender-inclusive disaster risk reduction strategies.

Regional Institutions



Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development



Gender Focal Point for APCICT: Mr. Ko Kiyong, Director

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The Women ICT Frontier Initiative

The Women ICT Frontier Initiative (WIFI) flagship programme aims to promote women's entrepreneurship in Asia and the Pacific by enhancing the capabilities of women entrepreneurs in ICT and entrepreneurship so that they and their enterprises can become more productive, and hopefully grow and be sustainable so that they can actively contribute to community development as well as to the local and national economy.

The overall goal of WIFI is to create socially and economically empowered women through ICT-enabled entrepreneurship.

WIFI is expected to achieve the following key objectives:

- Strengthen the capacity of women entrepreneurs to utilize information and communication technologies in support of their businesses
- Strengthen the capacity of government leaders and policymakers to create an enabling environment for ICT-empowered women entrepreneurs

As of March 2023, WIFI had reached 21 countries, including Armenia, Bhutan, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, and Viet Nam. Among 14,600 trained participants through the programme, 10,000 were women.

APCICT is now developing new training programmes to provide women entrepreneurs a comprehensive digital transformation/innovation solution. This will include modules on the Digital Transformation of Women-Owned MSMEs, E-Commerce and Digital Marketing, Digital Tools for Financial Management, E-Business Management and Business Continuity Planning, Data Analytics, and Trust and Security in Digital Technologies.

This year, APCICT has continued its efforts to localize its WIFI programme and signed a letter of intent with Thailand's Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, which takes charge of matters related to women, older persons, persons with disabilities and other marginalised populations. The Ministry acknowledged the importance of digital skills and literacy for older per-

sons, women, and persons with disabilities and WIFI was successfully introduced and adopted for their nationwide initiatives, such as "SMART Silver Economy with Soft Power." Under this letter of intent, the Ministry expects to roll out 27 training centres across Thailand, including 7 for women and families. This is in addition to the 300 plus older persons and women entrepreneurs trained under WIFI in Northern (Lampang), Pattaya, and North-eastern (Nakhon Phanom), in Southern (Songkhla) and Central regions this year.

Training on E-Commerce and Digital Marketing for Women Entrepreneurs (Maldives), 8-9 March

To celebrate International Women's Day, the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, together with the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services of the Republic of Maldives and APCICT, organized the Training on E-Commerce and Digital Marketing for Women Entrepreneurs in Male, Maldives. The two-day training focused on developing the local women entrepreneurs' knowledge and understanding of digital marketing, social media marketing, and leveraging the readily available e-commerce tools to build their businesses. The event also touched on the practical skills in creating a social media presence for their brand, its content creation, and having good branding and storytelling in their business strategy.

Training on Female Entrepreneurs and the Application of Digital Skills in Business (CWE), 27 April

On April 27, 2023, the Agency for Enterprise Development (AED) under the Ministry of Planning and Investment of Viet Nam, in collaboration with the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for ICT for Development, the Viet Nam Women's Union, and the Viet Nam Women Entrepreneurs Council, organized a training course called "Women Entrepreneurs and the Application of Digital Skills in Business" as part of the ESCAP project "Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship: Creating a Gender-Responsive Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (CWE)". The programme is funded by Global Affairs Canada. The training provided more than 100 female entrepreneurs with the necessary ICT skills and knowledge to enhance their entrepreneurship in today's digital economy.

Workshop on ICT Capacity Building for Women Entrepreneurs in Lampang, Thailand, 01-02 June

In an effort to strengthen the capacity of women entrepreneurs in Northern Thailand to use digital technologies in their businesses, APCICT, in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and the Digital Economy Promotion Agency, conducted a 2-day training on e-commerce and digital marketing for women entrepreneurs from 1 to 2 June 2023.

Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs and Older Persons through ICT (Nakhon Phanom Province), 02-03 August

APCICT, in partnership with Thailand's Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, and in collaboration with the Digital Economy Promotion Agency and the Research Center of Communication and Development Knowledge Management, co-organized the Training on Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs and Older Persons through ICT at the Center for Quality of Life Development and Career Promotion for the Elderly in Nakhon Phanom Province. The training aimed to introduce the Women ICT Frontier Initiative programme and highlight the importance of ICT capacity development for potential and current women entrepreneurs and older individuals. It also sought to enhance participants' understanding of the enabling role of ICT for women entrepreneurs and older persons.

Training Workshop on "Smart Skills" for Women Entrepreneurs, 17-18 August

APCICT and Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam organized the Training Workshop on Smart Skills for Women Entrepreneurs on 17-18 August 2023 in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India. The event aimed to help women entrepreneurs in India deepen their understanding of concepts and practices on digital marketing, social media marketing, and how to leverage e-commerce tools and platforms in their enterprises.



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Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM)



Gender Focal Point for CSAM: Ms. Li Yutong, Head

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Ms. Li Yutong can be contacted for advice, information sharing, coordination, and collaboration on gender mainstreaming issues.

Agriculture in Asia and the Pacific has traditionally relied on labour-intensive practices, with women playing a significant role in various farming activities. Agricultural mechanization holds immense potential to enhance productivity, reduce drudgery, and improve livelihoods in the sector. However, gender disparities in access to and control over agricultural resources and technologies, including mechanization, continue to persist. Addressing the gender dimension of agricultural mechanization is crucial to unlock the full potential of women farmers, enhance their economic empowerment, and achieve sustainable and inclusive agricultural development.

With the support of Programme Support Costs (PSC) funding from ESCAP, CSAM has been able to make proactive efforts towards ensuring equal access to mechanization technologies, providing training and capacity-building opportunities for women, and creating an enabling environment that promotes gender equality in the agricultural sector in Asia and the Pacific.

Integrating a gender dimension into CSAM's work has been challenging for the staff due to the field's predominantly male-dominated and traditionally gender-blind nature. Indeed, much of CSAM's focus lies within a technical niche that combines the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) sector, where male mechanical engineers in agricultural machinery are overrepresented, with technical aspects that often overlook gender perspectives, primarily focusing on practical issues such as machine functionality, pumps, pressure, brakes, and noise levels.

However, they identified several key approaches to integrate gender perspectives into the field of agricultural mechanization. The first approach focuses on enhancing the design of machinery, ensuring it is better adapted to women's specific needs and capabilities. This includes considering factors such as ergonomics and ease of use to facilitate women's involvement in agricultural activities. The second approach emphasizes the importance of improving women's access to STEM education and encouraging their active participation in the research and development of agricultural machinery. By promoting gender equality in STEM fields, women can contribute their expertise and perspectives to drive innovation and address the specific needs of women farmers. Lastly, there is significance to bridging the "gender yield gap," which refers to the lower agricultural productivity rates among female agricultural workers compared to their male counterparts due to limited access to subsidies, services, and modern machinery. Supporting initiatives that enhance women's access to machinery can empower them to overcome barriers, improve their agricultural productivity, and promote equitable opportunities in the agricultural sector.



Woman driving a tractor © CSAM

While CSAM initially had limited gender awareness in their work, they have since taken steps to address this gap. Indeed, CSAM's work on gender was initially limited to a few lines in their reports acknowledging the role of agricultural machinery in reducing the labour burden on women farmers. However, several technical working groups with engineers from different countries showcasing their efforts in integrating gender in their work inspired CSAM to explore gender considerations in machine design and access to agricultural mechanization. Although initially lacking the necessary resources and capacity, CSAM demonstrated a willingness to address gender considerations.

The availability of PSC funding from ESCAP has been instrumental in supporting CSAM's efforts to mainstream gender. This funding has increased the centre's awareness and capacity to design projects with higher impacts on gender equality and women's empowerment. As a result, CSAM organized a workshop titled "Enabling Gender Responsive Food Security Programming: Focus on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization." Attended by multiple agencies from the UN Country Team in China, including FAO, IFAD, RCO, UNAIDS, UNEP, WFP, and UN Women, the workshop received highly positive feedback. It served as a platform to discuss the pressing need to bridge the gender yield gap to boost food security and combat the global food crises. In addition, it also explored measures to increase female farmers' access to modern machinery and technologies and identified the need to tailor initiatives and practices to local development realities and levels of mechanization. The PSC funding also supported CSAM in recruiting an expert with expertise in agriculture, mechanization, and gender issues, further enhancing CSAM's capacity in gender mainstreaming within its overall strategy and programme planning.

This enhanced awareness of gender within CSAM led to a fruitful session on gender mainstreaming during the CSAM Governing Council (GC) meeting. GC members presented examples of how their countries are addressing agricultural machinery access and highlighted the need to encourage more female students in agriculture and engineering courses. They recognized women's significant contribution to food security and sustainability and discussed addressing the gender yield gap as a CSAM priority. As a result, GC members expanded CSAM's mandate to include gender in its scope of work – a topic that had not been previously addressed through dedicated projects. This new mandate also creates opportunities for future inter-agency collaboration, exchange of good practices, and funding support.

CSAM staff affirmed their commitment to further enhance their understanding of gender issues and translate this knowledge into the centre's programmes. While increasing female agricultural workers' access to machinery is a more immediate focus for CSAM to contribute to women's empowerment, the centre also acknowledges the importance of educating and inspiring a new generation of women to become agricultural engineers. Such a long-term commitment would greatly benefit the sustainable agricultural mechanization sector, improve the livelihoods of women farmers, and enhance regional food security. CSAM is actively preparing itself to support this transformation.

CSAM's efforts to integrate a gender dimension into CSAM's work reflect the centre's commitment to empowering women farmers and addressing the existing gender disparities in agricultural mechanization. By enhancing machinery design, improving access to STEM education, and bridging the gender yield gap, CSAM aims to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment in the agricultural sector. The journey towards gender mainstreaming in agricultural mechanization is critical in achieving sustainable and inclusive agricultural development in Asia and the Pacific.

Policy Brief: Gender Mainstreaming in Sustainable Agriculture Mechanization in Asia and the Pacific, December 2022

Following up on its commitment to gender mainstreaming, CSAM, in collaboration with ESCAP's Social Development Division and Strategy and Programme Management Division, has released a pioneering policy brief titled "Gender Mainstreaming in Sustainable Agriculture Mechanization in Asia and the Pacific." Guided by the ESCAP-CSAM team, the policy brief underscores the need to integrate gender responsiveness in agriculture and food security programming. It emphasizes the importance of ensuring that mechanization and innovation initiatives proactively address gendered barriers throughout their entire lifecycle, from design and dissemination to adoption and scaling.

The screenshot shows the CSAM website header with the ESCAP logo and navigation menu. Below the header, a blue banner reads "PUBLICATIONS » GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC". The main content area features a card for the policy brief. On the left is a thumbnail image of the brief cover, which shows a person operating a red tractor in a field. The text on the card includes the title, date (2022-12), a description, publication series, and language.

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PUBLICATIONS » GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Gender Mainstreaming in Sustainable Agriculture Mechanization in Asia and the Pacific
2022-12
Description: The Policy Brief discusses why gender matters in the context of sustainable agricultural mechanization, what key barriers women face in the adoption and scaling-up of mechanization-based solutions and how the gender dimension can be better integrated into programmes and strategies for sustainable agricultural mechanization in the Asia-Pacific region.
Publication Series: Policy Brief
Language: English

ESCAP / 4-PB / 31

Regional Forum on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization, 28-30 November 2023

In collaboration with the Nanjing Institute of Agricultural Mechanization (NIAM) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) of China, CSAM organized its 10th Regional Forum on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Asia and the Pacific from 28 to 30 November 2023 in Shanghai, China, with the theme “Gender Mainstreaming in Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization”. The participants shared their understanding and perspectives on the challenges and opportunities of women in agrifood systems, proven practices and good cases on designing gender-responsive technologies and empowering women engineers, and innovations and insights on how to improve women smallholder farmers’ access to mechanization in an integrated manner and address gendered barriers to technology adoption, particularly through regional cooperation.



