

Report on the Asia-Pacific Regional High-Level Meeting for the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women

*“Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and
the empowerment of rural women and girls”*

23 February 2018, Bangkok



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I. Organization of the Meeting

A. Background

1. To assist the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in its deliberations at its 62nd session, the Asia-Pacific Regional High-Level Meeting for CSW62 was jointly convened by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific as well as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, in collaboration with the World Food Programme Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (WFP) and other members of the Asia-Pacific United Nations Regional Coordination Mechanism's Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (TWG-GEEW) at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Bangkok on 23 February 2018.

B. Attendance

2. Representatives of the following Governments attended the Meeting:
 - Members of CSW62 from the Asia-Pacific region: Bangladesh, China, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Mongolia, Tajikistan.
 - Other Governments from the Asia-Pacific region: Afghanistan, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Russian Federation, Thailand, Timor-Leste.
 - Other members of CSW62: Egypt.
3. Representatives of the following offices of the United Nations Secretariat, funds, programmes, specialized agencies and other entities attended: ESCAP, UN Women, FAO, WFP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Partners for Prevention (P4P), and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).
4. Representatives of the following civil society organizations, farmers organizations and other entities attended the Meeting: Aaina, Asian Farmer's Association for Sustainable Development (AFA), Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), Alga, Asia Pacific Forum on Women on Law and Development (APWLD), Centre of Research and Development in Upland Area (CERDA), Cordillera Women's Education Action Research Center (CWEARC), Diverse Voices and Action for Equality (DIVA), Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Landesa – Rural Development Institute, Nething, Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA), Plan International, Potohar Organization for Development Advocacy (PODA), Rede Feto Timor Leste (Timor Leste Women Network), RITES Forum, Shobujer Ovijan Foundation, and We Women Lanka.

II. Proceedings

A. Opening of the Meeting

Opening remarks were delivered by Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP; Dr. Miwa Kato, Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; Dr. Kundhavi Kadiresan, Assistant Director General and Regional Director, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; as well as a representative of civil society, Ms. Alma Sinumlag, Cordillera Women's Education Action Research Center (CWEARC).

5. Reflecting on the priority theme for the CSW62 and the 2030 Agenda's objective to "leave no one behind", the four speakers focused on common challenges and opportunities across Asia and the Pacific in achieving gender equality and empowerment of rural women and girls. They recognized women's key roles in rural economies and well-being of households and communities. They also highlighted that rural women and girls continue to face structural barriers that impact their human rights and prevent them from achieving their full potential.
6. Dr. Shamshad Akhtar (ESCAP) emphasized the importance of working together to create an enabling environment which supports women and girls in rural areas of Asia and the Pacific to unlock their full potential as powerful agents of change. She stressed the necessity to support rural women's entrepreneurship and to enact gender-sensitive policies and interventions that recognize and respond to the concerns of women in their everyday interactions with their environment. She also addressed the need to account for the dynamics of rural-urban migration in policies and to strengthen normative and legal frameworks to ensure coordinated action for the empowerment of rural women and girls.
7. Dr. Miwa Kato (UN Women) identified rural women and girls as most at risk of "being left behind". She strongly reiterated the need to tackle the theme from a wide range of policy angles and highlighted the importance of conducting data collection and analysis. She underscored the importance of ensuring rural women and girls have access to ICT, relevant and quality education opportunities. She also stressed the importance of tackling violence against rural women and girls and ensuring their access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, both for the women and girls themselves and for the economy at large.
8. Dr. Kundhavi Kadiresan (FAO) proposed evidence that illustrated the potential of women as agents of change. Women with the same access to and control of resources as men would increase food and nutrition security and sustainable development in the region. Therefore, she stressed the need for radical, transformative change and the commitment by multiple actors and sectors to such change across Asia and the Pacific.
9. Ms. Sinumlag (CWEARC) delivered a joint statement on behalf of civil society organizations (CSOs). She stressed that CSOs will remain steadfast in making their voice heard. She reminded government officials that, as duty bearers, they are accountable for the systematic violation of women's land rights, loss of access to and control over natural

resources as well as assault, harassment, and threats against women human rights defenders. She urged Governments to ensure rural women and girls' rights, as well as highlighted the importance of consulting local communities, including rural and indigenous communities, before adopting and implementing development programmes and to ensure participatory gender-sensitive and environmental approaches.

10. The speakers emphasized the importance of the Meeting to provide an interactive forum for member States of the Asia-Pacific region to identify good practices and lessons learned and develop key recommendations which will feed into the preparations for the CSW62 to be convened in New York from 12 to 23 March 2018.

