



Division for the Advancement of Women



**Enhancing Women's Participation in Development
through an Enabling Environment
for Achieving Gender Equality
and the Advancement of Women**

Report of the Expert Group Meeting

**Bangkok, Thailand
8 - 11 November 2005**

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*The views expressed in this document are those of the experts
and do not necessarily represent the views of the United Nations*

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I. Introduction

1. To prepare for the fiftieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), organized an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on “Enhancing women’s participation in development through an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women” in Bangkok, Thailand, from 8 to 11 November 2005. In accordance with its multi-year programme of work for 2002-2006, the CSW will review the thematic issue of “Enhanced participation of women in development: An enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of education, health and work” at its 50th session from 27 February to 10 March 2006.

2. The Expert Group Meeting addressed questions relating to policies, institutions, mechanisms and strategies that have proven effective in increasing women’s capabilities, agency and access to education, health and work. The meeting also discussed the factors that facilitate or hinder an enabling environment for women’s participation. A critical analysis of current macro-level trends and cross-cutting issues as well as institutional change strategies that can transform the environment to enhance women’s participation in development, was also undertaken.

3. The Expert Group Meeting adopted recommendations for ensuring enhanced participation of women in development through an enabling environment for gender equality and advancement of women. This report is the outcome of the meeting. It provided inputs for the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission on the Status of Women.¹ The outcome of the meeting will also be presented during a panel discussion at the 50th session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

II. Organization of work

A. Participation

4. The Expert Group Meeting on “Enhancing women’s participation in development through an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women” was attended by twelve independent experts from different regions; a consultant to DAW; and seven observers, including four from United Nations entities and three from civil society. Two representatives from DAW also attended the meeting (see Annex I).

B. Documentation

5. The documentation for the meeting comprised (see Annex II):

- twelve papers prepared by experts;
- a paper prepared by an observer;
- a background paper prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women (Aide-

¹ E/CN.6/2006/12

Mémoire);

- a working paper prepared by a consultant to DAW;
- other background documents.

6. This report provides the outcome of the meeting of the independent experts. The report and all documentation relating to the meeting are available on-line on the DAW website: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/enabling_environment2005.

C. Programme of work

7. At its opening session on 8 November 2005, the meeting adopted the following programme of work (see Annex III):

- a) Opening session
- b) Election of officers and adoption of the programme of work
- c) Introduction to the meeting
- d) Presentation and discussion of the draft paper prepared by the consultant to DAW
- e) Presentation and discussion of papers prepared by experts
- f) Presentation and discussion of the paper prepared by an observer
- g) Working groups on:
 - Education
 - Health
 - Work
- h) Introduction of draft report and recommendations in plenary
- i) Adoption of final report and recommendations
- j) Closing session

D. Election of officers

8. The experts elected the following officers:

- Co-Chairs: Ms. Farzana Bari and Ms. Nüket Kardam
- Co-Rapporteurs: Ms. Pascale Allotey and Ms. Lynn Thiesmeyer

E. Opening statements

9. The meeting was opened by Ms. Thelma Kay, Director of the Emerging Social Issues Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). In her statement, Ms. Kay expressed appreciation for the extensive expertise of the experts and commended the Division for the Advancement of Women on guiding the organization of the meeting. At the regional review of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2004, the Asia and Pacific region had acknowledged some progress in the formulation of gender-responsive policies and action plans, in institutionalizing gender mainstreaming mechanisms, revising domestic laws to eliminate discrimination against women, and in the areas of health, education, and political participation. But obstacles remained, especially with regard to migrant workers, HIV/AIDS, poverty, participation in decision-making, violence against women,

environmental management, the impact of globalization and women's image in the media. Moreover, the lack of authority and resources of national gender machineries was a challenge.

10. Ms. Kay also noted the importance of gender mainstreaming. The Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Millennium Development Goals, and national strategies provided definitive policies and indicators for progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women. Ongoing advocacy faced old and new challenges, including discriminatory attitudes and practices; and, in the Asia and Pacific region, recent natural disasters. Nevertheless, the region's progress had created more opportunities to address inequalities through national legislation. These opportunities called for the political will to translate policy into practice and create a gender-responsive society.

11. A message from Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, was delivered by Ms. Sylvie I. Cohen, Deputy Director. In her statement, Ms. Hannan expressed her appreciation to the Emerging Social Issues Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for the collaboration, and to all participants of the Expert Group Meeting. Ms. Hannan pointed out the importance of the contribution of the meeting to the outcome of the 50th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2006. The Commission's ten-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action showed progress in policy reforms, legislative change, institutional development, adherence to human rights instruments, and enhanced partnerships. However, a large gap remained between policy and practice, and an enabling environment for women's participation in development had not yet been achieved. The challenge was to ensure the accelerated implementation of commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

12. The Director of Division for the Advancement of Women noted that the Declaration adopted by the Commission at its 49th session recognized that the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) were mutually reinforcing. In the recent World Summit outcome, Member States had emphasized the importance of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Summit also highlighted the indispensable linkages between peace, security and human rights. Ensuring full implementation of all these standards through gender mainstreaming should be seen as essential for the creation of an enabling environment. Ms. Hannan invited the participants of the meeting to identify constraints and define critical factors leading to an enabling environment, to reflect on the impact of international and national policies at different levels, and the potential for change. The meeting should identify lessons learned in the fields of education, health and work, and provide practical recommendations for the creation of an enabling environment for women's enhanced participation in development.

III. Women's enhanced participation in development: access, capabilities and agency in the context of an enabling environment

13. The Expert Group Meeting noted that the nature of women's participation in the economic, social, cultural and political processes that affect their lives, and the terms or conditions under which this participation takes place, have been key concerns for the women's movement and gender advocates, as well as Governments, for many years. There has been an increased understanding of the need to integrate gender-sensitive perspectives, approaches and procedures into development processes.

14. The approach to women's participation in development has broadened the focus from securing the involvement of women in existing processes and structures to ensuring the full empowerment of women, which can lead to the transformation of existing institutions, processes and structures. Participatory development approaches have tended to concentrate on methods of participation, most commonly focusing on ensuring women's quantitative rather than qualitative participation and representation. Such approaches have overlooked unequal power relations and socio-cultural constraints that limit women's capability to influence decisions and bring about positive and sustainable changes in their lives and development processes. Full empowerment enables women to acquire assets, skills, knowledge and capabilities so that they can have access to opportunities and public goods and control their own development and the development of their families, communities and societies.

15. Shifting from a focus on women's involvement in development processes to their full empowerment is important in light of persistent gender inequalities. The Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality's broad interpretation of women's empowerment highlights three critical dimensions that affect women's enhanced participation in development. These dimensions include: capabilities (for example, in health and education); access to opportunities (for example, employment and land); and agency (for example, the ability to participate in policy and decision-making processes).² The Expert Group Meeting adopted this conceptual approach to its work.

16. An enabling environment presents women and men with the same opportunities and freedom of choices while securing the conditions for their well-being. The Expert Group Meeting noted the need to address institutional factors in the creation of an enabling environment for women's enhanced participation in development. These factors range from policies, laws, rules, regulations and resource allocation procedures of state agencies, to the practices and attitudes of policy makers, and civil servants and service providers based on their interpretations of these laws and regulations, their own capacities and vested interests. The enabling environment also includes the policies and practices of non-governmental and civil society organizations and private sector actors such as businesses.

17. The EGM identified a set of interrelated frameworks and factors, inter alia:

- Legal and regulatory;
- Policy;

² Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality, *Taking action: Achieving gender equality and empowering women*, 2005, p. 3

- Resource allocations and infrastructure;
- Institutional and organizational factors; and
- Social-cultural factors.