Group photo at the Forum © CSAM

Position Paper: Gender Mainstreaming in Sustainable Agriculture Mechanization in Asia and the Pacific, December 2023

Building upon its 2022 policy brief and regional forum on the matter, CSAM published a position paper on gender mainstreaming in sustainable agriculture mechanization in the Asia-Pacific region. This paper highlights women’s position in agrifood systems, the challenges they face due to changing contexts (male outmigration, climate crisis, external shocks) and the opportunity presented by sustainable agricultural mechanization to improve their livelihood and agrifood systems. Therefore, it recommends the development of a gender-responsive sustainable agricultural mechanization and presents integrated approaches to ensure this strategy benefits smallholder women farmers and their clients’ demands and needs.



Gender Responsive Mechanization Development Framework
Adopted from Manfre et al. (2017) and Theis et al. (2018)



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As the statistical training arm of ESCAP, SIAP has the mandate to lead capacity development activities aimed at building and strengthening the capacity of ESCAP member states and associate members to produce timely and high-quality official statistics for evidence-based decision and policy making. Mainstreaming gender in the Institute's activities takes many different forms: (i) developing and conducting capacity-building activities in gender statistics; (ii) incorporating gender considerations in all aspects of the design, organization, and delivery of training programmes; and (iii) using a gender lens in monitoring and reporting.

Capacity building in gender statistics

Since 2013, when training on gender statistics was first included in SIAP's work programme, the Institute has been offering a range of courses on gender statistics through various modalities (face-to-face and e-learning) and at various levels (national, regional, and subregional). Currently, capacity development in the production and use of gender data and statistics remains a priority for SIAP. The **2022 Sustainable Development Goals Progress Report** produced by ESCAP highlighted the need to significantly enhance the availability of data to measure progress towards the achievement of gender equality (SDG 5 and other goals). In that vein, in 2023, SIAP delivered 3 training courses (2 subregional and one national) as part of efforts to strengthen national capacities to produce and use gender statistics to bridge the existing gender data gap in the Asia-Pacific region.

The two subregional training courses targeted Pacific and ASEAN countries and complemented ongoing initiatives in both subregions aimed at enhancing the production and use of gender data and statistics. Participants who attended both training courses were data producers (national statistics offices) and data users (line ministries, gender bureaus, SDG focal points). The content for each training course was based on the **Gender Statistics Training Curriculum** and tailored to meet the needs of the target participants in each subregion.

Subregional Training on Gender Statistics for Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 29 May to 2 June 2023

To support Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICs) specifically to produce gender data and statistics, SIAP organized an in-person subregional training from 29 May to 2 June 2023, in Seoul, Republic of Korea. This training was jointly organized, funded, and implemented by the Pacific Community (SPC), SIAP, UN Women's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and hosted by the UN Women Centre of Excellence for Gender Equality. A team of gender experts and statisticians from the co-organizing agencies facilitated the training that sought to strengthen the capacity of Pacific Island Countries (PICs) to produce and use gender data and statistics for SDG monitoring and decision-making.

Nineteen participants representing the National Statistical Offices and ministries of Women or Gender Bureaus of the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu benefitted from this weeklong training. The training complemented ongoing efforts at implementing the **Pacific Roadmap on Gender Statistics**, which serves as the overarching framework to support Pacific National Statistical Systems in generating quality, relevant, and timely gender data that meets users' needs to advance gender equality.



Participants and facilitators of the Subregional Training for PICs

Subregional Training on Gender Statistics for Monitoring the SDGs for ASEAN, 29 October to 3 November

SIAP collaborated with UN Women's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), the UN Women Centre of Excellence for Gender Equality (CENTRE) and Statistics Korea to conduct subregional training on producing and using gender data to advance gender equality. The training was hosted by Statistics Korea (KOSTAT) in Daejeon, Republic of Korea from 29 October to 3 November 2023. The training brought together twenty-one data users and producers from the ASEAN subregion: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, LAO PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste and Viet Nam, as well as the ASEAN Secretariat.

This training supported the high-level commitments and initiatives by ASEAN leaders to achieve gender equality, such as the **Declaration on the Gender-Responsive Implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and Sustainable Development Goals** endorsed by Heads of State in 2017.



Participants and facilitators of the Subregional Training for ASEAN

National Training: Producing and Using Gender Statistics to Monitor the SDGs and Implement the Pacific Roadmap in Tonga, 23 – 27 January 2023

In response to a request from the government of Tonga to enhance the availability, quality and use of gender data, statistics, and indicators, SIAP partnered with UN Women and the Pacific Community (SPC) to deliver national training. The objective was to better equip statisticians with the skills needed to enhance gender data production, and policy makers and advocates with the ability to find, interpret and use gender data effectively. Thirty-six participants (gender focal points, statisticians, policymakers) from a cross-section of line ministries, non-governmental agencies and civil society organizations attended the five-day training. The training in Tonga was one in a series of national capacity-building activities on gender statistics targeting Pacific Islands Countries. Similar national trainings were held in Kiribati and Solomon Islands in 2022.

Self-paced e-learning in gender statistics

To support continuous capacity building in gender statistics, ESCAP Statistics Division, SIAP and UN Women developed an e-learning course (Using gender data for analysis, communications and policy making in the context of SDG monitoring and beyond) on gender statistics. The self-paced e-learning course is available (free of charge) through the **SIAP Learning Management System** and can be pursued by both experts and non-experts.

Sub-Group on Gender Statistics Training

SIAP currently co-chairs the Sub-Group on Gender Statistics Training with UN Women. The Sub-Group was formed in 2018 to support national statistical offices in the Asia-Pacific region in building and strengthening statistical capacities to effectively produce and use gender data to monitor progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Members of the Sub-Group are experts from national statistical offices (NSOs), training institutes, universities, and development partners.

Gender Statistics Training Curriculum

Under the guidance of the Sub-Group, SIAP and UN Women developed the **Gender Statistics Training Curriculum**, which provides a structured approach for organizing and delivering training in gender statistics in a systematic and effective manner. The curriculum was developed out of a need to bolster efforts at building and strengthening institutional capacity in the production and use of gender statistics in the Asia-Pacific region. Since the Gender Statistics Training Curriculum was launched in 2020, it has been a key tool used in designing and delivering training in gender statistics, not only in the Asia-Pacific region but also by universities and other regions. The curriculum is publicly accessible for those wishing to learn more about gender statistics.

In 2023, the Sub-Group undertook a comprehensive review of the curriculum that focused on updating its contents, exercises, and training materials to reflect methodological advancements and capture new and emerging gender issues. The updated version (to be released in March 2024) will include additional content and exercises that were recommended by resource persons who have used the curriculum (in part or in full) for delivering gender statistics training at various levels (national, regional) and for diverse audiences (NSO staff, policymakers, students). Those updates are intended to further enhance the curriculum's depth and provide additional learning support to users.

Integrating a gender perspective in all aspects of training

Beyond the substantive training activities in gender statistics, SIAP actively strives to achieve gender balance in its training courses by using selection criteria that are free of gender bias and do not reinforce any gender inequalities. While SIAP has no direct control over the nominees that are selected by countries to participate in its training courses, the use of clear, unbiased criteria ensures that there are equal opportunities for participation and representation of both men and women in all trainings. Furthermore, while this does not guarantee that there will be gender balance in any single training or overall, the important gender consideration is that all training courses (irrespective of domain/ topic, modality of delivery, level, or target countries) can be equally accessed by both women and men, free of bias or stereotypes.

In monitoring and reporting of the Institute's work programme, SIAP consistently includes a sex ratio (number of females to male participants) as one gender sensitive indicator along with sex disaggregated statistics for all courses, irrespective of the nature of the training (e-learning or face-to-face) or the topic. In 2023, the sex ratio for training courses conducted between 1 January and 30 October stood at 1.37, implying that women outnumbered men overall with 137 women for every 100 men. This indicator captures parity in participation and is one of the many indicators included in the Director's Report which is presented annually at SIAP Governing Council meetings.

Finally, in developing training materials, consideration is given to ensuring that content, language, examples, and any illustrations used in all training materials (face-to-face or e-learning) are free of gender bias.





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Project highlights

ESCAP currently has three priorities for gender equality and the empowerment of women. The first is to advance women's economic empowerment through the promotion and facilitation of entrepreneurship, especially through technology. Its second priority is to encourage women's role in leadership and decision-making in political and economic spheres. The third priority is to put high-quality and timely gender statistics in place on all boards.

Enhancing Women's Economic Empowerment in Asia-Pacific

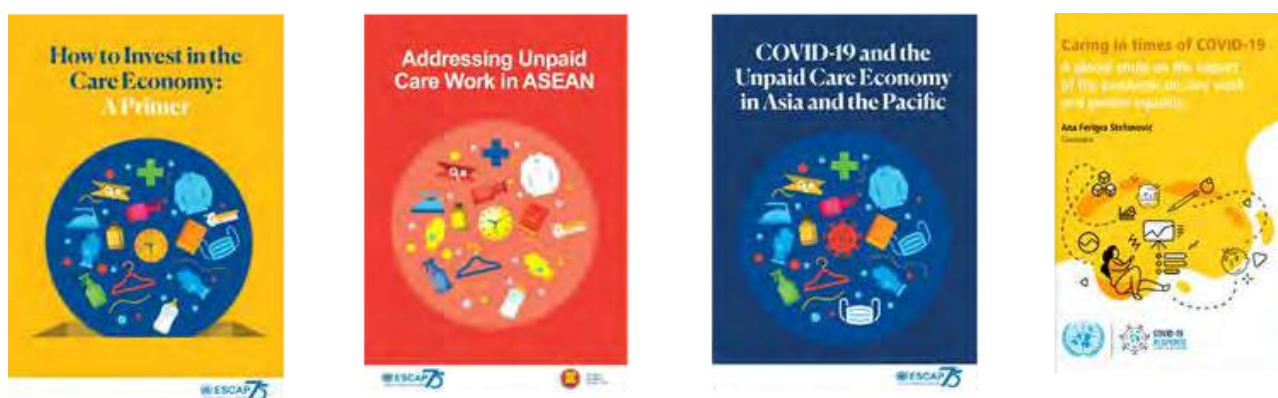
Women's economic empowerment is fundamental to realizing women's rights and achieving gender equality. Although the number of women entrepreneurs is increasing, they often face more challenges and barriers than their male counterparts. Improving the conditions for women's entrepreneurship not only enables women to empower themselves but also contributes to inclusive and sustainable development through creating jobs, eradicating poverty and contributing to socio-economic growth. ESCAP has developed several programmes and projects to strengthen women's entrepreneurship in the Asia-Pacific region.

Unpaid care economy

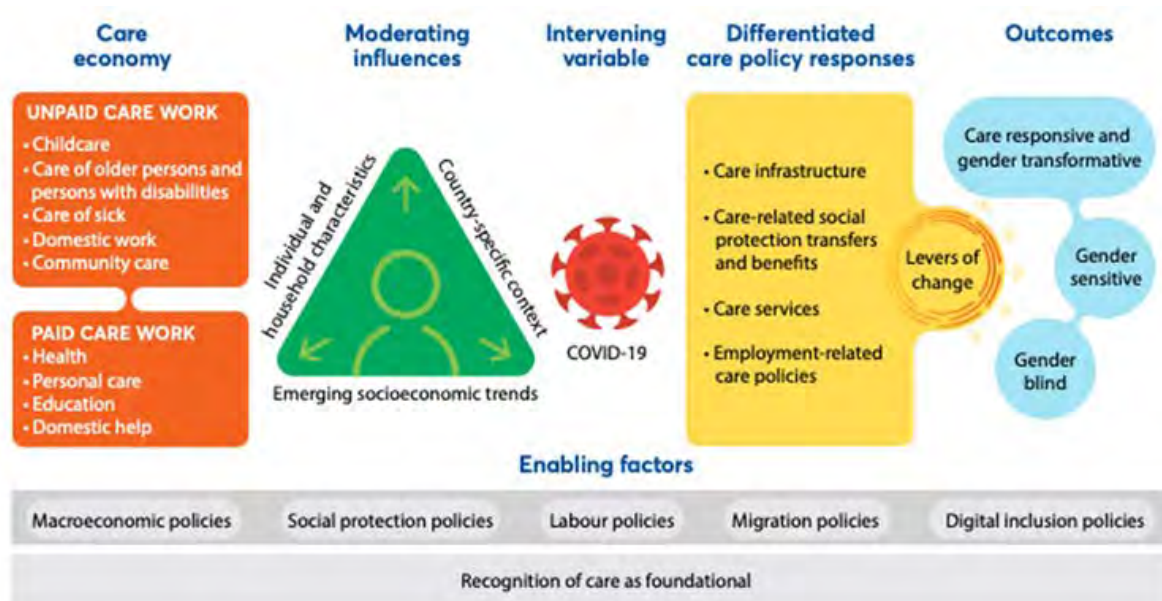
In Asia and the Pacific, women and girls shoulder a disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work, dedicating an average of four times more time to these responsibilities compared to men. This gendered and unequal distribution of care responsibilities restricts the opportunities available to women and girls, hindering their access to, *inter alia*, quality education and decent work. As the COVID-19 pandemic worsened the disparities in domestic work, ESCAP was at the forefront of research and policy development, utilizing its intergovernmental platform to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders committed to advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls.

