

**Commission on the Status of Women  
60<sup>th</sup> Session**

**Priority Theme:**

**“Women’s empowerment and its link to sustainable development”**

**Joint Statement of the United Nations Regional Commissions**

**Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)  
Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)  
Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC)  
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)  
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Madam Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to present to you this joint statement on behalf of the five UN Regional Commissions, namely ECA, UNECE, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA.

The UN Regional Commissions have traditionally been at the forefront of regional exchange of ideas and best practices in policy-making, knowledge generation and promoting sustainable and inclusive development with member States and stakeholders in their respective regions. They also play an important role in addressing the achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment at regional level drawing on well-established intergovernmental mechanisms, including the review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third session of the General Assembly of 2000; their role as conveners of the Regional Coordination Mechanism; their close links to regional inter-governmental architecture; and their longstanding relationships with non-state actors at regional level.

Looking forward, the UN Regional Commissions are identifying the relevant processes for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at regional level, including the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women as a specific focus of Goal 5, and as a cross-cutting issue of the other SDGs, as well as their localisation and adaptation to the regional priorities.

The work of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is driven by its Continent Wide Initiative on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (CWIGEW). This initiative aims to ensure that the work of the commission has an effect on the life of every woman in Africa, irrespective of her geographical location (urban/rural), status, ethnic group, while building on the positive interconnections between women’s socioeconomic and political development and Africa’s structural transformation. It addresses three interlinked components, namely women’s economic empowerment, women’s human rights, and the social sector.

The ECA provides technical support to member States in Africa on the achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment commitments through evidenced-based research, effective policy formulation and implementation, and developing monitoring and evaluation tools for improving the status of women and girls. The work of the ECA’s African Centre for Gender (ACG) is premised on analytical research and policy analysis where identified best practices are used to influence policy,

contoured on emerging gender and development issues, and its interconnections between the goal of gender equality and Africa's structural transformation. This work is centered on the existing gender equality goals and targets in the Beijing Plus 20 Outcomes, Agenda 2030 for SDGs and the Agenda 2063 (a continental framework led by the African Union) which provide impetus to accelerate progress in implementation so as to address gender inequalities across the economic, political, social and environmental spheres in Africa.

The 60th Session of the Africa Ministerial Pre-Consultative Meeting on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) held in January 2016 recognized that Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 are powerful milestones which open up unprecedented opportunities to accelerate achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. The Ministers in Charge of Gender and Women's empowerment acknowledged their critical role in influencing national action plans for implementation of both Agendas. They also underscored that they must engage NOW with ministries, departments and agencies in charge of the implementation of both Agendas, especially the planning ministry and National Statistics offices. They also underlined the need to build on what has been achieved so far as the momentum has already been created, and therefore there was no need to reinvent the wheel.

In line with the conclusions of the Regional Review of the Beijing Platform for Action in November 2014, UNECE continues to promote economic independence of women through supporting women entrepreneurship development. Workshops are biannually organized for participants from the countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia on building relevant support systems at country level as well as training women in entrepreneurial skills and new information and communication technologies. Mainstreaming gender in the work of UNECE Sub-Programmes will continue through capacity building and evaluation of projects.

UNECE's commitment to provide sex-disaggregated data for evidence-based policy continues. Work includes regular updating of the UNECE gender database and building capacity in member States to produce gender-sensitive indicators. A toolkit for training users of gender statistics has been published in 2015. Responding to the needs for comparable and reliable data for the follow up of the 2030 Agenda, UNECE is streamlining statistical work to support the monitoring of progress towards SDGs, modernizing statistical production and sharing tools for measuring SDGs, developing methods, standards and guidance to enhance the quality and comparability of statistics and SDG monitoring, and building capacity for reporting on SDG indicators in its member States. UNECE also contributes to the global indicator framework and its regional implementation.