18. In addition to these cross-cutting factors, other conditions affect women's access, capabilities and agency, including health, nutritional and education status; population demographics and household characteristics; labour markets; food security; economic, political and environmental conditions; socio-cultural conditions; access to adequate public services, basic infrastructures, and energy and labour-saving technologies; and access to information and communication technologies. Finally, international co-operation and partnerships in the fields of finance, technology transfer, debt relief and trade can support an enabling environment. Many of these issues are addressed by internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the objectives and related actions arising from the 2000 Millennium Summit and the 2005 World Summit.

IV. An enabling environment for gender equality and the advancement of women: current challenges

19. The current level of women's participation in the economic, cultural and political processes of most societies has not resulted in desired women's and girls' access to development resources and outcomes. The continued gender gap that persists in capabilities, access and agency remains a concern for the women's movement and gender advocates in the national and international arenas. A global situation analysis of gender relations around the world indicates that in most societies, gender inequality continues to shape structures and practices of institutions leading to inequitable allocation and distribution of resources. As noted by one expert, gender inequalities negatively impact on the success of socio-economic transformation and development.³ Gender equality concerns, however, are frequently ignored in the course of formulating national policies and strategies for development. Yet, as noted by another expert,⁴ women experience the impact of such policies in their day-to-day lives and encounters with institutions that shape their social environment, e.g., hospitals, schools, the police or military, and local employers. Institutionalized gender discrimination needs to be specifically addressed.

20. Development policies, strategies and resource allocations have not achieved the desired gender equality development goals, as the root causes and processes that create and reinforce gender inequality have been ignored. An expert reported that a range of strategies, including women's human rights education; bussing girls to girls' only schools; or providing women with micro-credit to set up their own small business, have been implemented in the hope that these provide opportunities for women and girls to become agents of social change.⁵ The experts noted, however, that such outcomes have not materialized, and compromising policies have failed to address the eradication of society-wide discrimination against women and girls. The experts also noted that there have been too few attempts in national development policies to reflect the situations of women and girls in ethnic or minority communities or women with

³ Khotkina, Zoya A., *The impact of macro-economic policies and economies in transition on women's employment, including in the informal sector* (EGM-WPD-EE/2005/EP.10)

⁴ Thiesmeyer, Lynn, *Gender, Public Health, and Human Security Policy in Asia* (EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP.2)

⁵ Kardam, Nüket, *Gender and Institutions: Creating an Enabling Environment* (EGM-WPD-EE/2005/EP.9)

special needs. These situations expose those affected to deeper discrimination, fewer opportunities, and greater human rights violations, and need to be addressed at the national level through specific empowerment and protection measures.

21. Among the root causes of discrimination, the experts focused on

- The impact of global macroeconomic policies on national, regional and local levels;
- The absence of or slow progress towards participatory democracy;
- The gendered nature of political, public, social and cultural institutions and related discourses; and
- Socio-cultural constraints, including the lack of attitudinal change towards gender equality and the empowerment of women.

22. The experts noted that livelihood systems, well-being and human security conditions are no longer determined by State and local actors alone, but also by globalization, including the economic conditions brought about by Governments, international financial institutions and multi- and bilateral donors, and trans-national corporations and other private actors. Effects of a cross-border nature are conflicts over resources; ideological, ethnic, and religious clashes; humanitarian disasters, natural disasters, and displacement of persons. Similar concerns were raised about responses to pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, or possible future pandemics, such as Avian Influenza.

23. Women experience the impact of globalization in different ways than men. Globalization and cross-boundary migration have brought some obvious benefits to women, such as access to information and communication technology and greater work opportunities. The experts critically assessed current conditions and concluded that these benefits notwithstanding, the disparities in and devaluation of women's participation in development have been reinforced by the global restructuring of economies, in particular liberalization, privatization, international trade agreements, and prioritization of monetary policies over fiscal policies and resource needs, among others. In many cases, neo-liberal macro-economic and financial strategies have influenced country-level social and economic structures in accordance with international frameworks rather than local priorities. The differential (and often negative) impacts of the resulting monetary and fiscal policies on women have been largely ignored. Economic growth has been prioritized over equality and equity in a way that increases poverty and gender inequalities and places greater burdens on women.

24. The experts noted that on the one hand, States have repeatedly stated their commitment to upholding the human rights of women. At the same time, because they operate under budgetary constraints and funding conditionality, States may restrict resource allocations (or increases to required levels) to the social sectors such as to health, education and social protection related to employment, areas most affecting women. The experts noted that low inflation targets inevitably constrain the level of public expenditure that can be sustained, with knock-on effects on health and education spending and hence on the capacity of poor countries to meet the MDGs.⁶ Strict

⁶ ActionAid International USA, *Changing Course: Alternative Approaches to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals and Fight HIV/AIDS*, 2005

limits on budget deficits (and often pressures to maintain surpluses) have similarly constrained increases on social sectors spending.⁷

25. Social and economic policies have been viewed by many as though they were gender-neutral, but they produce or reinforce gendered differentials in access to education and health services, as well as productive assets, including capital, land, skills, and markets, as well as exacerbate women's time burdens, economic constraints and opportunity costs.⁸ Several experts emphasized that neo-liberal policies most negatively affect the poor strata of the population, where women and children predominate. Social expenditures on the reproduction of the labour force such as child care have in many cases been moved to the sphere of domestic work, where they tend to become invisible to society and present an additional burden for women. Further, structural adjustment policies have led to moving labour supply and employment opportunities from the formal to the informal economies. This has created barriers to the expansion of women's employment in the formal economy and their over-representation in the informal economy.⁹

26. The analysis of gender differences in access to economic resources is complex and is still restricted by lack of sex-disaggregated data. For example, an expert noted that information about access to resources and property ownership is generally based on data related to households, but not on distribution of property and income within households.¹⁰ However, greater sex-disaggregation of economic data has allowed for a clearer analysis of the effect of open market, macro-economic restructuring and trade liberalization policies on gender equality and the empowerment of women. There is now a better understanding of ways in which economic liberalization reforms negatively impact women's health, access to education and skills development, and employment that ensures secure and sustainable livelihoods. Strategies and promising approaches to enable women to benefit from globalization have been developed and applied; their large scale implementation has, however, lagged behind.

27. The experts noted that under economic liberalization policies, health, education, and work have become "commodified". One expert stressed that education is often invoked as the foundation of democracy, but in many countries it seems to have been reduced to a mere commodity and a means to an end rather than being considered as an intrinsic public good and fundamental human right.¹¹ Instead of being considered as core social institutions that fulfill individuals' rights to education and health, privatized education and health systems offer their services at prices and standards driven by market forces. The Millennium Project Task Force on Child Health and Maternal Health, for example, has extensively discussed how the privatization of health care provision has reduced the quality and access to health services and particularly affected poor and marginalized sectors of the population, mainly women.¹² Health, education

⁷ United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, *Gender Equality. Striving for Justice in an Unequal World*, 2005, p. 30ff.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. xxi ff.

⁹ Khotkina, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ Khotkina, *op. cit.*

¹¹ Marphatia, Akanksha A., *Creating an enabling environment for girls' and women's participation in education* (EGM-WPD-EE/2005/EP.8)

¹² Millennium Project Task Force on Child Health and Maternal Health, *Who's got the power? Transforming health systems for women and children*, 2005, p. 39 ff.

and work have also been compartmentalized. The experts noted that current quantitative MDG targets and indicators largely fail to specify the systemic and socio-cultural changes required for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. They also fail to emphasize the linkages among the goals and do not mainstream gender perspectives.

28. Health, education and work are defined as human rights under the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the United Nations and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Beijing Platform (1995), the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly (2000), and the Millennium Declaration of 2000, which served as the basis for the Millennium Development Goals have noted the continuing need to achieve women's human rights. The Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality pointed out the gaps in implementation. Ensuring that States fulfill their obligations to uphold these rights through the adoption of appropriate legislation, temporary special measures, and capacity building for the judiciary has proved challenging in the context of globalization and threats to human security.