The ESCAP project “Advancing gender equality through recognizing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care work of women and girls in Asia and the Pacific” has accelerated the implementation of global gender equality commitments in the region, following the clarion call of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to ‘leave no one behind and reach those furthest behind first’. The project aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 5, which focuses on “achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”, with a particular emphasis on target 5.4, to “recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate”.

For the last two years, ESCAP has published several knowledge products, including reports on **COVID-19 and the Unpaid Care Economy in Asia and the Pacific**, “**How to Invest in the Care Economy: a Primer**,” and a global study titled “**Caring in Times of COVID-19**”. The report “**Addressing Unpaid Care Work in ASEAN**” was launched at the **4th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in October 2021** – and it served to strengthen collaboration with the ASEAN Committee of Women, paving the way for the adoption of the ASEAN Comprehensive Framework on Care Economy. Subsequently, a **Regional Forum on Addressing Unpaid Care and Domestic Work** in Asia and the Pacific was convened in November 2021, bringing all stakeholders together to guide the development of region-specific policies.



This year, ESCAP has taken concrete steps to further strengthen its ongoing collaborations with Cambodia and the Philippines, including plans to apply model frameworks on the care economy in both countries and a joint WECARE code at the municipal level in the Philippines. Furthermore, ESCAP is expanding its care economy work to Lao PDR, Indonesia, and China, and has formed new technical assistance partnerships with the Lao Women’s Union, Oxfam Laos, Oxfam Philippines, the Cambodia Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA), and the All-China Women’s Federation. As part of these efforts, it organized the **Regional Forum on Care Work in ASEAN Countries** in July, with the ASEAN Committee on Women, Oxfam, and the ASEAN Secretariat, capacity-building workshops with Cambodia’s MoWA in August, national workshops on the care economy in Lao PDR, the Philippines, Cambodia, and China in September, October and November.



ESCAP and the Institute of Development Studies' conceptual framework

Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship

ESCAP's Beijing+25 Synthesis Report identified women's entrepreneurship as an engine for employment creation and poverty reduction. When accompanied by labour protections that reflect decent work standards and address unpaid work, entrepreneurship provides an essential channel for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Indeed, as entrepreneurial enterprises are the largest employers in the Asia-Pacific region, they can play a decisive role in giving women the ability to access work. Although the number of women entrepreneurs is increasing, they often face more challenges and barriers than their male counterparts. As such, one pillar of ESCAP's strategy to advance gender equality is through supporting efforts to foster enabling conditions for women's entrepreneurship.

The Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship (CWE) programme aims to advance women's entrepreneurship and market participation in the Asia-Pacific region, resulting in poverty reduction, improved livelihoods and economic growth. The programme works to create an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs to effectively start-up and/or expand their businesses. The programme takes a facilitative approach to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem by enhancing women entrepreneurs' access and use of financial services, strengthening women entrepreneurs' use of ICT and digital solutions to support their businesses, and through policy and advocacy initiatives. The programme undertakes on-the-ground implementation activities in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Nepal, Samoa and Viet Nam, with policy and advocacy support across South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

As of March 2023, a total of 176,000 women entrepreneurs had benefitted directly from the programme (in addition to 650,000 indirect beneficiaries), through access to finance or acquiring enhanced digital skills to grow their business, exceeding the target by double. The innovative financing mechanisms have increased their outreach to women entrepreneurs by 327 per cent over the previous year. Furthermore, ESCAP has unlocked USD 89.7 million in capital for women entrepreneurs and invested in 15 start-ups.



CATALYZING WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMME

6-year programme (2018-2024) that aims to advance women's entrepreneurship in the Asia-Pacific region through three interconnected pillars of influence:

- 
POLICY & GOVERNANCE ENVIRONMENT
 Creating an enabling ecosystem for women
- 
INNOVATIVE FINANCING
 Enhancing access & use of financial services
- 
ICT & BUSINESS SKILLS
 Strengthening use of ICT & digital solutions



This year, the CWE Programme has also continued to build the ICT and business skills of women entrepreneurs in target countries and the capacity of governments and national partners to expand on these capacity-building activities through the training trainers. In 2023, the CWE Programme has trained -- women entrepreneurs (2023 target: -- women) and -- trainers (202 target: -- trainers).

ESCAP, with the Agency for Enterprise Development, Ministry of Planning and Investment in Viet Nam, organized a workshop on "Research and analyze business development opportunities of ethnic minority women entrepreneurs" in July. Following the publication of a report with the same name identifying the barriers and opportunities for ethnic minority women entrepreneurs in mountainous areas, the workshop aimed to present its findings to international organizations working on women's issues, business advisors, experts, women's unions, women's entrepreneurs associations, agencies and organizations that support businesses, and ethnic minority women entrepreneurs. The workshop was a stepping-stone to help strengthen the network of mentors for ethnic minority women entrepreneurs, providing solutions for ethnic minority women entrepreneurs to develop their businesses.



CWE workshop for ethnic minority women entrepreneurship in Viet Nam © AED/MPI

CWE's policy work to promote reforms in women's entrepreneurship at the country level has been made possible with the partnerships it has formed with Government ministries and entities. These relationships have led the project advisory committees (PAC) to transform into national platforms owned and led by the Governments. These national platforms include representatives from relevant government ministries, private sector, and women entrepreneurs and will lead to the institutionalization and sustainability of the agenda on women's entrepreneurship beyond the project period.

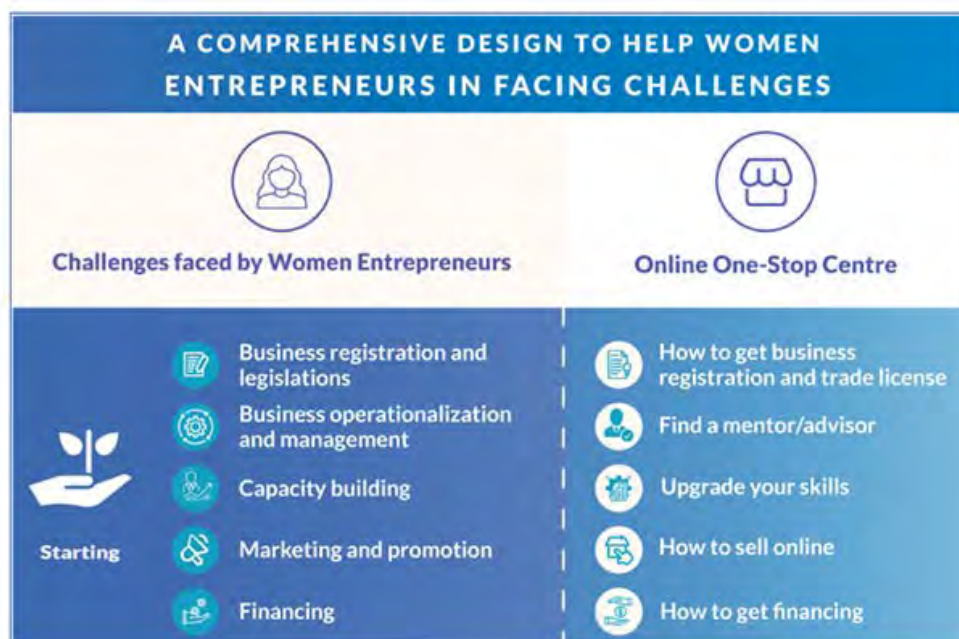
In Viet Nam, a PAC-turned Technical Coordination Group meeting was held in July 2023. Its purpose was to share CWE updates, as well as best practices from and discussions about various initiatives being carried out in relation to women's entrepreneurship in the country. Progress updates were provided on the implementation of the law on SME support for women-owned SMEs. In addition, sessions on the importance of psychosocial support for women entrepreneurs, as well as resource mobilization to strengthen the capacities of women entrepreneurs vis-à-vis digital technology were held, ending with discussions of recommended actions.



CWE technical coordination meeting in Viet Nam © AED/MPI

In Samoa, the latest Project Advisory Group meeting, held in September 2023, focused primarily on policy discussions in relation to the study of the business licensing process for women entrepreneurs. The final report findings and recommendations to address the barriers in business licensing were discussed in depth, which includes the need for shifts in cultural attitudes towards women in business, improved coordination among stakeholders that provide business support services, and strengthened business licensing and registration processes and systems to create a conducive environment for women entrepreneurs.

This year, ESCAP also **launched a one-stop digital service centre** for women entrepreneurs called WeHelp, co-designed with the Small and Medium Enterprise Foundation (SMEF) of Bangladesh. This portal addresses key barriers that impede women entrepreneurs' ability to participate fully in starting and growing their businesses. This includes a lack of access to information on start-up procedures, business registration and licensing, financial and banking products, and support schemes/policies. The WeHelp portal will bridge these information gaps, provide greater access to services and networking opportunities, and streamline processes. Furthermore, it will connect women entrepreneurs and their products to broader networks, making them an essential mechanism for an enabling entrepreneurial journey. The portal is in Bangla and English for the convenience of entrepreneurs across the country.



Under the CWE programme, TIID also produced a blog highlighting the work of the Bangladesh-p-based company iFarmer, enabling small-scale farmers and agribusinesses to access finance, insurance, inputs and training on crops, livestock, fisheries and poultry, as well as information on market conditions and weather advisories. As one of the winners of the 2019 Women MSME Fintech Innovation Fund, implemented by ESCAP and UNCDF under the Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship (CWE) programme, iFarmer is working to garner recognition for female farmers and facilitate their access to resources to grow their businesses and agency within the household.

Indeed, small-scale farmers are critical to Bangladesh's food supply and overall economy and women make up about 58 per cent of the agricultural workforce. Despite this, women rarely control the land or sale of their produce or cattle, traditionally lack significant decision-making power over household agricultural income and their contributions are largely overlooked. Moreover, the sector does not offer enough of a profit margin to attract younger generations who tend to migrate to urban centres in search of better-paid work. iFarmer is helping change these dynamics notably by developing an app called Sofol through which farmers can get access to low-cost, collateral-free financing. Under another joint initiative between UNCDF and FAO, iFarmer has connected 10,000 women and men farmers to the forward market through collection centres across the country. iFarmer's innovative approach to empowering women farmers and rejuvenating Bangladesh's agricultural landscape for small-scale farmers through technology signals promising progress for the sector and serves as a compelling reminder of the immense potential for solutions from our region. Read more in **this blog** published in October.

The CWE programme has also been leveraged to pilot, test, and scale innovative financing models to uplift rural women to drive climate action in Asia. Indeed, rural women across Asia play a key role in producing, processing, and trading agricultural products and are often the primary users and managers of natural resources. Despite this, discriminatory practices and stereotypes all too often limit their access to the technologies, information and economic opportunities needed to build resilience against environmental shocks and increase their incomes. While women farmers are disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change compared with their male counterparts, they are also uniquely placed to promote meaningful change. Research shows that if all women smallholder farmers received equal access to productive resources, their farm yields would rise by 20 to 30 per cent, and 100 to 150 million people would no longer go hungry. Moreover, it is estimated that by improving the productivity of women smallholder farmers, we could reduce carbon emissions by up to 2 billion tons by 2050.

