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## Asia Pacific Caucus Statement

55<sup>th</sup> CSW Session, 2011

Chairperson CSW, Excellency, distinguished delegates, sisters from the women's movement and friends:

We are privileged to make this statement on the behalf of the Asia Pacific Caucus. We welcome first of all the creation of the UN Women and the appointment of the former Chilean President **Michelle Bachelet** as the first Head of the body. She shall be our voice at the UN Table.

We welcome the adoption by the General Assembly of the Commission on the Status of Women on "Access and Participation of Women and Girls to Education, Training, Science and Technology and its Fundamentals for the Promotion of Women's Equal Access to Employment and Decent Work" as a pre-requisite to the realization of the Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals.

We note with concern that even after 15 years of Beijing, during the 15th Session of the Action and 10 Years for the MDGs, significant progress has been made with regard to commitments on education and scientific training, information and communication technology in particular. While we acknowledge that in some of the countries in our region, girls are outpacing boys in levels of higher education we still have a large part of the population with access to education and education levels were still far from equal. In addition, 60 per cent of school drop outs were girls (where?) Preventing girls from finishing even basic education burdens their chances and deters their own future.

The Expert Group Report and other documents clearly reveal that there are major gaps that need to be addressed. One of the instruments to be used to help girls and women to overcome such

*We are sixty percent (60%) of the world's women.*

With the current economic crisis, education system will sustain severe damage and children marginalised by poverty, gender and ethnically stand to bear the brunt. It would further exacerbate the crisis of female unemployment and push more women to vulnerable employment.

We urge all States to adopt and implement policies that prohibit employment discrimination, workplace harassment and all forms of exploitation of women and girls.

We call upon the States to recognise right to education as a fundamental human right and ensure it is not the impowerment of women and gender equality. The quality of education is equally important and it should be free of gender bias and stereotypes. Gender stereotypes concerning the perceived superiority of science and technology careers must be tackled at all levels.

We urge all States to address the socio cultural factors including violence that disadvantage women and girls from entering and pursuing careers in science and technology. Mentoring to encourage women and girls to go into career in science and technology should be provided.

The Asia Pacific region which has the 60 per cent of the female population of the world, is the region which is conflict ridden which has high percentage of internally displaced persons and is a region that has suffered both natural and human made disasters. We call upon the States to ensure that all impacted groups, in particular women and girls affected as such are also provided opportunities and access to education and technology. Girls from rural communities need special attention.

Gender and age disaggregated data is imperative for assessing and financing opportunities for education and science,

Last but not the least, we look forward with great hope and expectation to the UN Women is not only giving priority to addressing the economic and social rights of women and advance women's human rights but also to involve activists that include meaningful civil society participation in UN Women at the UN as well as regional and country level.

Thank You Excellencies