29. The experts stressed that the gendered nature of institutions in all public and private spheres, including in education, health and employment, constitute a major barrier to women's enhanced participation in development. Organizations and their modes of operation, including administrative, technical, political and financial processes, their underlying organizational cultures and the way they deliver critical services to women, combine with wider societal norms and cultural practices and affect responses to women's rights and needs. Patriarchal values and behaviours in household and family relationships are reproduced across a range of organizations and arenas and impinge on women's ability to participate effectively in development processes.¹³ As noted by the Secretary-General's report on the ten-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action, public attitudes to gender equality have not changed at the same pace as policies and legal and regulatory frameworks.¹⁴ The experts noted that stereotypical attitudes and practices continue to undermine achievements made over the past few decades, including in the areas of education, health and work as many policy reforms have not been accompanied by measures to reconfigure gender relations and institutional practices. For instance, women's access to property inheritance and the income it can generate are often compromised by community members even when equitable laws have been enacted.¹⁵ Cultural, religious and social biases against women may also lead to the inadequate allocation of governmental and donor resources.¹⁶

30. The experts observed that current discourses in the political, social and economic arenas tend to characterize gendered experience in terms of simplistic dichotomies, such as public-private spaces; masculine and feminine identity; the educated and the illiterate; formal and informal education; formal education and indigenous knowledge; productive and reproductive work; formal and informal economy; health (as a state of complete physical and mental health)

¹³ Kardam, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ E/CN.6/2005/2, para 81

¹⁵ Matashane-Marite, Keiso, *Women's Rights and Participation, Including Women's Access to Land and Inheritance, and the Role of Lobbying and Grassroots Organizations in Lesotho* (EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP.3)

¹⁶ Neema, Stella, *The impact of health policies and health sector reform on the readiness of health systems to respond to women's health needs, with special focus on reproductive health, reproductive rights and HIV/AIDS* (EGM -WPD-EE/2005/EP.11)

and disease. Rather, the diversity within societies should be recognized. Overly simplistic and contrasting views of identity and status contribute to institutionalizing gender stereotypes and undermining the value and contributions of women.

31. The experts agreed with other analysts¹⁷ that future initiatives should seek to couple policy changes with organizational changes that seek to reform the traditional and often patriarchal culture of institutions and challenge the underlying structures that reinforce inequality. Political and legal bodies, as well as social and economic institutions in the fields of education, health and employment must mainstream gender perspectives to achieve an enabling environment.

32. The experts noted that despite positive developments in democratization in some countries, violations of women's human rights prevail. Limited or shrinking space for democratic dialogue in many parts of the world and the lack of appropriately-paced transitions to democratic governance have denied access of certain societal groups, such as women, to mainstream politics, as well as freedom of association, assembly and expression in society. As noted by one expert, democracies continue to perpetuate the public-private divide between men and women, partly because legislative and executive bodies continue to adopt patriarchal attitudes and their work modalities often ignore women decision makers' domestic care burdens and socio-economic constraints.¹⁸

33. Gender inequalities are embedded in male-dominated societal norms. An expert noted that throughout the world, unwritten 'social contracts' assigning the distribution of gender roles in the family and in the formal and informal labour markets are still in force.¹⁹ The different and unequal roles, rights and responsibilities that communities and societies consider appropriate for women and men have a strong influence on gender disparity.²⁰ Women have less time to invest their human and social capital. Discriminatory socio-cultural norms restrict women's mobility, property rights, and access to education and health services, and impair their access to livelihood opportunities. These biases are often validated and confirmed through education when school environments and learning processes discriminate against girls and women. The effect is one of disempowerment, where girls and women have been "socialized" to accept the inequalities and are therefore not able to demand their right to full equality in all areas of public life, focusing instead on practical needs on access to education and health care.

34. The experts emphasized the role of men and boys in addressing socio-cultural stereotypes and transforming discriminatory practices in communities. The experts agreed that women had been encouraged and enabled to participate in education and work, and seek health care on an equal basis with men, but their triple burden of productive, reproductive, and community work

¹⁷ Grey, quoted in Greig, Froniga, *Gender at work: Increased participation requires institutional change* (EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP.4); Rao, A. and Kelleher, D., *Is there life after gender mainstreaming?* in: *Gender and Development* Vol. 13, No. 2, July 2005, and *Institutions, organisations and gender equality in an era of globalization*, in: *Gender and Development* Vol. 11, No. 1, May 2003

¹⁸ Bari, Farzana, *Women's political participation: Issues and challenges* (EGM/WPD-EE/2005/WP.12, draft)

¹⁹ Tisheva, Genoveva, *Creating an enabling environment for women's participation in development through legal and regulatory frameworks that provide women's equal access to rights and opportunities in the field of education, work and health – Challenges and recommendations, and the role of women's NGOs* (EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP.5)

²⁰ Marphatia, *op. cit.*

had not lessened proportionately. Men's greater participation in household and family care, the reproductive work of society, was considered essential. An expert considered that gender equality required that equality in employment be complemented by equality in the household.²¹

35. Another major and harmful phenomenon influenced by socio-cultural factors is persistent violence against women and girls, which impacts across all sectors of society and all age groups. Public and private violence is pervasive throughout the life cycle of girls and women, and impacts on the enjoyment of their rights to education, health and employment. It also seriously undermines women's ability to develop capabilities and skills, to access services, for example in the education and health sectors, and to participate in public life and make use of their agency. Women and girls' enhanced education as well as enhanced access to economic opportunities through work and enhanced protection of their health, are prerequisites for the elimination of violence against women in all its forms, and in particular domestic violence and trafficking in women.²² The experts also noted however that education alone is not sufficient to fight violence. Educational institutions and their staff have been known to be the perpetrators of violence against girls. Nevertheless, a good quality education and a safe school environment created with and by the community, children and school staff have been proven to decrease rates of violence.²³

36. The experts stressed that all disabling conditions discussed above call for adopting an integrated rights-based approach to development that brings together health, education and work as essential elements of an enabling environment for women.

V. Issues and Policy Recommendations in the Fields of Education, Health and Work

A. Education

37. Education is a fundamental human right. The right to education has been recognized in numerous international human rights standards. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Agreements specific to education, such as the Education for All Declarations of 1990 and 2000 have provided guidance to reforming education systems. They have encouraged investments in the entire education system, from early childhood education to life-long learning through adult literacy and empowerment programmes. They have also encouraged countries to include the right to education in their constitutions. Without the recognition of education as a basic right for all citizens, those most likely to be left out of the educational system will continue to be girls and women.

38. The experts stressed that CEDAW prohibits discrimination against girls and women in the field of education, both in terms of equal access to education and content of education. CEDAW requires prompt action of States parties to ensure the elimination of discrimination,

²¹ Khotkina, *op. cit.*

²² Tisheva, *op. cit.*

²³ ActionAid International, *Stop Violence Against Women*, 2004

including, as necessary, through laws and regulations that create incentives and temporary special measures.²⁴

39. Education is both an end in itself as well as a means to improve individuals and societies. Education that promotes equality and rights has the potential to offer girls and women the kind of knowledge that can lead to self-empowerment and critical ways of thinking about their social, cultural, political and economic status. Good quality education can also provide specific skills and training for employment, better health choices, and opportunities to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. The intrinsic and empowering value of education for women should be equally considered along with the beneficial secondary impacts on families, communities and societies.