To unlock this potential, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) partnered with Impact Investment Exchange (IIX) to support rural women entrepreneurs across the region to access affordable and well-regulated financial services through the **IIX Women's Livelihood Bond™ (WLB™) Series**. The WLB™ Series, which was the world's first gender-lens investing instrument listed on a stock exchange, is structured as a set of innovative debt securities that mobilize private capital to invest in a multi-country, multi-sector portfolio of women-focused enterprises that balances risk, return, and impact. Growing substantially since its first issuance in 2017, the Series so far has impacted 1,300,000 women and girls across Asia and Africa and US\$128 million has been mobilized. Read more in **this blog** published in November.



Looking ahead

Gender will continue to be integrated into the strategic planning, as guided by the ESCAP Gender Equality Policy and Implementation Plan and supported through gender equality capacity development activities. The Social Development Division will continue to coordinate closely with the Strategy and Programme Management Division, to follow up on the effective mainstreaming of gender within the ESCAP work programme.

In the draft Proposed programme plan for 2024, subprogrammes 2 on trade, investment and innovation and subprogramme 7 on statistics have put forth results on advancing women's economic empowerment and mainstreaming gender in statistics, respectively. Subprogramme 3, which focuses on transport, is planning to achieve a result on inclusive and safe mobility policies that address gender concerns in the transport sector as a cross-cutting theme. The participation of women in decision-making processes and the health impacts of environmental issues is one of the key concerns for ESCAP's subprogramme on environment and development, highlighted in its strategy for 2024. Similarly, subprogramme 9 on energy facilitates dialogue and produces knowledge products that include the energy system's impacts on women and highlight women's contribution to a sustainable and just energy transition.

In 2024, ESCAP will convene the **Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review** in collaboration with the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok from 19-21 November 2024. The Conference will bring together Ministers, senior officials and representatives from relevant Ministries, civil society organizations, youth organizations, academia, the private sector, UN entities, independent experts and other key stakeholders from across the Asia-Pacific region to assess the progress of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration.



Annexes

Senior Management Team Gender Champions



Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana

ESCAP Executive Secretary

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations



Ms. Lin Yang

Deputy Executive Secretary
for Programme



Mr. Hirohito Toda

Deputy Executive Secretary for
Partnerships and Coordination



Dr. Srinivas Tata

Director

Social Development
Division



Ms. Soomi Ro

Director

Division of
Administration



Mr. Adnan Aliani

Chief of Service

Programme Management

ESCAP Gender Champions 2023



Ms. Heather Taylor-Strauss

Economic Affairs Officer

Trade, Investment and Innovation Division

The untapped potential of Foreign Direct Investment to advance gender equality



Mr. Ko Kiyong

Director

Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT)

Harnessing Information and Communication Technology for Women's Empowerment



Ms. Sharita Serrao

Statistician

Statistics Division

Mainstreaming gender in statistics for evidence-based policymaking and assessing progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals



Ms. Zeynep Orhun Girard

Chief of Section, Programme Management

Strategy and Programme Management Division

Efforts behind the scenes: How did the gender marker come into shape at ESCAP?

Gender Focal Point Directory 2023



Office of the Executive Secretary

Gender Focal Point for OES



Mr. Nyingtob Norbu

Economic Affairs Officer

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Nyingtob Norbu is part of the team that coordinates the ESCAP's support to the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states. In addition to coordinating the contributions of the substantive divisions, they undertake their own analytical work, which includes an annual flagship publication and several technical materials addressing the development priorities of these groups of countries. They also organize capacity-building activities based on the request of member states.

He is interested in understanding and applying gender mainstreaming in different contexts given the diverse challenges observed in countries in special situations.





Division of Administration

Gender Focal Point for DA/HRMS



Ms. Margo Acker

Administrative Officer

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Margo Acker is the Administrative Officer in the Office of the Director of Administration of ESCAP, where she manages a broad administrative portfolio in support of the Division and ESCAP more broadly. She first joined the United Nations at the United Nations Global Service Centre (UNGSC) in Brindisi, Italy, in 2013. She then joined the United Nations Regional Service Centre Entebbe (RSCE) in Entebbe, Uganda, in 2015. After almost five years, she moved to the UN Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2020. Prior to joining ESCAP, Margo was an Administrative Officer at the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria (IIIM-Syria). Margo holds a master's degree in International Affairs from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland, and a Bachelor of Arts in History from Yale University.

Alternate Gender Focal Point for DA/HRMS



Ms. Milica Markovic

Human Resources Officer

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Milica Markovic is an HR Officer with the Staffing Diversity and Outreach Unit, where she manages a wide-ranging HR portfolio, including outreach, talent acquisition and the Secretariat's organizational priorities. Milica joined the UN in 2010 in UNHQ, New York. She then joined ESCAP's HR in 2016. Prior to joining the UN, Milica worked in the non-profit sector in the public diplomacy arena. Milica holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Baruch College, City University of NY (CUNY), NY and a BA in International Studies and Business Administration from Portland State University (PSU).



Strategy and Programme Management Division

Gender Focal Point for SPMD



Mr. Edgar Dante

Programme Management Officer

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Edgar leads a team providing support to ESCAP senior management in implementing the design, conduct and use of independent evaluations mandated by ESCAP member States and donors. He also coordinates ESCAP's engagement in independent evaluations conducted by external oversight bodies, including OIOS, JIU and donors. Prior to this role, Edgar was a Programme Management Officer at SPMD, supporting divisions/offices in programme and project formulation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation. He was involved in facilitating training for ESCAP staff on various topics, including project management, results-based management, monitoring and evaluation. Before joining ESCAP, Edgar was a researcher at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) located in Bangkok.

Alternate Gender Focal Points for SPMD



Ms. Wiebke Uhde

Programme Planning Officer

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Wiebke Uhde is part of the team that prepares ESCAP's main strategic planning document. One of her responsibilities includes the mainstreaming of gender considerations in planning processes, as well as in data collection for monitoring and reporting purposes. Prior to joining ESCAP, Wiebke worked for ESCWA in Beirut, OCHA in New York and the German bilateral cooperation in sub-Saharan Africa on diverse topics such as governance and women empowerment, natural resource management, and HIV/Aids.



Ms. Wanphen Sreshthaputra

Programme Management Officer

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Wanphen Sreshthaputra is a programme management officer in SPMD's Capacity-building and partnership office. She coordinates the implementation of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation, among other tasks. Wanphen joined the United Nations as a Population Information Specialist in 2002 and worked for over 15 years on population and social-related affairs, including gender equality and women's empowerment. Based in the ESCAP SSWA for over six years, she coordinated the first ESCAP-led project on women's entrepreneurship and worked closely with the SAARC Secretariat to launch the SAARC Gender Policy Advocacy Group.



Energy Division

Gender Focal Point for ED



Ms. Yejin Ha

Economic Affairs Officer

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Ms. Yejin Ha is an Economic Affairs Officer in ESCAP's Energy Division. Yejin works on supporting energy transition and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in member countries through power system interconnections. Prior to joining the Energy Division, Yejin worked at UN-HABITAT in Nairobi, Kenya, as a human settlements officer and later at the Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia of ESCAP and supported projects on power system interconnections, including the Green Power Corridor Road Map for Northeast Asia, and served as the coordinator of the North-East Asia Power Interconnection and Cooperation Forum (NEARPIC). Yejin has been promoting gender mainstreaming efforts in ESCAP for over five years and implemented projects on disaggregated data collection for enhancing the inclusion of women in national disaster risk reduction strategies.

Alternate Gender Focal Point for ED



Ms. Tania Pei Yee Lim

Associate Economic Affairs Officer

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Tania Lim works in the Energy Division of ESCAP on the thematic areas of critical energy transition minerals and energy connectivity, providing spatially contextualized economic research and demographic analysis. She had previously worked on improving gender- and youth-responsive urban basic service delivery, particularly in ensuring access to energy, mobility, water, sanitation and ICT in informal settlements and slums in the context of sustainable urbanization for UN-Habitat in Kenya; developing trainings and capacity development to support local governments and state-owned utility companies on how to design and select affordable, low-cost, appropriate and home-grown digital transformation technologies. She brings prior experience as a gender focal point in UN-Habitat's Urban Basic Service Branch.



Environment and Development Division

Gender Focal Point for EDD



Ms. Sanjeevani Dilanthi Singh

Economic Affairs Officer

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Sanjee Singh is an Economic Affairs Officer at ESCAP's Sustainable Urban Development Section, with over 20 years of global expertise in sustainable urban development and affordable housing. At ESCAP, Sanjee supports the localization of the SDGs, urban and territorial planning, climate action and leads the section's work on digital innovation. She actively assists member states in developing national urban and smart city policy recommendations and works with multiple development partners.

She is passionate about contributing to sustainable development and advocating for gender equity. She is equally enthusiastic about enhancing team productivity and project outcomes through well-structured processes and strong collaboration and partnerships.

Alternate Gender Focal Point for EDD



Mr. Manuel Castillo

Environmental Affairs Officer

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Manuel Castillo is an Environmental Affairs officer at ESCAP. He is coordinating a project to advance environmental rights in the region, including procedural rights: access to information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice and remedy in environmental matters. Furthermore, he is the focal point for the Ocean protection work led by the Environment and Development Division, focusing on global and intergovernmental processes and policies.

In previous United Nations positions, he has worked on climate change issues, including interlinkages between climate change, public health and renewable energies. In his current and previous work, he has consistently supported gender mainstreaming across all areas of work. With an intersectional approach, he integrates a comprehensive understanding of gender beyond binary expressions.



ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division

Gender Focal Point for IDD



Ms. Aida Karazhanova

Economic Affairs Officer

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Aida Karazhanova (PhD, Ms.), in her current functions as an Economic Affairs Officer at ICT for Development Section of the Division of ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction of ESCAP, facilitates: (i) implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) action plan 2022-2026 on connectivity for all and e-resilience, (ii) development of analytical and knowledge products, packaging technical cooperation projects to enable SDGs, policies and online ICT infrastructure planning tools, facilitating online platforms for digital connectivity & integration of digital technologies for disaster risk reduction and digital economy, and promotes linkages of the digital, climate and green components.



Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division

Gender Focal Point for MPFD



Ms. Lin Zhuo

Economic Affairs Officer

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Lin Zhuo joined ESCAP in 2020. She is an Economic Affairs Officer at the Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division of ESCAP. She has been part of the team producing the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific. Additionally, she manages capacity-building projects on the macroeconomic modelling for sustainable development. While macroeconomics is traditionally perceived as gender neutral, as the MPFD gender focal point, she puts every effort into integrating a gender dimension into MPFD's work, including capacity-building projects and analytical work. Prior to ESCAP, she worked for the UN in New York. Before joining the UN, she worked at various financial institutions in Hong Kong.

Alternate Gender Focal Point for MPFD



Ms. Latipat Mikled

Research Assistant

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Latipat Mikled is a research assistant in the Financing for Development Section, Macroeconomic Policy Analysis and Financing for Development Division at ESCAP. She previously worked as an industry analyst covering macroeconomic and social economic issues, renewable energy, power plants, and telecom at SBCS Co., Ltd., a subsidiary of Japan's Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation.



Social Development Division

Gender Focal Point for SDD



Ms. Cai Cai

Chief of the Gender Equality
and Social Inclusion Section

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Ms. Cai Cai leads ESCAP's regional programmes on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment as well as disability-inclusive development in Asia-Pacific.

She has over 20 years of rich experience with the United Nations at the country, subregional and regional levels, covering a wide range of socioeconomic issues in the larger context of sustainable development. In addition to gender and disability, she had worked in the areas of youth, ageing, as well as health and development issues. Prior to joining ESCAP, she worked with UNICEF and UNDP, focusing on policy development and advocacy that aimed to empower women and young people as a key strategy for pro-poor growth and sustainable development.

