

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-six Session

Priority theme: "The empowerment of women, their role in poverty and
eradication, development and current challenges"

Delivered by Mrs. Memtaz M. Awary, Chair of Center of Women
ESCWA

Joint Statement of the UN Regional Commissions

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished representatives,

Allow me to welcome you to the Commission on the Status of Women
Ladies and Gentlemen

The mandate of the regional commissions on women's empowerment, gender equality is guided by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, the Millennium Declaration, the 2005 World Summit Outcome, and the Commission on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW), as well as by other regional mandates emanating from its intergovernmental machinery and regional policy frameworks.

The synergies between the global and regional agendas are a clear indication of the need and the importance for the regional commissions to continue to work closely with the UN system as well as vertically at the global, regional and national levels.

In this context, the regional commissions are uniquely placed to leverage UN support at the regional level and increase its relevance and impact. Acting as important intergovernmental forums for policy dialogue and cooperation on women's empowerment and gender equality, the UN regional commissions provide support to governments, including through multidisciplinary analytical work, particularly for mainstreaming gender into all key development sectors. Through close relations with member States, the Commissions, at the national, regional and international levels. In close collaboration with UN Women, the regional commissions will continue to monitor the implementation of the Global Platform for Action, in coordination with the implementation of the respective regional platforms or plans of action for gender equality.

In the ESCWA region, the regional platform Beijing Declaration has achieved important achievements in the area of women's health, education and legal reform. However, women living in rural areas are often marginalized and girls fighting for equal access to social services, education, justice, are not always fully empowered. Many women in rural areas are still struggling to guarantee rural women full access to basic services. Gender inequality in the region can either reinforce women's positions by pushing forward the gender equality agenda, or reverse achieved gains and even deepen inequalities. Transitional times represent a unique opportunity for policy makers to introduce, within the context of constitutional change, legislative reforms to end discrimination and promote women's full participation in public life.

ESCWA has been providing continuous advisory and technical cooperation services to member States to integrate a gender perspective in national policies and support the full implementation of the CEDAW.

... an observatory for women in the Arab region that will
... an electronic sex-disaggregated database on the status of women, including rural women in the
... economic, social, political, cultural and legal fields.

... in the LAC Region and in line with the recommendations of the Beijing +15 Regional Review Meeting,
... IDIEC initiative is focused on enhancing women's economic independence, specifically through
... supporting women's entrepreneurship including in rural areas. To this end, UNECE provided a platform
... for policy dialogue and exchange through a number of events... conducted research on the gender gaps in
... entrepreneurship, including differences in rural areas, in Central Asia and strengthened capacity for
... women entrepreneurs in Central Asia through targeted workshops.

... Tajikistan were conducted, covering women in rural areas as well as in urban and drawing conclusions on
... specific evidence-based policy recommendations which were... at national workshops. In
... addition, at several high-level meetings including the International Policy Seminar... Women's
... areas and a policy measures needed to increase women's economic opportunity in the region.

... In the ECLAC region, rural areas of Latin America with percentage of women without income reached
... 19%, compared with 17% at men. Studies of wage gaps in the region also demonstrate that rural and
... indigenous women are disadvantaged due to structural factors of gender inequality in access to the labor
... market, type of occupation and income. At the eleventh session of the Regional Conference on Women
... in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Brazil in 2010, ECLAC member states approved the
... rural employment in areas undergoing productive restructuring and to ensure that mechanisms needed to
... implement them are... place, in addition to a number of other commitments... rural...

... In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Index (GEWI) collects data to
... monitor the situation of rural women including women who live in... of their own... an indicator
... created specifically for this purpose using data from household surveys conducted in 7 countries,
... Guatemala and Mexico and a... on fertility... development and empowerment of rural
... women together with IN-Women.

... In the ESCAP Region, rural areas and women's economic empowerment have not been equitable
... between countries and between rural and urban areas within countries, with substantial remaining
... challenges for social inclusion and, in particular, women's overrepresentation amongst those living in
... poverty. Thus, ESCAP continues to support the regional implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on
... gender equality and women's empowerment, with a particular focus on the economic
... empowerment of women living in poverty within marginalized, primarily... contexts. To that end,
... ESCAP has recently initiated multi-country projects aimed at strengthening capacity and partnerships for
... gender mainstreaming for women's economic empowerment towards the achievement of MDG 1 within
... the... and programme planning at national, provincial and subnational levels. It is also
... increasingly increasing its efforts towards mainstreaming gender across all areas of ESCAP work, with a
... regional... policy and LDCs, which are crucial for the empowerment of rural
... women within poverty elimination strategies and for the setting of related priorities in national public

spending. In addition, ECA focuses upon promoting the rights of women with disabilities and older women, especially in terms of improved social protection and financial opportunities.

In the ECA region, the most prominent implementation strategy derived from the Panel of Experts (2009) defines seven key areas of action in response to several challenges affecting the empowerment of rural women, including their access to services and control of productive assets.

The current work of ECA includes a special focus on land policy and the promotion of women's land rights, through supporting the implementation of the 2009/10 UN Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges which resolved to strengthen security of land tenure for women. This is reinforced by the ECA, AfDB and AU initiatives to support innovation in land governance and rural women's participation in decision-making through the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa. ECA is also advocating for a special focus on women's role in ensuring environmental security in the context of climate change, including financing. The special challenges facing rural based women in conflict and post-conflict situations, and the need to ensure their effective participation in policy-making, are also a priority for the current ECA to strengthen responses by member States.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair,

The regional commission is committed to its commitment to working in close partnership with member States and coherence at the regional level with UN Women and other agencies in order to ensure that the work of the UN System maintains its responsibility for contributing to real and enduring results for girls and women on the ground in all societies.

In addition, ESCAP focuses upon promoting the rights of women with disabilities and other women, especially in terms of improved social protection and livelihood opportunities.

In the ECA region, the post Beijing + 15 implementation strategy derives from the Beijing Declaration (2009) defines seven key areas of action in response to several challenges in addressing the empowerment of rural women, including better access to and control of productive assets.

The current work of ECA includes a special focus on land policy and the promotion of women's land rights, through supporting the implementation of the 2009 UN Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges which resolved to strengthen security of land tenure for women. This is reinforced by the ECA, AfDB and AU initiative to support countries' land tenure reform and implementation. ECA is also advocating for a stronger through the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa. ECA is also advocating for a stronger focus on women's role in ensuring sustainable food security in the context of climate change, including financing. The special challenges faced by rural based women in conflict and post conflict situations and the need to ensure their effective participation for lasting peace solutions is a key priority for the work of ECA to strengthen responses by member states.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair,

The regional commissions reiterate their commitments to working in close partnership, complementarity and coherence at the regional level with UN Women and other agencies in order to ensure that women of the UN System maintain its responsibility for contributing to real and enduring results for girls and women on the ground in all societies.