40. The experts noted that greater educational opportunities for women and girls have proven to result in greater health care for children, lower rates of HIV infection, lower birth rates and later marriage, and greater ownership of land and assets.²⁵ The experts also noted that education and training enable women to hold better positions in the labour market; retain stronger bargaining power; enhance opportunities for promotion; participate in economic, social and political decision-making; and break through gender stereotypes.

41. Innovative interventions in education and training, including for adult women, have shown promising results. As noted by one of the experts, a human rights training programme targeted at women and taught in community centres in Turkey has resulted in greater awareness, legal literacy and increased advocacy for gender equality and the empowerment of women.²⁶ The enabling factors included partnership between civil society and a Government agency²⁷. The content of the programme focused on human rights, including CEDAW, legal reforms promoting women's human rights, and communication skills for individual women and grassroots organizations. Women learned about their rights, how to communicate, negotiate and demand them, and how to hold the Government accountable. An evaluation found that this had a positive impact on reducing domestic violence.

A.1. Constraints

42. Educating all children, especially girls, and ensuring that schools offer a vibrant learning environment free of gender bias and injustice is a major challenge. The experts noted two key international goals driving progress in education. The MDG 2 is to achieve gender parity in education as the basis for achieving other development goals, but many countries will have failed to achieve this goal by the end of 2005. Education For All (EFA) takes a holistic approach to education and considers learning a life-long process; its six goals capture the importance of early childhood, adult education, the importance of rights in education and high quality of learning. EFA was originally to be achieved by 2000, but the target date has now been harmonized with the 2015 target date for the MDGs. The experts noted that there may be an inherent contradiction

²⁴ Tisheva, *op. cit.*

²⁵ Marphatia, *op. cit.*

²⁶ Kardam, *op. cit.*

²⁷ The non-governmental organization Women for Women's Human Rights, and the Turkish Government's General Directorate for Social Services

between time-bound, short-term goals and longer-term efforts, investment and planning required for transforming gender biases and social norms that discriminate against women. Notably, little progress has been made towards initiating education that would enable students to analyze the underlying causes of inequalities.

43. The experts also noted that neo-liberal policies designed by international financial institutions and implemented by ministries of finance and central banks have restricted spending on education and other social sectors. In some countries, they have led to public education becoming less viable. The rapid privatization of public services, decreasing foreign aid for education, donor conditionality and the huge debt burden, have a strong influence on the availability and flexibility of education funds. These shortages mean that governments have difficult choices to make when allocating funds. Education programmes for girls may be curtailed and salaries for teachers compromised. Multiple providers now offer differing quality of education to those who can afford to pay. The ‘outsourcing’ of education has brought into question what education is for and for whom it is accessible.²⁸ Girls and women, who constitute the majority of the poor, have been particularly affected by this development.

44. The challenges to exercising the right to education persist when education is not provided free of charge to all children. In 92 developing countries where school fees continue to be charged, a negative impact on the education of girls has been noted.²⁹ Fewer girls are sent to school if parents with limited resources are forced to make a choice between investing in their daughters’ or their sons’ education. The experts stressed, however, that a number of countries, notably in Africa, have recently eliminated school fees, but have not made the necessary adjustments needed to provide for the ensuing increased school enrolment. This measure brought over 1.5 million children to schools in one single country, but in some classes, the numbers of students per teacher multiplied. The quality of education dropped, and many children, particularly girls, dropped out of school.³⁰

45. There are other gender-specific challenges of access to education such as the lack of availability of schools within safe walking distances and the quality of infrastructure, the lack of sanitation facilities for girls or safe and appropriate school buildings; sufficient, adequately qualified female teaching staff and adequate teaching and learning materials. There is sexual harassment in some school environments by educational staff, teachers and male students. Other challenges include early marriage of girls and teenage pregnancies, which, in some parts of the world, are major reasons for school drop-outs and consequent low completion rates of girls.

46. In many countries, current educational programmes are not fully responsive to girls’ and women’s practical and strategic educational needs, for example improvements in the quality and relevance of education and initiatives to eliminate gender bias in curricula and teaching practices. Policies have often addressed girls’ and women’s immediate needs for education without challenging the underlying structures and patriarchal beliefs that reinforce and reproduce social inequality. Few initiatives empower teachers to identify the discriminatory messages prevalent

²⁸ Marphatia, *op. cit.*

²⁹ Tomasevski, K., *Free or Fee? Right to Education Global Report*, 2005

³⁰ Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality, *op. cit.*, p. 48

in their own practices so they can communicate concepts of equality, justice and equity, and serve as role models in classrooms.

47. The experts considered that in traditional societies, where some girls are married between the ages of 12 and 15, parents may be unwilling to invest in the education of their daughters because they will leave the household early, and in some cases, education of girls may decrease “marriageability”, turning education into a negative investment.³¹ They noted that as long as, in some societies, the most important role of girls is seen to be caretaker, mother and wife, incentives to invest in their education will be low. The perceived notion that the ‘rate of return’ for boys’ education is greater than for girls, because boys have more opportunities to access better paying jobs, raises important questions about the value placed on girls, their right to education and the value of education itself.³²

48. Educational opportunities that enable women to identify and choose appropriate or remunerative employment are not yet universal. There is also inadequate awareness of or lack of cooperation between potential employers and educational institutions. Women and girls with lower levels of education are usually faced with employment that is lower paid and lacks social protection. In addition, in some countries, socio-cultural stereotypes limit the employment choices of women, even those with higher education levels.

49. The challenges highlighted above will require substantial increases in investments and commitments to compulsory girls’ education. Governments, as the principal providers of public education, should make available the resources to educate all children. Governments need to find ways to raise more resources for education despite the macro-level trends that negatively impact investments in education systems, and Governments’ ability to promote equality.

A.2. Recommendations

50. Governments should be the primary providers of public education and maintain a regulatory role that establishes minimum standards of access, quality and equality for the multiple providers now delivering education, including standards relating to the protection and promotion of girls’ and women’s rights to education.

51. Governments should ensure that legislation on education includes provisions on universal access to education and training, including vocational training; and ensures access by women and girls throughout the life-cycle. This right should be guaranteed in the Constitution and in other laws and regulations; at the same time, men who are care givers should also be granted the right to continuous education and training.

52. Governments should enact society-wide laws against violence, including violence in education and training environments.

53. Education institutions should address the underlying causes for violence against girls and women in schools and work with communities to eliminating such violence.

³¹ Kardam, *op. cit.*

³² Marphatia, *op. cit.*

54. Governments and other partners should provide training for teachers on gender-based violence and harassment; school-based monitoring systems should be established to identify perpetrators and include punitive measures.
55. Governments should prepare for major increases in enrolment following the elimination of school fees by securing resources to build enough schools, provide learning materials, hire and train additional teachers. In view of future increased enrolment of girls, particular attention should be paid to integrating gender equality perspectives into all planning processes.
56. All levels of the education system should send consistent and clear messages promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Initiatives to eliminate gender bias in curricula and teaching practices need to challenge the patriarchal attitudes that reproduce social inequalities (e.g., both boys and girls cleaning the classroom).
57. Curricula should educate girls and women, as well as boys and men, on the human rights of women and the need to achieve gender equality, on the social construction of gender roles, and the benefits of shared childcare and other care responsibilities. Textbooks should be revised to eliminate gender stereotypes, promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and incorporate adequate attention to women's human rights.
58. Teachers should be sensitized, trained, empowered and supported to identify the hidden, discriminatory messages prevalent in their own practices so they can communicate concepts of equality, justice and equity, and serve as role models in school.
59. All women should be provided full opportunities to acquire literacy and other skills, in view of the fact that educated mothers are more likely to send their daughters to school and support their education.
60. Universal education on sexuality, which incorporates sexual health and gender identities, should be provided for girls and boys in the school environment; formal and informal education on sexuality and gender roles should also be offered in different media, educational institutions, and community organizations.
61. Education and training programmes, and public campaigns, should focus on men's and boys' involvement in the promotion of gender equality, respect for women's and girls' human rights, and the promotion of their empowerment.
62. Parents should be engaged in monitoring the quality of education for girls, and should be supported in advocating with Governments for free, accessible and high quality education for girls.
63. Children and young people should be encouraged and supported in their advocacy for gender equality in education.