B. Session 1: “Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls”

11. Session 1 entitled “Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls” included a high-level roundtable discussion chaired by Mr. Joeli Cawaki, Assistant Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management, Fiji. The panellists included Mr. James Marape, Minister for Finance and Rural Development, Papua New Guinea; Ms. Laura Menezes Lopes, Secretary of State for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, Timor-Leste; Mr. Muhammad Mahmood, Secretary of Agriculture, Government of the Punjab, Pakistan; Ms. Mahmuda Sharmeen Benu, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Bangladesh; and Mr. Toyam Raya, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Nepal.
12. The panel discussion focused on challenges and opportunities towards the empowerment of rural women and girls, including good practices and key recommendations from the Asia-Pacific region. Panellists highlighted common challenges related to discriminatory social norms and practices as well as patriarchal societies, which continue to obstruct the realisation of gender inequality and limit women's voices and participation in the public sphere. The panellists indicated that, in rural areas, women and girls are vulnerable to food insecurity and climate change, tend to be overrepresented in informal employment, with low wages. Furthermore, many panellists highlighted challenges related to limited access to economic and productive resources, issues of land ownership and other properties and assets. Issues of violence against women and girls, early and child marriage, limited mobility, and limited access to basic social services, such as health and education were highlighted by all panellists.
13. Panellists illustrated several good practices to promote access to education for women and girls. In this regard, experiences in enhancing education opportunities for girls were shared, including scholarships for female students of all ages, school feeding programmes and social protection interventions which target vulnerable families with children to ensure their attendance of compulsory basic education. Several panellists further highlighted the importance of sufficient resource allocation for the implementation of strategies to promote the empowerment of rural women, noting gender-responsive budgeting and development of action plans with gender-related key performance indicators as good practices.

14. Key recommendations to achieve gender equality were proposed, including the collection, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data to track progress. The importance of cross-sectoral collaboration among different ministries as well as engagement of key stakeholders, including civil society, private sector and religious leaders, among others, was also highlighted. Tackling embedded social norms and discriminatory practices was emphasized by panellists as a key priority along with the need to promote women's voice, agency, leadership and participation. The need to engage men and boys in these efforts was underscored as imperative in creating lasting change.
15. Panellists called for targeted programmes that will directly benefit rural women and girls, and expand their social and economic opportunities. Examples included the establishment of funds to support agricultural enterprises and women entrepreneurs, as well as investment in infrastructure, facilities and access to services. Panellists also called for action to increase knowledge generation, awareness-raising and advocacy on issues specific to rural women's needs; as well as to support rural women in enhancing their resilience to climate impacts. A programme promoting rural women's access to ICT was presented as an example of how building capacity and enhancing IT literacy can support their access to extension advisory services, agricultural inputs, machinery and electronic markets.
16. Following the high-level roundtable, government representatives further reflected upon the status of gender equality, particularly in relation to the empowerment of rural women and girls, in their national contexts. Many representatives emphasized their Governments' commitment to achieving gender equality, as enshrined in the CEDAW, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 as well as in national constitutions and development plans.
17. Representatives specified key challenges facing rural women and girls, including in relation to the structural barriers they face in ensuring food security, supporting rural livelihoods managing natural resources and protecting the environment, as well as in dealing with the gendered dynamics of migration outflows. Women's agricultural work was noted as either family-based, without remuneration, or concentrated in lower levels of activities with poor wages and occupational hazards. In addition, it was mentioned that women continue to exit from the active labour market due to their dual roles - reproductive and productive, while unpaid care work adds to their burden. The impacts of climate change were recognized by several representatives as being gender-differentiated and requiring specific measures, including through equipping women and girls with the requisite skills, knowledge and resources.
18. Representatives showcased targeted efforts in enhancing the well-being of rural populations, which has also greatly benefited rural women and girls – including developments in infrastructure and housing, women's improved access to and ownership of land, expansion of broadband connectivity, as well as advances in the participation of women in decision-making and leadership roles at all levels, including in conflict situations. Advocacy campaigns and strategies were noted as pivotal in raising awareness

of the importance of gender mainstreaming in rural development, as well as in changing discriminatory gender norms and mindsets.

19. Several representatives illustrated concrete measures to end violence against women through the adoption of legislation, regulations and action plans, provision of multisectoral services, strengthened coordination between and accountability of service providers, integration of these issues into school curricula as well as in training of police and judicial officials. In addition, one representative highlighted the strengthening of law enforcement measures to address human trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and children.
20. The importance of investments in health services, particularly in relation to reproductive and sexual health as well as in early childhood care and development, were underscored by several representatives. Additionally, the critical value of prioritizing education for rural girls and women was emphasized, including in relation to addressing access, quality and human resources, as well as through comprehensive policy measures to improve gender equality in education, sports, culture and science.
21. Most representatives highlighted continued efforts in delivering decent jobs for women coupled with social protection and the protection of rights at work, including through mechanisms such as women's federations', petition counters and telephone hotlines. Representatives outlined efforts to enhance women's economic empowerment, particularly in the fisheries and agriculture sectors. Capacity-building programmes, including vocational income-generation schemes, business and agribusiness management trainings and ICT literacy programmes were mentioned as integral in this regard. In addition, measures to promote inclusive access to finance and credit, including in relation to microcredit for entrepreneurs; agricultural inputs, services and extension services; as well as in entering creative economy markets were also cited as examples. The need to enhance agricultural value chains to allow for the greater participation of women at various stages and thereby facilitate their broader economic empowerment was also recommended.
22. Some representatives informed the Meeting of steps taken towards the adoption and institutionalization of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) in their countries. In this regard, with the support of ESCAP, the representative of Lao PDR reported on key activities undertaken including a national status review of gender-responsive budgeting to identify strategic entry points, drafting of a GRB training manual, training of a group of trainers in using the manual and the subsequent organization of two capacity-building workshops for line ministries on the implementation of GRB.
23. Some representatives cited the necessity of strengthened data collection and monitoring mechanisms to ensure the effective formulation and implementation of evidence-based policies and programmes. One representative reported on an emerging good practice of a registry system for the fisheries sector, which establishes a database of information on fisherfolk, documents success stories of women in this sector, provides technical assistance for women's participation in the conservation and management of natural marine habitats, and forges partnerships with various stakeholders. In addition, innovative work currently underway in conducting applied research on harnessing women-friendly technology and