Alternate Gender Focal Point for SDD



Ms. Channe Lindstrom Oguzhan

Social Affairs Officer

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With over two decades of experience, Channe is a humanitarian and human rights professional with a track record in stakeholder engagement, partnership-building, and fundraising. Noteworthy contributions include managing projects related to gender equality, social development, and emergency response for UN agencies such as ESCAP, UN-Habitat, OCHA, and UNHCR. Channe currently focuses on advancing Sustainable Development Goal 5 by working on women's economic empowerment across UN member states in Asia and the Pacific. Holding a Master's degree in Forced Migration from the University of Oxford Refugee Studies Centre and a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from the London School of Economics and Political Science, Channe is also a published author on issues related to forced migration.



Statistics Division

Gender Focal Point for SD



Ms. Sharita Serrao

Statistician

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Sharita Serrao is currently working as a Statistician at the Population and Social Statistics Section of ESCAP's Statistics Division. She has over 18 years of experience in international development, having started her career with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, now UN Women) before joining the ESCAP Statistics Division. At ESCAP, she has been leading the work programme on gender data and statistics. In addition, she has worked on statistical development and capacity building, covering several domains of social statistics, including disability, informal sector, and migration statistics, as well as civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS). Sharita has undertaken initiatives to strengthen national statistical systems as well as on developing e-learning on using gender data for analysis, communications, and policy making. Sharita holds a Master of Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Economics, Mathematics and Political Science, and is currently pursuing an advanced degree in Gender and Development Studies.





Trade, Investment and Innovation Division

Gender Focal Point for TIID



Mr. Alexey Kravchenko

Economic Affairs Officer

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Alexey Kravchenko is an Economic Affairs Officer at ESCAP's Trade Policy and Facilitation Section. His work revolves around trade and sustainable development issues, non-tariff measures, illicit financial flows and trade misinvoicing in the region. His most recent work focused on trade and climate change and the development of an online platform to support trade negotiators in data analysis. Prior to joining the United Nations, he ran a consultancy which specialized in non-market valuation, choice modelling and geospatial online surveys. He also taught various undergraduate and graduate economics and econometrics courses in China (Shanghai International Studies University) and New Zealand (University of Waikato and Waikato Institute of Technology). He holds a Masters in International Business and Mandarin, a Masters in Economics, and a PhD in Economics from the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

Alternate Gender Focal Point for TIID



Ms. Marta Perez Cuso

Economic Affairs Officer

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Marta Pérez Cusó leads ESCAP's programme on inclusive innovation policies to promote technologies and innovations that leave no one behind. She also leads ESCAP's work on promoting enabling policy environments for inclusive business. She has over 20 years' work experience with the United Nations, providing policy advice on inclusive business, innovation and digital policies to governments across Asia and Latin America. Marta has a specific interest in promoting gender equality and women empowerment at work and in her work. She has established informal women networks in and outside ESCAP and promoted gender mainstreaming in her work.



Transport Division

Gender Focal Point for TD



Ms. Katrin Luger

Chief of the Transport Research and Policy Section

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Katrin Luger is the Section Chief for Transport Research and Policy in ESCAP's Transport Division (TD) and TD's gender focal point. The Transport Research and Policy Section is supporting ESCAP's Member States in advancing low-carbon transport and mobility, sustainable urban development and inclusive transport in line with the objectives of the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Sustainable Development Goals. Katrin joined ESCAP in early 2023, after working for 20 years in transport-related fields (mainly railways and shipping) in the private sector.

Alternate Gender Focal Point for TD



Ms. Wei-Shiuen Ng

Economic Affairs Officer

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Wei-Shiuen Ng is an Economic Affairs Officer in the Transport Division at ESCAP, where she is currently leading the development of low-carbon and inclusive transport projects and initiatives. Her expertise includes transport emissions, energy and behavioural modelling, policy scenario building, transport, climate change and gender research analysis, and regional and global policy dialogue development. Prior to joining ESCAP, she was Advisor to the Secretary-General on Sustainable Transport and Global Outreach in the International Transport Forum at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris, Adjunct Professor at the Paris Institute of Political Science (Sciences Po) and Associate at the World Resources Institute in Washington DC.



Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia, Incheon

Gender Focal Point for ENEA



Mr. Peter Tse Nam Chin

Associate Social Affairs Officer

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Peter, Chin Tse Nam is an Associate Social Affairs Officer at the East and North-East Asia Office with a focus on social issues such as ageing youth and gender for the East Asia region. He is currently working on a report for accelerating digital innovation for ageing populations among China, Japan and Korea.

Alternate Gender Focal Point for ENEA



Ms. Dana Choi

Team Assistant

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Dana Choi is a Research Assistant at the East and North-East Asia Office. Her primary responsibilities include providing support in the field of social affairs and facilitating the monitoring and coordination efforts for the implementation of SDGs at both the country and subregional levels. She is currently working on a report for accelerating digital innovation for ageing populations among China, Japan and Korea.

Prior to joining ESCAP, she served as a UNV Youth Programme Analyst at UNFPA Nepal for implementing UNSCR 2250 Youth, Peace and Security and Bodily autonomy/SRHR advocacy and supporting the GBV Prevention and Response project in Nepal from 2020 to 2022.



Subregional Office for North and Central Asia, Almaty

Gender Focal Point for SONCA



Ms. Natalja Wehmer

Economic Affairs Officer

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Natalja works as a Social Affairs Officer for the Social Development Division and for the Subregional Office in North and Central Asia (SONCA) in Almaty, Kazakhstan where she is currently based. She has an MA in Sociology and European Studies, and aside from two years as an agricultural trader in the private sector, she has over 18 years of experience in international development (mostly with the UN) and in civic education (various foundations and think tanks) covering a wide range of issues, from urbanization, community empowerment, poverty eradication, governance, development finance, environment and natural resource management, climate change, DRR, social enterprises and local value chains, combating human trafficking, migration, and ageing, interactive learning design and facilitation. Since 2014, she has been the gender focal point for ESCAP's Environment and Development Division, Macroeconomic Policy Division and currently for SONCA.



Subregional Office for the Pacific, Suva

Gender Focal Point for EPO



Mr. Khanh (Bill) Ha Tran

Associate Programme Management Officer

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Mr. Khanh Ha TRAN joined UNESCAP, Subregional of Pacific (Suva, Fiji) as an Associate Programme Management Officer in 2023. He joined the African Center of Statistics, under UNECA, as an Associate Geographic Information System Officer at the P-2 level in 2019. Mr. Khanh Ha holds a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University. He also got his Bachelor's Degree in Computer & Information Sciences from Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand). Prior to joining the UN, Mr. Tran had more than eleven years of experience in the ICT sector, of which more than eight years of experience in the Administration and Development area.

Alternate Gender Focal Point for EPO



Ms. Nobuko Kajiura

Economic Affairs Officer

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Subregional Office for South-East Asia, Bangkok

Gender Focal Point for the Subregional Office for South-East Asia



Mr. Ruhimat Soerakoesoemah

Head

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Mr. Ruhimat Soerakoesoemah is the Head of the Subregional Office for South-East Asia at UN ESCAP. He initiates work on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development among the South-East Asian member States, in partnership with governments, international institutions, civil society, and private sector entities. He leads the cooperation of the UN with ASEAN in the economic and social-cultural areas under the ASEAN-UN Plan of Action framework.





Subregional Office for South & South-West Asia, New Delhi

Gender Focal Point for SSWA



Ms. Leila Salarpour Goodarzi

Associate Economic Affairs Officer

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Leila Salarpour Goodarzi is an Associate Economic Affairs Officer at ESCAP's South and South-West Asia Office, New Delhi. Leila joined the United Nations in 2022 after teaching Economics at the University of Victoria, Canada, for a few years. She has a Ph.D. in Economics from Binghamton University, USA, specializing in Applied Microeconomics, Labor, and Development. She has worked on various topics related to intrahousehold economics and gender issues, the marriage and divorce economy, female labour force participation, and migration. In her capacity as a United Nations officer, she is working on various projects, including a study on female labour migrants in India concentrating on the textile industry and a joint programme under the SDG Fund between ESCAP and UNDP on Strengthening National and Subnational Capacity for Sustainable Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in the Maldives which includes providing gender-responsive decision-making tools for DRR.

Gender Focal Point for APCICT



Mr. Ko Kiyong

Director

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As the Director and Head of APCICT, Mr. Ko has led the Centre for more than 5 years to provide practical and impactful support to ESCAP member States in their human and institutional ICT capacity. The Centre's main target audience groups are policy makers/civil servants and vulnerable populations, such as women, older persons, and disabilities. In particular, to address gender mainstreaming issue, the Centre developed a programme called 'Women ICT Frontier Initiative (WIFI)' for women economic empowerment through ICT skills. Mr. Ko holds a Ph.D. in Technology Policy from Yonsei University and a Master's degree in Management Science from Stanford University.

Alternate Gender Focal Point for APCICT



Ms. Nuankae Wongthawatchai

Programme Management Officer

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Ms. Nuankae Wongthawatchai is a Programme Officer at APCICT. Prior to APCICT, she worked in different United Nations offices, including the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Management at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in Beirut, Lebanon. Before joining the United Nations, Ms. Wongthawatchai worked at Bangkok University and the National Economic and Social Development Board. Ms. Wongthawatchai, holds a Master of Philosophy degree in Social Anthropology from the University of Cambridge and a Master of Public Policy from the KDI School of Public Policy and Management.

Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM)

Gender Focal Point for CSAM



Ms. Li Yutong

Head

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Dr. Yutong Li is currently the Head of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM), a Regional Institution of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) based in Beijing.

Dr. Li has 25 years of working experience in the fields of agricultural economy, trade and investment, and food safety, and has worked in government, United Nations agencies and other departments. Dr. Li holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics and Management from China Agricultural University. Her professional and research interests include agricultural development, agricultural policy making, policy research and analysis, and international cooperation.

Alternate Gender Focal Point for CSAM



Mr. Marco Silvestri

Programme Officer

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Mr. Marco Silvestri serves as Programme Management Officer at the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM), a Regional Institution of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) based in Beijing.

Prior to CSAM, he also worked at ESCAP's Environment and Development Division and the Office of the Executive Secretary. Overall, he has 15 years of experience in sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region, having worked at the Asian Development Bank (ADB), UNEP, and the Resident Coordinator System.

Gender Focal Point for SIAP



Ms. Sinovia Moonie

Statistician and Lecturer

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Sinovia Moonie is currently a statistician and lecturer at SIAP. In this capacity, she leads the design and delivery of training in the areas of social and demographic statistics and related SDGs. In the various capacities she assumed over the last 15 years, she has been working to strengthen statistical capacity and the availability of data in the Caribbean and Asia-Pacific regions in close collaboration with national statistical offices and development partners.



APDIM
Asian and Pacific Centre for
the Development of Disaster
Information Management

Gender Focal Point for APDIM

Ms. Letizia Rossano

Chief of Branch, Programme

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Gender Focal Point for APCTT

Ms. Moushumi Das

Team Assistant

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Alternate Gender Focal Point for APCTT

Mr. Soumya Bhattacharya

Economic Affairs Officer

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Gender in Social Media 2023

January 2023

United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Are you a TikTok-er? YouTuber? Moviemaker? Influencer? Or anyone with a phone or fancy camera? THIS IS YOUR CHALLENGE! Make a video. Show us your passion & how technology can help gender equality. Deadline: 20 Jan 2023 (23:59 hrs Bkk time).