64. Governments and other stakeholders should partner with civil society and support its critical engagement in transforming schools and local educational institutions into gender-sensitive environments.

65. Educational institutions and networks should include teachers' unions, children's groups and women's organizations to enable women and girls to be represented in decision-making in the education sector.

66. Educational institutions and other stakeholders should develop meaningful indicators that monitor the quality of the educational experience and the longer-term empowerment of girls and women brought about by education.

B. Health

67. The experts noted that health is a human right under CEDAW and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). States parties are obliged to ensuring non-discrimination against women in health. Recent international reports focusing on sexual and reproductive health and other gender inequalities in health highlight concerns the response of the health system, thus providing global impetus for change.³³

68. An environment that aims to achieve gender equality in health needs to ensure that violations of women's human rights, such as violence against women and girls, are deemed unacceptable; neither are deaths from preventable causes, in particular maternal mortality. Basic health care that is gender-responsive and prioritizes universal access to sexual and reproductive health services is critical for their participation in development throughout the life cycle. Effective health systems provide women the opportunity to express their needs and exercise choices that enable them to promote their health, prevent disease and access acceptable and appropriate health care in all aspects of health, including sexual and reproductive health. Integrated approaches to health, education and work would provide women and girls with health services in schools and at the workplace.

69. The experts stressed that women's participation in development includes their representation and the inclusion of gender perspectives in policy and programme formulation and implementation within the health sector. Decentralization of health care has in some countries led to positive outcomes in women's participation. For instance, a mandatory representation of women on health management committees has enhanced their involvement in decision-making on issues that have a direct bearing on women's and girls' health. It has also slowly led to changes in household decision-making on health issues.³⁴

70. Effective interventions for women's health exist that are well-known, simple, and cost effective. In working with communities and women's organizations on women's health issues, community-based interventions for women and girls, coupled with microfinance and job creation, can offer sustainable options.

³³ For example, the report of the Millennium Project Task Force on Child Health and Maternal Health, *op.cit.*, or UNFPA, *State of the World Population*, 2005.

³⁴ Neema, *op. cit.*

B.1. Constraints

71. Women's access to full, comprehensive, affordable, and quality primary health care services remains low, compounded by the multidimensional factors that create and maintain poverty and discrimination. For women living under extreme conditions of poverty, marginalization is manifested in a reduced capacity to make healthy life choices, resulting in physical and mental health challenges. Lack of education and information, cultural and religious beliefs and practices continue to constrain women's ability to seek health care and to exercise informed choice in sexual and reproductive health matters.

72. Poor maternal health and family planning services and vulnerability to sexually transmissible infections, including HIV/AIDS, and to gender-based violence continue to be a major burden for women. The number of women among new HIV/AIDS infections, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa, continues to rise disproportionately. Messages of abstinence and use of condoms do not take into account women's and girls' inability or lack of power to negotiate safe and consensual sex. At the same time, women and girls provide most of the home-based care for HIV/AIDS, elderly persons and persons with disabilities and other conditions, thus reducing women's ability to participate in the paid workforce.

73. In developing countries and countries in transition, recent health sector reforms have resulted in reduced Government spending on health, increased privatization of health services and cost sharing, decentralized services and a focus on cost effectiveness. As noted by an expert, the reforms were based on a market-driven philosophy rather than on the Alma Ata principles of comprehensive primary health care that health and development are inextricably linked and require a multi-sectoral approach, which involves agriculture, food and sanitation, basic social services, and the participation of communities and civil society in the prioritization of their health needs.³⁵ The experts found that under current health information systems, the focus of performance data on outcomes may be of value to the broader health system and to funding agencies, but does not necessarily reflect the priority needs, processes and outcomes relevant to improving women's health, such as quality and affordability of care and adequate referral systems.

74. The experts noted that while certain aspects of recent health care reform policies had been intended to reduce inequalities in the provision of health care so that more people are able to access health services, the effects of such policies were mixed. In many settings, the expected translation of these reforms into improved health outcomes, particularly for women and girls, has not been met. The experts considered that some reforms had exacerbated gender inequalities and disadvantaged poor and already marginalized women and girls. As a result, initiatives such as health insurance schemes could remain inaccessible to the poorest women and girls.³⁶

³⁵ Allotey, Pascale, *Does Primary Health Care still have currency in improving sexual and reproductive health of women?* (EGM-WPD-EE/2005/EP.7)

³⁶ The report of the Millennium Project Task Force on Child Health and Maternal Health, *op.cit.*, or UNFPA, *State of the World Population*, 2005.

75. A major component of the health sector reform that has been implemented in a number of countries is decentralization of health services to regions, districts, voluntary agencies and the private sector. However, due to limited budgets in local communities or lack of gender aware community leaders, one expert noted that some specific needs of poor women, such as transportation to health facilities or the provision of food and clothing or domestic care support, are not planned for, leading to unintended restrictions in access for women and girls in these countries.³⁷

76. Human resources policies within the health sector are largely responsible for the drain of human resources from the health sector from low to higher income countries. Nursing, a profession exercised in the majority by women, is undervalued and has been one of the areas hardest hit by skill migration. Emigration of health professionals has multiple effects: reducing capacity and quality within the health services, but investment to the national economies that invest in the training of health professionals, and changes to the dynamics within the families of those who leave. Attitudes of staff that remain, and poor quality of services, act as disincentives for women to access health services.³⁸

77. Gender stereotypes also lead to a relative lack of representation of women in decision-making in health care structures and negatively affect women's ability to negotiate with the authorities of national health systems.

78. Professional associations within the health sector have sometimes resisted the introduction of innovative strategies that benefit women, for example the "de-medicalization" of certain procedures and the integration of services and community-based distribution of health commodities. In addition, multinational organizations within the pharmaceutical industry have also focused on outcomes that are not aimed at optimizing health for women and other marginalized populations.³⁹

B.2. Recommendations

79. Governments should ensure that health systems apply the primary health care principles of accessibility, affordability and acceptability to women's health, and ensure that health is seen as a social good rather than a commodity.

80. Governments should introduce policies to promote the retention of health staff, particularly providers capable of reaching poor and vulnerable women and providers of sexual and reproductive health. Policies may include sustainable incentives for deployment of staff to rural areas. In addition, donor policies on the funding of health staff salaries need to be revised to create opportunities for the development of sustainable health human resource programmes in less developed countries.

81. Governments should assess and develop the health workforce, particularly at the primary care level. This should include taking gender perspectives into account in ensuring adequate

³⁷ Thiesmeyer, *op. cit.*

³⁸ Allotey, *op. cit.*

³⁹ Allotey, *op. cit.*

conditions to retain nursing, midwifery and other sexual and reproductive health staff. This is critical for priority issues such as emergency obstetrics and the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

82. Governments should expand pilot community health programmes, workplace-based programmes, and nurse retraining programmes. Governments and other policy makers should commit to overcoming current resistance from professional associations in the development of alternative sources of service providers.

83. Governments and other stakeholders should bring health services closer to women and girls at the workplace, in educational environments, and in their homes.

84. Governments, international financial institutions, donors, and other policy makers should systematically assess the impact of health sector reforms on women to ensure that the development of new health infrastructure and the introduction of new health technologies such as in emergency obstetric care, cancer detection and anti-retroviral treatment, take gender perspectives into account.

