

Asia Pacific Caucus Statement

54th CSW Session, 2010

Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, sisters from the women's movement and friends:

I am

privileged to make the statement on behalf of Asia Pacific Caucus .

As we Commemorate the 15th Anniversary of BPFA, we are nostalgic, nostalgic about the energy, excitement, and engagement of women across the world who landed in Beijing where the Beijing Platform for Action was adopted in 1995 that raised our hopes – hopes of a world free of poverty and hunger, free of violence and a world in which women live with dignity and have an equal say in all matters of governance.

We **welcome** since then, the adoption of the Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889 that have paved the way for supporting women's significant roles in all aspects of peace-making and conflict resolution; the Secretary General's Campaign on Unite to End Violence Against Women; and the September 2009 Resolution of the General Assembly that delivered to the women the commitment of the UN member states the establishment of an new and ambitiously funded gender architecture.

Despite

these advances, women and girls, especially in the Asia Pacific region face enormous and complex challenges as the dominant development paradigm continues to be guided by market ideology impacting on women in terms of climatic changes and disasters, food insecurity, unemployment and livelihood.

Democracies

are in distress in many countries of the region, especially systematic persecution of legitimate dissenters and human rights defenders, and their families exists. Prolonged political crises, religious extremisms, fundamentalisms and military dictatorships in some countries continue to create critical situations and insecurity for women and girls through violations of their human rights. Women and girls constitute some 80 % of the world's refugees and displaced persons, including internally displaced persons – their needs remain unaddressed.

Violence against women and girls across all geographic and demographic areas is a major concern. We acknowledge the campaign launched by the Secretary General on **Unite for Violence Against Women**, yet the fact is - there are increasing reports of FGM, alleged violent sorcery killings, witch hunting, honor killings and acid throwing cases and rape as an instrument of war or colonization. New and pervasive forms of violence are emerging alongside new media and technology with cyber bullying.

Threats

to women's human rights take place amidst tremendous uncertainties and multiple crises in the financial, food, ecological, consumption, health reproductive spheres that have led to widespread economic displacements and migration. Economic and climate crises have increased feminization of poverty, loss of livelihoods, homelessness, social isolation and increased violence against women. Girls and young women have been forced to leave school to enter the labour force, entertainment industry and the sex trade. The root causes of human trafficking in its various forms are not being addressed.

In the midst of these **challenges**, fifteen years after, we urge the governments to fulfill their commitments and implement the **BPFA and the Outcomes Document** in its holistic spirit, promote and protect women's human rights, human rights defenders, abolish discriminatory laws and customary practices, particularly personal laws.

We **urge** governments to bring an end to impunity to the perpetrators of women's human rights violations and punishing those responsible for war crimes and gender based violence. We further urge the UN bodies to fully implement UN Resolutions 1325, 1880, 1888 and 1989.

Military

spending must be reduced drastically and resources redirected to human needs. WE urge the States to halt arms manufacturing and curb their proliferation.

We urge States, intergovernmental bodies, corporations, IFIs and development agencies to follow the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in the Asia Pacific region and prevent economic displacement, environmental devastation, loss of indigenous knowledge and integrity, subversion of their rights and violence against indigenous women and girls.

We **call** upon the governments to pay heed to climate change warnings and put an immediate stop to all ecologically destructive and extractive activities by large foreign corporations; that specific needs of women and girls are integrated into disaster prevention, response and relief operations.

We **urge** the States to strengthen national institutional mechanisms; ensure provision of appropriate resources that are crucial to advance the position of women and girls; promote equal participation of women in leadership and decision making bodies at all levels.

The **new gender entity** in the United Nations must have effective field level presence and clear mechanisms and processes for engagement of women's organizations from the global to the national level.

We further **urge** that in this era of globalization, it is time we put gender economics at the forefront and that on all fora/bodies, be these global or regional, women's concerns should be central and women should have a space in these by their own right.

Last, but not least to realize that the intent and spirit of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Outcomes Document, the MDGs, CEDAW and other international instruments, we call upon the governments to move from **rhetoric to action** for women's **progress is progress for everyone**.

Last but not the least we **urge** the Governments and the UN to move forward and convene the **5th World Conference** on women. .

Let me end by saying - we went to Beijing with a song “ **We shall overcome, We shall overcome ...**” . We look forward to the time when we can sing with the younger generation “ **We have overcome, We have overcome...**”.

Thank You Mr. Chairperson

Prof. Pam Rajput

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Dr. Pam Rajput

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