Apply now>> bit.ly/3HzdEGI
 Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Only 12.5% of young women living in poor & rural households have completed secondary education representing one-sixth of the population. Our LNOB methodology identifies the furthest behind across #AsiaPacific: lnob.unescap.org

#InternationalDayofEducation @UNESCO @UNICEF
 Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

How are we tailoring #digital solutions and financial services for #women-led small businesses in #AsiaPacific? Listen to this podcast by our partner UNCDF youtu.be/cLbUKeK2VvA
 Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

DEADLINE EXTENDED UNTIL 26 JAN 2023 (By 11.59PM)

How are you using tech, social media or IT to make society a better place? How can tech improve gender equality? Tell us in a short video & share it to bit.ly/3J21uH1

#AmbassadorForADayTH
 Traduire le Tweet



February 2023

United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Many women in #AsiaPacific don't have access to basic services and tools necessary for their #empowerment. Bridging the digital gender divide is vital for achieving #GenderEquality and #SDG5!

More information here bit.ly/3wkCfZ1
#CSW67 @unwomenasia
Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Women's access to the Internet remains low in #AsiaPacific. Access to the Internet means better opportunities to start new businesses, pursue education & participate more fully in public life. When #WomenAndGirls are empowered, societies overall benefit: bit.ly/3wkCfZ1

Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Women working in STEM often face harassment, prejudice & a lack of opportunities to progress in their careers. To encourage women's participation in STEM and maintain #GenderEquality, discriminatory policies & behaviors must be challenged & addressed bit.ly/3wkCfZ1

Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

The violence faced by #WomenAndGirls online can:
- restrict their access to online services and tools
- lead them to fear for their safety
- affect their work and education

We must put an end to online violence and advance #GenderEquality!
bit.ly/3wkCfZ1

Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Women in #AsiaPacific face significant barriers to full participation in and equal access to the digital sphere due to harmful gender stereotypes.

It is vital that these stereotypes are properly challenged to advance #SDG5 on #GenderEquality.

bit.ly/3wkCfZ1
Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

#Tech offers better access to info, education & skills, but not all women can benefit from the opportunities it offers. #GenderGap, hinders their access & #GenderEquality.

300+ experts discussed solutions on closing the gender gap in #AsiaPacific at #CSW67 w/ @unwomenasia

Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

World needs science, and science needs women!

On this #WomenInScience day, meet Dr. Aiyngul Kerimray, environmentalist & senior researcher at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in #Kazakhstan.

Discover her research on energy poverty & air quality: bit.ly/3YoEE10

Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

While there are ample ways that #gender can be mainstreamed and prioritized into the work of #investment promotion agencies in #AsiaPacific, few have done so.

Our latest #blog ahead of #TIEBIComm explores why: bit.ly/3DooQeM

Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Congratulations to all winners of the #AmbassadorForADayTH contest!

We are looking forward to welcoming the youth who are passionate about advancing #GenderEquality at our office for the commemoration of #IWD2023.

Traduire le Tweet



March 2023



On International Women's Day, we must join hands to close the **#digital** gender divide and achieve **#GenderEquality** in the Asia-Pacific region.

Register for the **#AsiaPacific** Regional Commemoration on **#IWD2023** bit.ly/IWD2023-DigitA...

Traduire le Tweet



“When women don't have access to information, they are not able to make informed decisions about their bodies,” says Ayesha, activist from **#Pakistan**.

Read how she's working on a tech-based solution to mitigate the digital **#GenderGap**: bit.ly/3yhYRuc

#IWD2023

Traduire le Tweet



👏 A big shoutout to the winners of **#AmbassadorForADayTH** for all enthusiasm and energy they brought to the **#IWD2023** commemoration. With this kind of spirit and dedication, **#GenerationEquality** is sure to become a reality. ✨

Traduire le Tweet



Don't miss out on the GenderNet Bootcamp 🌟
Hear from **#tech** innovators and activists on topics such as **#gender** & **#AI**, professional development in the tech industry.

🕒 Register before 5 March to join us in **#Bangkok** or online: bit.ly/3YI64VP!

#IWD2023 #DigitALL

Traduire le Tweet



Let's turn the **#PowerOn** this **#InternationalWomensDay**!

It's time to make gender equality a reality, both online and offline.

RT/share & like if you agree!

➔ bit.ly/3L1RaA8

#IWD2023 @unwomenasia

Traduire le Tweet





"I have a very deep, fundamental belief that [#technology](#) can change the world to be a better place."

This is Dilanaz's vision, a [#GenderEquality](#) activist from [#Türkiye](#), who's combating online gender-based violence: bit.ly/3F2I3MQ

[#IWD2023](#)

[Traduire le Tweet](#)



Which industry is [#AsiaPacific](#)'s largest women employer?

[7](#) 35 million [#women](#) work in garment & textile sector.

Yet, COVID-19 brought major job losses and highlighted the need for change.

More in [#APFSD](#) [#SDG9](#) profile: bit.ly/3JwggFW

[#SDGs](#)

[Traduire le Tweet](#)



"[#Digital](#) revolution provides new avenues to generating socio-economic outcomes, but we should never take for granted that the digital space is gender-neutral and [#GenderInclusive](#)."

- [@UN_Armida](#), Executive Secretary of [@UNESCAP](#), at [#IWD2023](#).



[#HappeningNow](#) [#AsiaPacific](#) Regional Commemoration of International Women's Day [#IWD2023](#).

Let's [#PowerOn](#) and address the gendered impact of the digital revolution, creating a brighter digital future for ALL: bit.ly/3Jnx95R

[Traduire le Tweet](#)



[Retweeted](#) United Nations ESCAP

[Armida Alisjahbana](#) [@UN_Armida](#) · 8 Mar

Today, let's celebrate the women and girls who are championing the advancement of transformative technology and digital education! [#PowerOn](#)

Join our [#AsiaPacific](#) Regional Commemoration on [#IWD2023](#) here bit.ly/IWD2023-DigitA...



"Imagine [#AsiaPacific](#), where women and girls have [#EqualOpportunities](#) to safely and meaningfully access, use, lead, and co-design technology. Let us all make women's rights a reality every day!"

- [@Sknibbs2](#), Regional Director a.i. [@unwomenasia](#) at [#IWD2023](#).



United Nations ESCAP Retweeted
Armida Alisjahbana @UN_Armida · 8 Mar
 Only 54% of women in #AsiaPacific have digital access. We must act immediately to bridge this digital #GenderGap & use #innovation to unlock the immense, untapped potential of women and girls: bit.ly/3kNHm20

#IWD2023



context.news
 Harnessing the digital age to empower women and girls | Context
 How we can unleash our region's most untapped potential

United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP · 8 Mar
 🎉 A big shoutout to the winners of #AmbassadorForADayTH for all enthusiasm and energy they brought to the #IWD2023 commemoration. With this kind of spirit and dedication, #GenerationEquality is sure to become a reality. 🌟



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

👤 Why do we need to empower women in #tech?

Rhea See, Co-founder and Co-CEO at @SheLovesTechOrg gives a perfect example in this video 📺 📱

#WomenEmpowerment #womenintech #IWD2023 w/ @unwomenasia
 Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP Retweeted
Armida Alisjahbana @UN_Armida · 8 Mar
 It was a pleasure to welcome Muhammadharis and Yonladee, young #GenderEquality leaders, to discover @UNESCAP and celebrate #IWD2023 together as part of the #AmbassadorForADayTH initiative. Thanks for sharing your perspectives with me.



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP · 8 Mar
 Thanks for joining our #IWD2023 #DigitALL celebrations both online and offline! 🎉

🌟 Today's discussions were a blast, sparking new ideas, new networks, and energizing us to continue to #PowerOn for #GenderEquality every day.

Let's keep the momentum going! 🚀



April 2023

United Nations ESCAP
@UNESCAP

Being the only **#woman** in the room or in male-dominated field can be intimidating, but it's also an opportunity to stand out & make a difference - emphasizes Rhea See, co-founder of **@SheLovesTechOrg**

We call on everyone to inspire & empower **#GirlsInICT** bit.ly/3N9Vjmm
[Traduire le Tweet](#)



United Nations ESCAP
@UNESCAP

👉 46% of women in the **#AsiaPacific** lack digital access, leading to missed opportunities for participation and innovation towards the **#SDGs**.

Bridging the digital **#GenderGap** is crucial for achieving **#GenderEquality**, and women & girls are leading the way: bit.ly/3N9Vjmm

[Traduire le Tweet](#)

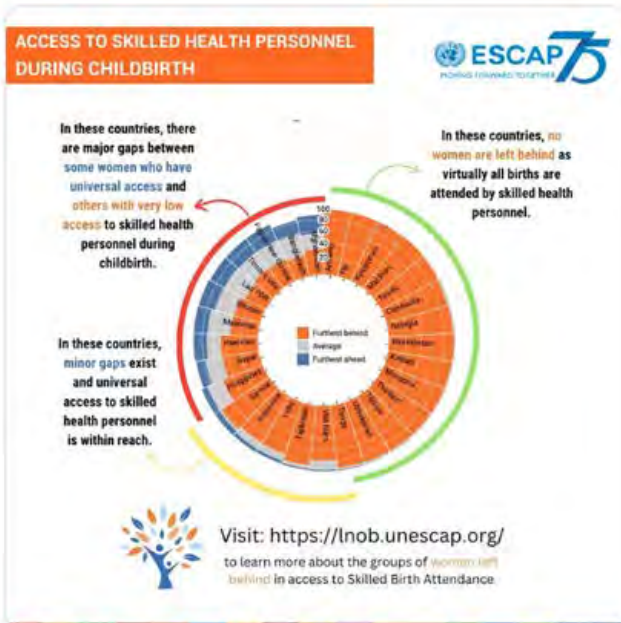


May 2023

United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

On International Day of #Midwife, let's recommit to providing universal access to skilled health personnel during childbirth in #AsiaPacific.

Check out lnob.unescap.org to learn about vulnerable populations in the region and take action to #LeaveNoOneBehind. @WHO @UNFPA
Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

📢 Call for applications!

@UNESCAP is seeking to partner with non-profit organisations supporting #WomenEntrepreneurs.

📍 Countries: #Fiji 🇫🇯, #Bangladesh 🇧🇩, #Cambodia 🇰🇲, #Nepal 🇳🇵, #Samoa 🇸🇲, #VietNam 🇻🇳.

🕒 Deadline: 11 June 2023 (UTC +7).

More info and links 📄 📄 📄

Traduire le Tweet

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

ESCAP's Catalysing Women's Entrepreneurship Project is seeking to partner with non-profit organisations supporting women entrepreneurs

- climate change adaptation and mitigation
- economic empowerment of rural and remote indigenous women
- relieving over-indebtedness

📍 Countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Nepal, Samoa and Viet Nam

🕒 Deadline: 11 June 2023, ICT, UTC+7

United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Here are three things you can do right now to start advancing #GenderEquality:

- 📖 Educate yourself
- ✅ Check your privilege
- 🗣️ Make space for diverse voices

- advises 30 for 2030, @unwomenasia, youth activist @kirthijayakumar.
Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

📄 Application form for non-profit organisations from #Fiji 🇫🇯 and #Samoa 🇸🇲 working on economic empowerment of #WomenEntrepreneurs and #ClimateChange adaptation & mitigation 📄 bit.ly/3MUZguD

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Partnerships for promoting women's entrepreneurship among rural indigenous women and/or in the climate change context

📍 Countries: Fiji & Samoa

🕒 Deadline: 11 June 2023, ICT, UTC+7

SCAN ME

June 2023

United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Inclusive business empowers female entrepreneurs #Bangladesh 🇬🇧.

@UNESCAP & #Romoni, an inclusive online beauty services platform, launched a project connecting women micro-entrepreneurs with financial institutions to support #WomenEmpowerment: bit.ly/43nEIRs
Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

✦ Although conflict-related sexual violence has been documented in many Asia-Pacific countries, only a minority provides assistance to female survivors.

📘 Digital technologies have the power to support and empower them.

#EndRapeInWar @unwomenasia
Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

👩 Women's participation in peace processes is essential for #GenderEquality & sustainable development.

👉 Despite evidence that their participation allows for longer lasting peace, it remains rare in #AsiaPacific.

Let's push for #WomenInDiplomacy to achieve #GlobalGoals!
Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

🚫 When land becomes degraded and water is scarce, women are often the worst affected.