85. Governments should ensure that strategies for cost sharing such as insurance schemes to cover health care costs have a more equitable focus in order to avoid excluding those women and girls most in need of care. The continued provision of free sexual and reproductive health services in particular is critical.

86. Governments and other stakeholders should ensure that monitoring and evaluations focus not only on standard mortality, morbidity and burden of disease measures but also on processes that reflect the responsiveness of health services to women's needs. Innovative indicators should be developed to assist in monitoring the gender responsiveness of health systems.

87. Governments and other stakeholders should ensure that health education captures women's health broadly, in addition to sexual and reproductive health.

88. Governments and other stakeholders should mainstream strategies throughout the health sector that enable the identification, treatment and establishment of support systems with regard to gender-based violence.

89. Governments, international organizations and other stakeholders should scale up initiatives that address the feminization of HIV/AIDS and other stigmatized conditions.

90. Governments should initiate public awareness raising campaigns on the root causes of poor women's health, including gender discrimination and legal, economic, socio-cultural and sexuality issues, and lack of men's involvement in ensuring the achievement of women's and girls' right to health.

C. Work

91. Employment, in particular paid employment, is a critical aspect of the empowerment of women. Work can increase women's mobility and enable them to acquire greater capacities and skills, access and agency, and in particular greater economic independence, which can in turn enable them to have greater access to health care. Women's remunerated employment is also a critical means to ensure household and family security and survival and thus contribute to the fight against poverty.

92. The experts noted that CEDAW obliges States parties to ensure non-discrimination in employment. Opportunities for gender justice in employment also exist through the work of labour-standard setting organizations, regulatory bodies, elected workers' representatives, collective and social movements, and development frameworks to promote the protection of women workers' rights to decent work and equal pay.

93. Ongoing interventions such as gender-responsive budgeting and planning, corporate social responsibility, vocational education and skills development programmes, and partnerships among various organizations, including women's organizations and networks of organized informal workers, have enhanced women's and girls' capabilities, voice and agency while protecting and promoting women's fundamental rights at work. For example, one of the experts stressed that a local banking programme had the potential to bring women to the formal finance market. Women's participation in the leadership of the programme had opened opportunities to be involved in local governance and the private sector.⁴⁰

94. Research initiatives and the development of gender-sensitive data-collection initiatives can measure and capture the subtleties of gender discrimination at work and the multi-faceted contributions of women to the national economy.

95. The experts agreed that women's enabling environment in the field of work involves all stakeholders, including Governments, the private sector, and worker's representatives. They noted that Governments regulate labour markets through their trade, industry and fiscal policies, with a bias towards large industries. States should also support women in the informal economy through training, credit, and marketing, and social protection measures, in accordance with international standards set by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and other organizations.⁴¹

C.1. Constraints

96. Work in contemporary times continues to contrast productive and reproductive activities, as well as paid and unpaid work, including in family-based enterprises. The division of labour continues to be structured, valued and remunerated according to traditional gender roles. The gendered division of labour is expressed in women's overload with work of little economic value or social recognition, lack of time available for training and recreation, and inadequate access to

⁴⁰ Londonio, Amelia, *Bayanihan Banking Program: a little answer to the gargantuan problem of poverty of the city of Pasay* (EGM-WPD-EE/2005/EP.6)

⁴¹ Khotkina, *op. cit.*

information systems. This restricts women's opportunities to enhance their earning potential, participate in social and political life and decision-making, and live fulfilling lives. Women's greater responsibilities for domestic work, community tasks and child-rearing make it difficult to balance productive and reproductive roles. This challenge intersects with other sources of inequality, such as class, age, income, ethnicity/race, minority status, religion, sexual orientation, and education.

97. Women constitute a large proportion of the workforce worldwide. The experts noted that available data suggests that in the poorest regions of the world, the share of women family workers in total employment was much higher than men's, but women were less likely to earn salaries or wages.⁴² Women perform the majority of unpaid agricultural work and domestic work.

98. While most countries have seen a rise in women's participation in the economy, one of the experts noted that structural adjustment programmes, including deregulation of labour markets and the loss of guaranteed full employment in the formal sector in the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe resulted in sharp declines in paid female employment. These developments were exacerbated by existing occupational segregation and gaps in male and female wages.⁴³

99. In countries of transition, migrants from rural areas, including from neighbouring countries, increasingly take up service sector jobs. In addition, competition due to imports of cheap consumer goods, subsidized agricultural products from the North, and the movement of labour markets to cheaper zones means that many women have lost their livelihoods in agriculture and local industries. New employment opportunities for women that have been created through globalization are often insecure and transient.⁴⁴

100. Global economic restructuring and trade liberalization processes have generated a broad range of labour arrangements. Regular full-time wage employment has given way to outsourcing; home-based work; labour migration; informal, seasonal, casual, flexible, and temporary work; and self-employment; among others. These forms of labour are associated with the growth of the informal economy. One of the experts noted that traditional components of the informal economy – small-scale independent entrepreneurship and self-employment – are decreasing in comparison with use of new casual, home-based workers, whose status is less secure and who earn less than the self-employed. Yet the informal economy constitutes up to 60 per cent or more of Gross Domestic Product in certain countries.⁴⁵

101. A higher percentage of women than men work in the informal economy globally. Women are also concentrated in the lower-income segments of the informal economy – in subsistence activities or as casual waged workers or home-workers. Many of these women are chronically poor, with limited education and agency, which would enable them to request or benefit from

⁴² ILO, quoted in Zambrano, *op. cit.*

⁴³ Khotkina, *op. cit.*; Bakker, I., ed., *The Strategic Silence: Gender and Economic Policy*, London, Zed Books, 1994

⁴⁴ Wichterich, quoted in Tisheva, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ Khotkina, *op. cit.*

social protection and poverty alleviation initiatives. As a result, they are unable to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty despite the fact that they hold remunerative employment.

102. The experts noted, however, that gender-based economic inequality cannot be neatly correlated with poverty status.⁴⁶ Gender disparities in equal access to labour opportunities are also prevalent among women in higher social strata and they equally experience persistent wage gaps and occupational segregation. In this context, women's lower educational attainments and intermittent career paths are not, contrary to conventional belief, the main reason for gender differentials in pay. Occupational segregation and discrimination against women in employment based on socio-cultural stereotypes have a significant impact on remuneration.⁴⁷ For example, in urban areas of Vietnam, men tend to dominate industries such as mining, metal work and heavy industry. Conversely, women are overwhelmingly represented in light industry, such as garment and textile manufacturing, social services and sales.⁴⁸

103. Women are likewise not equally represented in decision-making positions in either the formal or informal economy, even in female-dominated sectors. For example, as noted by an expert, the proportion of male employers in some countries of Eastern Europe was twice that of women, while almost equal numbers of women and men were self-employed. Thus, women were not only underrepresented among entrepreneurs, but also consequently owned smaller portions of property and income.⁴⁹

104. The experts were also concerned that much of the work performed by women is not acknowledged as contributing to the gross national product. Free market and transition economies that are no longer state-regulated have resulted in changes in household economies, i.e. many services which families could formerly afford to purchase or receive from the public sector are now performed by women at home, including child care and other domestic services. Women have had to increase their contributions to the reproduction of the labour force and the well-being of their families to a significantly larger extent than men. Women's extra time spent in unpaid work results in a vicious cycle, breaking the economic and work-life balances and resulting in loss of efficiency.⁵⁰ Thus, while women significantly contribute to the economy, their participation does not necessarily lead to greater empowerment in their daily lives.

C.2. Recommendations

105. Governments should ensure the adoption of gender equality legislation that supports promotion and protection measures for women in the field of work.

106. Governments should guarantee that poverty reduction strategies and initiatives address the interests and needs of women in informal economies and those considered chronically poor.