UNECE will hold a Regional Forum for Sustainable Development (RFSD) on 10 May 2016. The RFSD will discuss the results of a Regional SDG Survey and possible modalities of a future regional review mechanism. At sub-regional level, UNECE will strengthen cooperation for the achievement of the SDGs and targets within the Special Programme for the Economies in Central Asia (SPECA) framework. The Declaration adopted at the 10th session of the SPECA Governing Council (Dushanbe, November 2015), recognized that achievement of gender equality as a specific focus of the SDGs through Goal 5, is also a cross-cutting issue to be factored into the implementation of the other SDGs. All SPECA thematic working groups will therefore consider gender aspects in their work.

ECLAC promotes women's autonomy (economic, physical and in decision-making) as a driver and critical component for sustainable development, thus ensuring that gender equality is at the heart of its agenda for equality. The Commission continues to support the countries' efforts to mainstream a gender equality perspective into their policies for development. A permanent priority is gender statistics which provides comparable indicators for analysis of women's situation and public policies through the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean. ECLAC's close work with National Statistics Offices and Mechanisms for the advancement of women contributes to data user-producer coordination, which is a significant challenge for the SDGs follow up process.

Building on existing intergovernmental bodies and experience, including the nearly 40 years of work of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC offers an institutional setting for regional exchange and coordination for the implementation and follow-up of the Agenda 2030. The implementation of the sustainable development agenda, and its impact on women's autonomy will be in the focus of the XIII Regional Conference in Montevideo in October 2016.

ESCAP, working in partnership with other UN entities, is focusing on supporting the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and of the commitments expressed in the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Asia-Pacific Beijing+20 Review Conference in late 2014. The Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration identified the "increasing financing" as a critical means to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In February 2016, ESCAP, UNDP and UN Women jointly organized a regional seminar on transformative financing for gender equality, in preparation for the 60<sup>th</sup> session of the CSW. It provided a forum for Asia-Pacific countries to deepen their understanding and develop strategies surrounding the issue of financing for gender equality in support of the SDGs, including through gender-responsive budgeting, public and private sector financing and innovative funding mechanisms.

Similar to the other Regional Commissions, one of ESCAP's priority areas is women's economic empowerment. ESCAP has been working on women's entrepreneurship and will be devoting more attention to strengthening gender-responsive budgeting in the region, women's unpaid care work as well as women's access to and control over productive resources, and enabling technologies – in support of Goal 5.

In April, the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development will be convened and a Regional Roadmap for implementing the SDGs and a mechanism to track progress is expected to be agreed upon. Implementation of the Agenda 2030, ensuring that the needs and interests of all persons are met, is contingent upon the collection, analysis and dissemination of good-quality data, disaggregated by sex, age and location, as well as income, disability and other socially ascribed population markers. The national statistical offices will have key roles in applying a global indicator framework for monitoring the SDGs in the particular country's context. In this regard, ESCAP is working in partnership with a number of UN entities and National Statistics Offices, to build on the regional core set of gender statistics and the SDG indicators, to strengthen member States' capacity to collect and use data that can inform policy, legislation and track results.

ESCWA continues to be the voice of the Arab region on issues related to gender equality and the empowerment of women. ESCWA provides tailor made technical assistance to Arab States to achieve gender equality. It regularly monitors the development in the situation of Arab women and provides evidence based policy recommendations. This is supported by regional projects aiming at supporting Arab States in implementing these recommendations and meeting their international obligations. In cooperation with UN-Women and League of Arab States ESCWA is building on the momentum of the Beijing review after 20 years through its normative work and advisory services. ESCWA is working to develop a regional strategic vision and framework to implement Goal 5 of the SDGs as well as mainstreaming it in the other goals. In this connection, ESCWA is supporting member States to identify their national priorities and develop regional interventions to help them meet their obligations toward Goal 5.

ESCWA is also preparing for the third Arab High Level Forum on Sustainable Development on 25-26 April 2016. The Forum will support Arab regional preparations for the fourth session of the HLPF, which will be held within the framework of the 2016 substantive session of the UN Economic and Social Council (New York, 11-20 of July 2016). On the regional level, it will allow for Integration across SDGs as well as their integration into national development processes.

Against the context of similar platforms and united by the common goal to achieve and maintain gender equality and empower women in their respective regions, the UN Regional Commissions will continue to jointly work towards addressing the challenges of the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and building inclusive societies for all.