✅ This Desertification and Drought Day, raise your voice for #HerLand. Her Rights!

@UNCCD
Traduire le Tweet

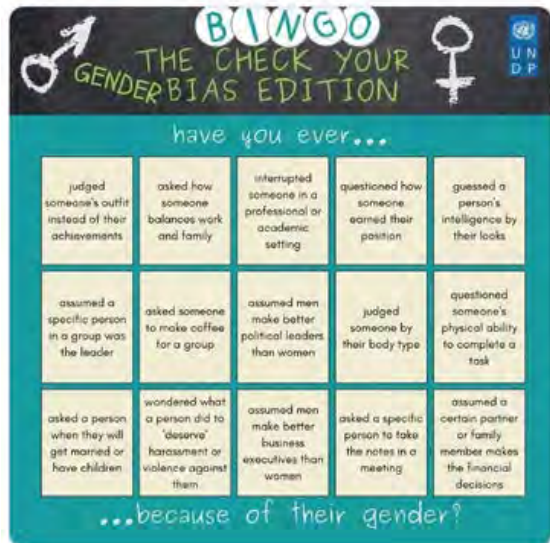


United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

➡ 49% of people believe men make better political leaders than women.
➡ 25% of people believe it's justified for a man to beat his wife.

@UNDP's new Gender Social Norms Index shows how gender biases still remain entrenched today.

👉 #CheckYourBias now: bit.ly/3JaqCL9
Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Recent #AsiaPacific #CRVS Research Forum was a big success! 🎉

Some great initiatives were shared including gender-equity in #CRVS legal reviews and addressing barriers to civil registration in #Pakistan.

More Insights in our new blog: bit.ly/3p64Pxx
Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Closing the #GenderGap in employment in the #AsiaPacific could add \$4.5 trillion to collective wealth by 2025.

Fostering women's entrepreneurship in #MSME, #SMEs is essential for inclusive & sustainable development in the region.

Learn more bit.ly/46cf11b
Traduire le Tweet



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

#MSMEDay: Empowering women entrepreneurs is crucial for economic growth in #AsiaPacific. 🙌👩🏫

With limited access to finance, education & business support, they face an uphill battle.

#MSMEs 🙌👩🏫
Traduire le Tweet



July 2023

 United Nations ESCAP
@UNESCAP

 Promoting **#GenderEquality** in infrastructure projects is key to achieving the **#SDGs**!

However, challenges persist in implementing gender-responsive projects in **#AsiaPacific**, from **#DataGaps** to limited awareness.

Read our blog to learn more bit.ly/44vIQ2V
[Traduire le post](#)



 United Nations ESCAP
@UNESCAP

Women & girls in **#AsiaPacific** spend **4** more times on unpaid care & domestic work than men.

The Regional Forum on Care Work in **@ASEAN** Countries, held in **#Vientiane**, shed light on the undervalued but essential work by caregivers! ✨

More: bit.ly/3rRzzU0
[Traduire le Tweet](#)



 United Nations ESCAP
@UNESCAP

To find paths to better value & invest in **#UnpaidCare** and domestic work in **#SouthEastAsia**, **@UNESCAP**, **@ASEAN** & **@OxfamInAsia** organised a Forum on Care Work.

Stakeholders explored gender-responsive & care-sensitive policies to build a stronger care economy: bit.ly/3OzIcEP

[Traduire le Tweet](#)



August 2023

United Nations ESCAP
@UNESCAP

🌟 Discover the real-world effects of gender-responsive financial products supported by @UNESCAP's Women's Entrepreneurship Project!

Read the success story of Boost Capital, an award-winning #FinTech Company underserved entrepreneurs in #Cambodia 🇰🇷: bit.ly/3OW133P
Traduire le post



United Nations In Cambodia et 3 autres personnes

United Nations ESCAP
@UNESCAP

During the #FeministFinanceForum, which kicks off tomorrow, we will explore the development of gender-responsive financial products and services to promote inclusive entrepreneurship and #GenderInclusive financing across #AsiaPacific. 🌐

Learn more bit.ly/43GBSXS
Traduire le post



Global Affairs Canada et 9 autres personnes

United Nations ESCAP
@UNESCAP

🌟 The #FeministFinanceForum has kicked off today in #Bangkok, uniting voices to champion change & empower entrepreneurs in #AsiaPacific.

👉 Let's accelerate action & drive innovative solutions to bridge the #GenderGap in access to finance: bit.ly/43GBSXS
Traduire le post



Global Affairs Canada et 7 autres personnes

United Nations ESCAP
@UNESCAP

JUST LAUNCHED 🚀 Policy Approaches for Financial Inclusion: An Examination of Approaches across #AsiaPacific & #LatinAmerica.

The report showcases policies to advance #FinancialInclusion of women, rural communities & #MSMEs across 2 regions: bit.ly/3OVIYVW

@APCColombia
Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP
@UNESCAP

On the sidelines of Day 1 of @UNESCAP's #FeministFinanceForum, @SheLovesTechOrg hosted a competition for women-led startups from the Mekong region to pitch in front of top investors.

A round of applause for participants & winners! 🎉

[📌](#) [👍](#) [👎](#) [➕](#)
Traduire le post



She Loves Tech

United Nations ESCAP
@UNESCAP

👩‍💻 #EmpoweringWomen entrepreneurs = Empowering economies!

🎉 @UNESCAP's #FeministFinanceForum concluded with a call for collaborative action to close the #GenderGap in access to finance in #AsiaPacific

Let's drive change & unlock opportunities for all ➡️ bit.ly/3QJ7ckZ
Traduire le post



She Loves Tech et 9 autres personnes



#FeministFinanceForum provided a platform to strengthen partnerships to bridge the gender-finance gap in the #AsiaPacific.

@UNESCAP & @2x_global had formalised a partnership to facilitate gender-smart capital deployment. Learn more about our initiatives: bit.ly/44AtYjo

[Traduire le post](#)



September 2023

United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

At ESCAP, we're not only talking about closing the financial gender gap; we're actively working to #EmpowerWomen.

@2x_global's Natalie Au offers 3 steps to help female leaders and managers navigate the #GenderGap in #AsiaPacific.

#FeministFinanceForum
Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

!?! Can you imagine the financial #GenderGap that women face? Rhea See, the co-founder of @SheLovesTechOrg, calls for fair funding opportunities for women techs and start-ups.

Join us on our #EmpoweringWomen Journey. 🌍

#FeministFinanceForum
Traduire le post

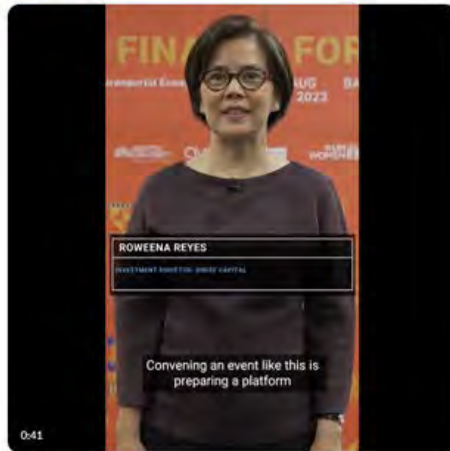


United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Join the movement for gender equality in entrepreneurship.

Roweena Reyes of @SweefCapital speaks about the opportunities to strengthen existing and new partnerships in advancing #genderequality in the #AsiaPacific.

#FeministFinanceForum
Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

We've worked together to bridge the #GenderGap in #AsiaPacific and make this a reality.

See what suggestions Emme Dao Lan Huong, the founder and executive chairwoman of TEKY Academy, gives to women entrepreneurs.

#FeministFinanceForum
Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Our SDG Action Weekend side event will be a game-changing discussion on gender-lens financing across pivotal sectors.

Register by 8 September: bit.ly/45Qv6QB
Learn more on the event: bit.ly/3sEj8e2
Registration guidelines: bit.ly/45zMOHS

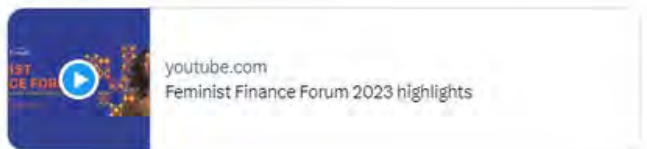


United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

The #FeministFinanceForum has worked on feminist entrepreneurial ecosystem in #AsiaPacific.

Financial #GenderEquality not only means #EmpoweringWomen but also means a brighter future for everyone.

Watch the highlights of the forum:
Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

COVID-19 exposed the fragility of current care systems, resting on unpaid and precarious work by women and girls

@UNESCAP joins the @GAllianceCare, along with @eclac_un & @UN_Women, amplifying the call for action in #AsiaPacific

bit.ly/44XvD1T #caresociety #SDG5 Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Making policies #gender and care-sensitive is crucial to encouraging women's economic participation and advancing gender #equality.

The ESCAP case study on #Indonesia explores how policymakers can build a stronger and more resilient care economy.

bit.ly/3Rh6WKH Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

In Bangladesh's 7.8 million SMEs = 25% of GDP, 1.5 million jobs

Women still face barriers to accessing vital info and support in SMEs

New digital one-stop service center #WEHelp is ready to empower #womenentrepreneurs!

@UNESCAP @SME_Foundation @GlobalAffairsCanada Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Introducing #WEHelp: a new digital one-stop service center Co-designed by

@UNESCAP & SME Foundation, funded by @GlobalAffairsCanada, #WEHelp assists #WomenEntrepreneurs with financing, e-consultation, e-commerce, skill building and more

bit.ly/3PCyVmr Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

WeHelp Portal has just launched in #Dhaka

Co-designed by @UNESCAP and SME Foundation, & funded by @GlobalAffairsCanada, this hub empowers women entrepreneurs

Join us in connecting #womenentrepreneurs to broader networks!

@SrinivasTata @caicaibkk @SudhaGooty @shriya410 Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP a reposté

Armida Alisjahbana @UN_Armida - 18 sept.

Investing in #women is not just a moral obligation but makes sound business sense. Scaling up gender-lens financing is critical to achieving the #SDGs. It is a cross-cutting agenda with the potential to accelerate progress across all Goals. #UNGA78



Mongolian Mission to the UN in New York et 6 autres personnes

4 8 697

Accelerating SDG progress is intrinsically linked to advancing Gender-Lens Investment in critical sectors like education, food systems, energy & climate change.

📺 Watch a recording of our [#SDGActionWeekend](#) side-event to learn more: bit.ly/48tz8Si

[#UNGA78 #SDGSummit](#)

[Traduire le post](#)



Asian Development Bank et 9 autres personnes



October 2023



In the **#Philippines**, only 46.3% of women work **VS** 70.8% of men due to unpaid care responsibilities.

@UNESCAP, @PCWgovph, @oxfamph organized a forum to bridge the **#GenderGap** & accelerate the adoption of national policies that **#CareforCareWork**.

Traduire le post



Oxfam in Asia et 7 autres personnes



#RuralWomen in **#AsiaPacific** play a vital role in agriculture and resource management.

It's time to break down barriers and stereotypes that limit their access to resources & opportunities.

Learn how @UNESCAP empowers women entrepreneurs bit.ly/3rPZoEd

Traduire le post



In **#AsiaPacific**, around 400 million women stay out of the labour force due to unpaid care work responsibilities.

On this International Day of Care and Support, let's stand for women in the care economy!

Join us bit.ly/46zJc9I

#CareforCareWork #SDG5

Traduire le post



In **#Cambodia**, many women work in the informal economy to have more flexibility to face growing unpaid care & domestic tasks.

@UNESCAP & partners, organized a consultation to better value & invest in the care economy.

Learn more bit.ly/3ZLDVst

#CareforCareWork

Traduire le post



Ministry of Women's Affairs Cambodia et Institute of Development Studies



On 29 October, the global community will mark the International Day of Care and Support

Join us at the **#AsiaPacific** commemoration, co-hosted by @UNESCAP, @ILOAsiaPacific, @UNDPAsiaPac & @unwomenasia

Register now bit.ly/46zJc9I

#CareforCareWork #SDG5

Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Women in #AsiaPacific on average spend up to 11 hrs/day on paid & unpaid care work – 4 times more than men.