⁴⁶ Khotkina, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ ILO, quoted in Zambrano, *op. cit.*

⁴⁸ Greig, *op. cit.*

⁴⁹ Khotkina, *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ Khotkina, *op. cit.*

107. Governments should redefine and recognize work to include low-remunerated care, unpaid care work, reproductive and volunteer work, as productive work with economic value, for example through research, revision of national statistics and gender-responsive budgeting.

108. Governments should provide legal recognition to women workers in all economies, fair conditions of work, social protection, and fundamental rights at work, for example, the right to organize.

109. International organizations, Governments and employers should strengthen accountability measures and mechanisms for the protection and promotion of women workers' rights regardless of the sector of employment or place of work.

110. Governments, CSOs and employers should enact norms, including labour codes, anti-discrimination laws, equal opportunity laws and codes of conduct, and social standards on corporate social responsibility that enhance substantive equality for women.

111. Employers, unions, CSOs and donors should upscale corporate social responsibility initiatives that focus on gender equality and work with the informal sectors.

112. Governments, the private sector and relevant regulatory bodies at the national and local levels should establish temporary special measures to overcome persistent gender barriers, such as quotas for women in decision-making in publicly owned or private companies; or favourable treatment for women who are starting or managing businesses.

113. Financial institutions should ensure that capital and finance for business and entrepreneurship programmes can identify and target women not only in small and medium-sized enterprises but also in larger enterprises; access to larger scale, formal sources of credit should also be ensured.

114. Governments, CSOs, donors and employers should provide incentives, such as tax benefits and subsidies, to those who engage in transformative practices at the workplace to achieve gender equality, for example, affirmative action measures and promotion of women, work and life policies, parental leave, gender-responsive planning and budgeting, and retirement schemes that include provisions for women's reproductive role.

115. Governments, social partners, international agencies, and institutions that set up, implement and monitor macroeconomic policies, should ensure that a high-level policy dialogue on women's work is supported by gender analysis. Governments, CSOs and donors should assess policies, strategies and initiatives aimed at improving and diversifying income opportunities for women, including for women entrepreneurs.

116. Governments, CSOs, donors and employers should promote the establishment of new, and support existing, groups and organizations engaged in the protection and promotion of human rights for women workers, such as workplace-based organizations that can monitor the implementation of labour codes and rights of women at work.

117. Current initiatives from CSOs, unions, donors and others, which have proven to enable women to enjoy fundamental rights at work, for example, through tripartite partnerships, should be strengthened.

118. Governments, employers, unions, donors and CSOs should make available services and infrastructure at and around the workplace to empower working women, including transport, health and child care, especially in sectors where large numbers of women work, and in rural and other areas that are not easily accessible.

119. Employers, donors, unions, CSOs and governments should increase access, control and opportunities for women in relation to information and communication technologies (ICT) at the workplace on a variety of issues relating to health, education and work.

120. Data collection, analysis and management of data that measures women's inequalities in the world of work should be enhanced, for example, through the development and use of meaningful process indicators.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

121. The Expert Group Meeting reflected on the impact of globalization, rights-based development frameworks, the role of the women's movement, as well as opportunities and strategies to promote an enabling environment in education, health and work for women.

122. The experts noted that there was a need to pursue integrated approaches to ensure an enabling environment for women's enhanced participation in development. The experts concluded that some current opportunities constitute aspects of such integrated approaches, inter alia:

- Mandatory assessments of mechanisms and institutions that are responsible for creating enabling environments for women, including in the context of CEDAW and MDG reports;
- Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) and planning initiatives ensuring that allocations are made to support legal reforms and the implementation of gender equality policies;
- The implementation of regulatory frameworks, and current initiatives from civil society organizations, donors and others that have enabled women to enjoy fundamental rights;
- Partnership among existing networks and organized groups of women and supportive men to enable women to exercise collective and individual agency;
- Innovative research and new categories of data to measure women's inequalities and evaluate progress, including process indicators;
- Infrastructures and support measures that enhance women's direct participation in the three areas of education, health and work;
- Educational and training programmes and media content that promote social and cultural change and human rights and eliminate gender stereotypes.

123. A national development strategy committed to gender equality outcomes in education, health and work needs to take account of the institutional processes within and across policy-

making and service delivery organizations that enable or undermine women's capability, access, and agency.

124. The success of gender-aware interventions in one sector will require coordination with interventions from other sectors. The inter-connectedness of the education, health and work sectors implies that institutional processes and sectoral interventions need to be coordinated to produce tangible gains for women. Integrated management and delivery of programmes pertaining to literacy, health and employment require a multi-sectoral approach to meet the multiple needs of women.

125. The linkages between education, health and work will require concurrent attention and reform in all three areas. Due to a complex interplay of factors, women's achievements in one area do not automatically lead to equitable gains in other areas, and a coordinated approach is therefore necessary. For example, accessing information on health services requires some degree of literacy. Enhanced education and work opportunities, for example, do not always result in equal income, as many employed, educated women do not earn as much as men. The economic empowerment of women does not necessarily translate into overall empowerment in other areas of their lives, for example within the household and in their interactions with local communities. Women's increased paid work as well as their continuing responsibilities for care work, and the lack of involvement of men and boys in domestic work, may lead women and girls to experience an increased workload, at home and at the workplace.

126. Health, education and work are among the seven strategic priorities to combat gender inequalities and ensure women's empowerment, identified by the report of the Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality:

- Strengthen opportunities for post-primary education for girls and commitment while simultaneously meeting commitments to universal primary education;
- Guarantee sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- Invest in infrastructure to reduce time burdens;
- Guarantee property and inheritance rights;
- Eliminate gender inequality in employment;
- Increase women's share of seats in national parliaments and local governmental bodies;
- Combat violence against girls and women.

127. The Expert Group Meeting noted that in order to close the glaring gap between policy and implementation and to ensure the creation of an enabling environment, the above-mentioned seven strategic priorities should be adopted by countries and implemented at a national level. These strategic priorities should represent a set of non-negotiable minimum conditions and should be complemented by further institutional change, including adequate resource allocations and the provision of sex-disaggregated data and other relevant statistics for monitoring and evaluation. All of these are vital for an enabling environment for women's participation.

128. The Expert Group Meeting also made the following cross-cutting recommendations to Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate:

129. Harmonize national laws and regulatory frameworks and national development strategies with global commitments to gender equality and women's human rights and existing national gender policies.

130. Harmonize macro-economic policies with international human rights commitments on women's and girls' rights, including through mechanisms to guarantee fairness in trade agreements.

131. Promote democratic culture at all levels, i.e. family, local, national, and international, in health and education settings and at the workplace, and develop accountability mechanisms for those countries where regulatory frameworks restrict space for civil society, in particular women's organizations, to critically engage with the State.

132. Cultivate a political climate that encourages institutional and organizational change with a view to fostering gender equality and the empowerment of women in all societies.

133. Increase women's participation in decision-making bodies in the public and private spheres, and in particular throughout the fields of health, education and work through affirmative action measures. The modalities of affirmative action must be direct, constituency-based and empowering.

134. Develop approaches, tools and mechanisms to measure and make visible the economic contributions of women.

135. Undertake gender-responsive budget initiatives with a view to reducing gender gaps and inequalities by disaggregating government spending and revenue according to its impact on different groups of women and men and consideration of the gender relations, roles and opportunities to access and control resources in society; ensure the results of such initiatives are analyzed and used as a blue print for socio-economic priority-setting.

136. Ensure that development approaches and regulatory frameworks take into account the interconnectedness between the public and the private spheres across the fields of health, work and education.

137. In the implementation of all development programmes and initiatives, ensure that process indicators are based on social, cultural, political and economic changes relating to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

138. Support the scaling up of current initiatives of civil society organizations in integrated development programmes that enable women and girls to enjoy fundamental rights.

139. In implementing these recommendations, the experts stressed that all stakeholders should apply the rights-based approach to development as a conceptual, legal or normative framework that focuses on ensuring participation and agency, eliminating discrimination, and providing access to opportunities. This approach also promotes the rule of law, transparency, accountability and sound public management. It is important in upholding the universal validity of human rights. Application of global universal norms to local contexts for the creation of an enabling environment for women's enhanced participation in development requires culturally sensitive approaches that nonetheless should not, under any circumstances, compromise the indivisibility and universality of human rights.

ANNEX I

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ANNEX II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

A. PAPERS BY EXPERTS

- EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP.1** *Decent work and gender equality:
Participation of women workers in development
frameworks*
Margarita Zambrano (Colombia)
- EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP.2** *Gender, public health, and human security policy in
Asia*
Lynn Thiesmeyer (USA)
- EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP.3** *Women's rights and participation, including
women's access to land and inheritance, and the
role of lobbying and grassroots organizations in
Lesotho*
Keiso Matashane-Marite (Lesotho)
- EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP.4** *Gender at work: increased participation requires
institutional change*
Froniga Greig (United Kingdom)
- EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP .5** *Creating an enabling environment for women's
participation in development through legal and
regulatory frameworks that provide women's equal
access to rights and opportunities in the field of
education, work and health - challenges and
recommendations, and the role of women's NGOs
in this process*
Genoveva Tisheva (Bulgaria)
- EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP.6** *Bayanihan Banking Program:
a little answer to the gargantuan problem of poverty
of the city of Pasay*
Amelia "Nona" Londonio (Philippines)
- EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP.7** *Does primary health care still have currency in
improving sexual and reproductive health of
women?*
Pascale Allotey (Australia)
- EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP. 8** *Creating an enabling environment for girls and
women's participation in education*

Akanksha A. Marphatia (USA)

EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP. 9

Gender and institutions: creating an enabling environment

Nüket Kardam (Turkey)

EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP. 10

The impact of macro-economic policies and economies in transition on women's employment, including in the informal sector

Zoya A. Khotkina (Russian Federation)

EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP.11

The impact of health policies and health sector reform on the readiness of health systems to respond to women's health needs, with a special focus on reproductive health, reproductive rights and HIV/AIDS

Stella Neema (Uganda)

EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP.12 (draft)

Women's political participation: issues and challenges

Farzana Bari (Pakistan)

B. PAPERS BY OBSERVERS

EGM/WPD-EE/2005/OP.1

Gender- the view from below

Hoa Phuong Tran (Vietnam)

C. BACKGROUND PAPERS

EGM/WPD-EE/2005/BP.1

Aide-Mémoire

EGM/WPD-EE/2005/BP.2

Short bibliography

D. WORKING PAPER

EGM/WPD-EE/2005/WP.1 (draft)

Enhanced participation of women in development: An enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of education, health and work

Rachel J. Masika

Consultant to DAW

E. INFORMATION NOTES

EGM/WPD-EE/2005/INF.1 Rev.2	Proposed Programme of Work
EGM/WPD-EE/2005/INF.2	Information for Participants
EGM/WPD-EE/2005/INF.3 Rev. 2	List of Participants
EGM/WPD-EE/2005/INF.4	List of Documents
EGM/WPD-EE/2005/INF.5	Procedures followed in ad hoc expert group meetings

ANNEX III

PROGRAMME OF WORK

Tuesday, 8 November 2005

United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC), ESCAP

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 8:00-8:30 p.m. | Registration of participants |
| 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. | Opening of the meeting

Opening statement by Ms. Thelma Kay, Director, Emerging Social Issues Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Message from Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director, Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Presented by Ms. Sylvie I. Cohen, Deputy Director, Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)

Introduction of experts and other participants |
| 10:00 – 10:15 a.m. | Break |
| 10:15 a.m. – 10:45 p.m. | Election of officers and adoption of the programme of work
Introduction to the meeting by a representative of DAW |
| 10:45 – 12:00 p.m. | Presentation of Working Paper by Ms. Rachel Masika, Consultant to DAW
Discussion |
| 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. | Lunch |
| 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. | Presentations by experts

Ms. Akanksha Marphatia (USA)
<i>Creating An Enabling Environment for Girls and Women's Participation in Education</i> (EP.8)

Ms. Nüket Kardam (Turkey)
<i>Gender and Institutions: Creating an Enabling Environment</i> (EP.9)
Discussion |
| 3:00 – 3:30 p.m. | Break |

3:30 – 6:00 p.m

Presentations by experts (ctd)

Ms. Genoveva Tisheva (Bulgaria)

Creating An Enabling Environment for Women's Participation in Development through Legal and Regulatory Frameworks that Provide Women Equal Access to Rights and Opportunities in the Fields of Education, Work, and Health: Challenges and Recommendations, and the Role of Women's NGOs (EP.5)

Ms. Keiso Matashane-Marite (Lesotho)

Women's Rights and Participation, Including Women's Access to Land and Inheritance Issues, and the Role of Lobbying and Grassroots Organizations in Lesotho (EP.3)

Ms. Farzana Bari (Pakistan)

Women's Political Participation: Issues and Challenges (EP.12)
Discussion

Wednesday, 9 November 2005

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Presentations by experts (ctd.)

Ms. Zoya A. Khotkina (Russia)

The Impact of Macro-Economic Policies and Economies in Transition on Women's Employment, including in the Informal Sector (EP.10)

Ms. Lucia Margarita Zambrano (Colombia)

Decent Work and Gender Equality: Participation of Women Workers in Development Frameworks (EP.1)

Ms. Froniga Greig (UK/Australia)

The Impact of Globalization and Employment Policies on Women's Participation in Development (EP.4)

Discussion

10:00 a.m. – 10:15 p.m.

Break

10:15 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.

Presentations by experts (ctd.)

Ms. Nona Arce Londonio (Philippines)

Bayanihan Banking Programme: A Little Answer to the Gargantuan Problem of Poverty of the city of Pasay (EP.6)

Discussion

11:30 – 12:30 p.m.	Lunch
12:30 – 3:00 p.m.	Presentations by experts (ctd)
	Ms. Lynn Thiesmeyer (USA) <i>Gender, Public Health and Human Security Policy in Asia (EP.2)</i>
	Ms. Pascale Allotey (Australia) <i>Does Primary Health Care Still Have Currency in Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health? (EP.7)</i>
	Ms. Stella Neema (Uganda) <i>The Impact of Health Policies and Health Sector Reform on the Readiness of Health Systems to Respond to Women’s Health, with a Special Focus on Reproductive Health, Reproductive Rights and HIV/AIDS (EP.11)</i> Discussion
3:00 – 3:30 p.m.	Break
3:30 - 4:30 p.m.	Discussion
4:30 – 5:00 p.m.	Presentations by observers (tbd)
	Ms. Hoa Phuong Tran <i>Gender - The View From Below (OP.1)</i> Discussion
5.00 – 6:00 p.m.	Establishment of working groups

Thursday, 10 November 2005

8:30 – 10:00 a.m.	Working groups
10:00 – 10:15 a.m.	Break
10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Working groups
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 – 3:30 p.m.	Feedback from the working groups to plenary Discussion
3:30 – 4:00 p.m.	Break
4:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Drafting Committee works on draft report Work to continue in the evening as necessary

Friday, 11 November 2005

8:30 – 10:00 a.m.	Drafting Committee work continues to work on draft report
10:00 – 10:15 a.m.	Break
10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Presentation and discussion of draft report and recommendations
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Adoption of report and recommendations
3:00-3:30 p.m.	Break
3:30 – 4:30 p.m.	Closing session End of Expert Group Meeting