Many countries are addressing #unpaidcarework - but much more needs to be done!

Learn more in our new blog: bit.ly/3s7eyVB

#CareforCareWork #SDG5

@oxfamiasia
Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Gender disparities are more acute in urban areas.

Digital tools like @safetipinapp drive change.

Urban innovation with a strong gender & intersectional focus can really affect the region's cities and urban areas. 🙌

More in #FutureCitiesAP bit.ly/45D2rNO

Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

The 1st ever #CareDay is a reminder that we need to address a critical issue:

Women in #AsiaPacific spend up to 11 hours daily on unpaid care work, four times more than men.

Let's amplify their voices & invest in the care economy for #GenderEquality: bit.ly/3tSPHW8

Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Coming up today! Commemoration of the 1st International Day of Care and Support!

We call on more partners to:

- ◆ Recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work
- ◆ Reward paid care work by promoting decent work

Register bit.ly/46zJc9j

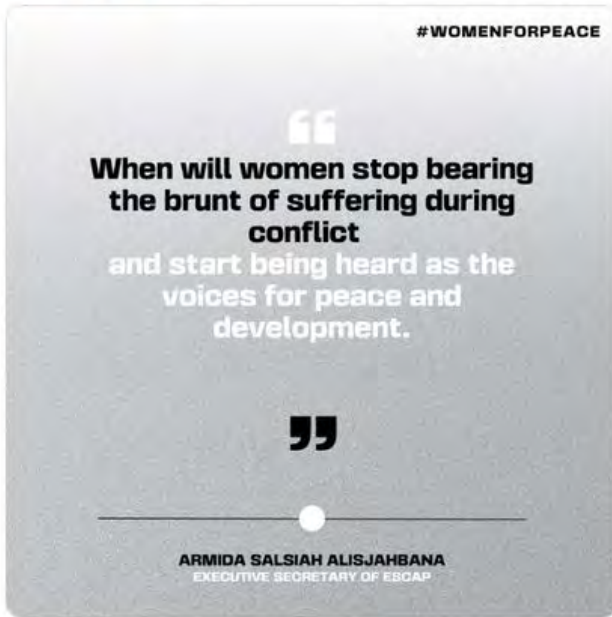
#CareforCareWork #SDG5

Traduire le post



Amida Alisjahbana
@UN_Amida

#womenforpeace



United Nations ESCAP
@UNESCAP

📍 Access to clean water can transform the lives of rural women, providing them with more time and opportunities.

📖 Read how policies designed to value and invest in the care economy drive progress toward #GenderEquality in the #Philippines:

bit.ly/3FKpEDq

Traduire le post



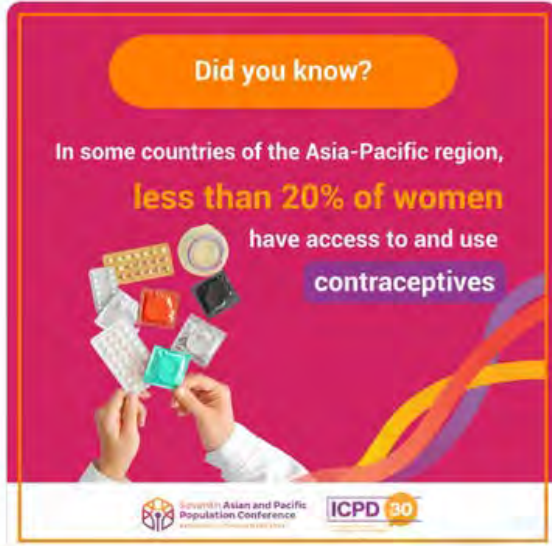
November 2023

United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Access to family planning remains uneven in #AsiaPacific, with women in certain countries having less than 20% prevalence in contraceptive use.

This emphasizes the urgent need for improved access to #HealthForAll: bit.ly/3QL8HPo

@UNFPAAsiaPac #APPC7 #ICPD30
Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

In 2023, women hold only 21% of parliamentary seats in #AsiaPacific.

Increasing female representation is a crucial step towards creating more inclusive & fair societies.

Follow #APPC7 for further discussions on #GenderEquality & #WomenEmpowerment: bit.ly/3QL8HPo

Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Amid climate disasters, about 80% of displaced individuals are women, intensifying their unpaid care burden.

@UNESCAP & partners convened in #Philippines 🇵🇭, to accelerate local gender-responsive climate policies valuing women's unpaid care work.

#CareforCareWork
Traduire le post



United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

Aleta adds to the disheartening statistics of women and girls that carry the family upon their shoulders, subsidizing the market economy with #UnpaidCare work- to the detriment of their own opportunities. Read her story: bit.ly/3u9Act3

@UNFPAAsiaPac
#APPC7 #ICPD30
Traduire le post





Ponny Lim, a Cambodian woman, defies gender biases in agriculture, spearheading a successful fish-feeding enterprise despite barriers.

With support from @GoodReturnOrg & @UNESCAP, she champions female-led businesses in her community.

Read her story bit.ly/47zOH7U

Traduire le post



Rural women in #AsiaPacific, crucial in agriculture, face resource barriers.

IIX Women's Livelihood Bond™ (WLB™) Series supports rural women through finance & training and affects 140,000 women in their businesses.

Learn more bit.ly/47eBMII

Traduire le post



Gender disparities in connectivity hinder women's economic empowerment in the #SPECA region.

@UNESCAP & @UNECE led discussions on women's role in transforming the region into a #DigitalConnectivity hub to build a sustainable future.

More details bit.ly/47qxQ7K

Traduire le post

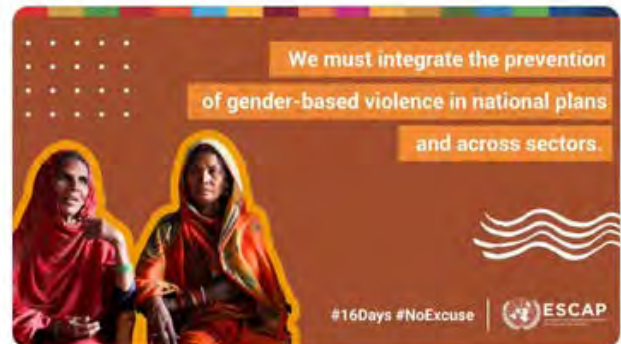


There's #NoExcuse for gender-based violence.

There's #NoExcuse for delaying transformative policies, gender-responsive budgets & funding for women's rights movements.

Let's use these tools to create a world where every woman & girl feels empowered & safe. #16Days

Traduire le post



Join the #16Days of Activism to prevent and end violence against women and girls.

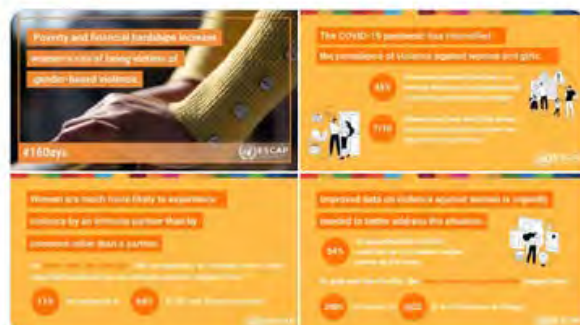
Governments, CSOs and international organizations should collaborate for policy changes and support services.

There is #NoExcuse.

Learn more here: bit.ly/49Eg5DF

@UN_Women

Traduire le post



@UNESCAP & @impacthub partner to boost inclusivity in entrepreneurship, bridging the funding gap for women entrepreneurs with disabilities in #AsiaPacific.

@AspenANDE Bangkok workshop provided the ideal platform for this announcement!

Traduire le post



Global Affairs Canada et 2 autres personnes

Let's explore pathways for increased digital access for women.

Join us on 5 December for "Women in the Digital Economy" event during #UNCTADeWeek, by @UNESCAP, @UNCDF & @GAC_Corporate.

Register now at: bit.ly/47Qstzf

[Traduire le post](#)



The poster is for the "Women in the Digital Economy" event, part of UNCTAD eWeek 2023. It features a grid of speakers and a moderator. The event is on 05 December from 8-9 a.m. CET and 10-11 a.m. EAT, with a 2-3 p.m. ICT session. The poster includes logos for UNCTAD, ESCAP, and UNCDF.

eWeek
UNCTAD | Geneva, 4-8 December 2023
Shaping the future of the digital economy

Women in the Digital Economy
Driving the use of technology among women

SPEAKERS

- Chairperson of the Panel:** **YOUNGJAE LEE**, Director, Digital Innovation Centre, UNCTAD
- Panelist:** **DR. YAN LI**, Asia Pacific Regional Director, International Labour Office
- Panelist:** **DR. ANITA K. SINGH**, Director, Digital Innovation Centre, UNCTAD
- Panelist:** **DR. ANITA K. SINGH**, Director, Digital Innovation Centre, UNCTAD
- Panelist:** **DR. ANITA K. SINGH**, Director, Digital Innovation Centre, UNCTAD
- Panelist:** **DR. ANITA K. SINGH**, Director, Digital Innovation Centre, UNCTAD

MODERATOR

- DR. ANITA K. SINGH**, Director, Digital Innovation Centre, UNCTAD

05 December
8-9 a.m. CET
10-11 a.m. EAT
2-3 p.m. ICT

unctad.org/eWeek2023

ESCAP
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

UN CDF
Impact Capital for Development

December 2023

United Nations ESCAP @UNESCAP

During #16Days and beyond, we recognize the importance of women's organizations:

- Providing services on a local level
- Bolstering women's empowerment
- Reaching those at risk of being left behind

Let's say #NoExcuse for #VAW.

Read more: bit.ly/49Eg5DF
@UN_Women
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María's story mirrors the post-Typhoon Haiyan challenges encountered by many in the Philippines.

Delve into Leyte's #ClimateCare nexus and explore ways to bolster the country's #ClimateResilience.

Read more bit.ly/418G4iG
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In #AsiaPacific, women bear heavier impacts of #ClimateChange.

🚧 Limited resources and gender roles hinder their adaptation.

Gender-responsive #ClimateAction for #GenderEquality should be on the ground.

Learn more bit.ly/46L16oD

#SDG5
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#SouthSouthCooperation between #AsiaPacific & #LatinAmerica advances women's financial inclusion

Policymakers gathered for a 3-day in-depth study on gender-responsive finance and bank collaboration.

Let's celebrate #WomenPower with @APCColombia, @UNESCAP & @nbccambodia!
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Online violence is a [#HumanRights](#) violation.

Let's support [#16Days](#) of Activism and say [#NoExcuse](#) to gender-based violence.

Learn more here: bit.ly/3RbwXUD

[@UN_Women](#)

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The collaboration between [@UNESCAP](#) and [@narimaitree](#) aims to enhance climate resilience for women-led businesses in [#Bangladesh](#).

Access to finance, tailored training and partnerships will [#empowerwomen](#) against [#climatechange](#).

Learn more here: bit.ly/48BskQb

Traduire le post



In [#AsiaPacific](#), women entrepreneurs face finance barriers.

Meet Sarom Meas, a Cambodian fish entrepreneur empowered by [@ChamroeunPlc](#) & [@GoodReturnOrg](#).

Discover her journey transforming local economies with [@UNESCAP](#)'s support:

bit.ly/3RoqoDs



Care Catalyst: Micro Business Women's Childcare Incubation Programme launched in Suva, Fiji!

A six-month initiative empowering [#WomenEntrepreneurs](#) in establishing and running child daycare businesses.

[@UNESCAP](#), [@fcefiji](#) and Women Entrepreneurs Business Council (WEBC)

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AMBASSADOR FOR A DAY 2024 VIDEO CONTEST LAUNCHED – click link-in-bio on bit.ly/3RrxjVg

Biggest creative contest for gender equality you won't want to miss. The theme this year is FINANCING.

Apply now at: bit.ly/3taeWU1

#AmbassadorForADayTH

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