efforts to leverage digital technology for rural development programmes were also presented.

24. The representative of the Russian Federation informed the Meeting of the organization of the Second Eurasian Women's Forum in St. Petersburg in September 2018, which will focus on the topic of "Women for Global Security and Sustainable Development". The representative indicated that the event is being organized to promote partnerships and communication with a view to find new solutions to empower women in both urban and rural areas, towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

C. Session 2: "Multi-stakeholder approaches to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls"

25. Session 2 entitled "Multi-stakeholder approaches to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls" included a multi-stakeholder dialogue chaired by Ms. Misun Woo, Coordinator of Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD). The panellists included Ms. Louise Lampon, Gender Advocate of Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA), a member of Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA); Ms. Israt Jahan Baki, Sexual and Reproductive Health Advisor, Plan International, Bangladesh; Ms. Chanda Thapa Magar, Deputy Secretary General of Asia Indigenous Peoples Pack Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP); and Ms. Banamallika Chowdhury, Nething.
26. The panel discussion focused on effective means of implementation to address the challenges faced by rural women and girls regarding (a) land rights and land tenure security; (b) violence and harmful practices; (c) health care and sexual and reproductive health and rights; and (d) resilience and preparedness to climate change and disaster.
27. Several speakers stressed the importance of recognizing the key role played by women in rural development and enhancing public consciousness of their contribution to sustainable development. Panellists highlighted that secure and equitable access to land and natural resources is fundamental for rural women livelihoods as it provides food and shelter and is the basis for sociocultural and religious identity and practices. Panellists urged countries from the region to guarantee rural women's access to and ownership of land and productive assets and their effective participation in natural resource management and conservation. It was also mentioned that national policies and trade agreements should protect women's land rights and traditional practices which are key to agrobiodiversity, food security and sovereignty, and resilience to climate change impacts. Panellists underlined the importance of fostering women's economic empowerment by investing in entrepreneurship skills and ability amongst rural and indigenous women.
28. The relative absence of women (especially indigenous women) in politics and in leadership positions in rural areas was pointed out by panellists. One panellist suggested that discrimination against indigenous women and threat to their land ownership is linked to identity, culture and specific lifestyles of these women, rather than their level of education. Panellists urged Governments to take measures to enhance rural and indigenous women's

meaningful participation and representation in society including in agriculture cooperatives and farmers and producers' organizations. The panellists concurred that there is a need to create a conducive environment for rural and indigenous women and women's organizations to design their own projects and solutions.

29. Panellists highlighted the need for countries to implement policies and laws which promote the rights of rural women and girls, with a focus on addressing gender-based violence and accessing sexual and reproductive health services. One panellist mentioned that in countries where these services are not provided, and such rights are not protected through effective measures, rural women and girls suffer from high rates of child marriage, unplanned pregnancies, maternal mortality and morbidity, unsafe abortions and sexually transmitted infections. She called on Governments to promote rural and indigenous women's access to justice and to protect them from violence by enacting laws that criminalize domestic violence against women. The importance of providing education and investing in multi-stakeholder innovative projects to tackle gender-based violence and sexual reproductive health issues was also mentioned.
30. Speakers expressed that pre-existing vulnerabilities or gender inequalities can be exacerbated during times of disaster, emergency or conflict. Panellists also pointed out that rural women and indigenous communities are more vulnerable to climate change and disasters because social and cultural structures often place them in disadvantaged positions. The need to strengthen partnerships and collaboration, between various actors - governments, donors, civil society- was specifically highlighted as critical to address rural women's resilience and preparedness to climate change and disaster.
31. Following the panel discussion, representatives of Governments presented on underlying causes of discrimination and disempowerment, and reported on challenges and continued efforts to combat violence and discrimination against rural and indigenous women. One representative emphasized the importance of statistical approaches to reporting of abuse and discrimination cases, particularly, in relation to indigenous women. The need to identify working solutions to addressing the specific needs of women with mental health issues in the context of war and violence was also highlighted. Among measures to assist women facing violence and discrimination, self-help groups were referred to as a strong form of social capital in need of greater support. Representatives shared successful cases of political engagement and activism, such as the major role played by rural grassroots women and civil society in devising national policy for food security – thereby stressing the need to ensure inclusion of women in decision-making at local levels.
32. Access to education, skills, public services, gender-responsive budgeting and economic empowerment programmes, and targeted measures for women in agriculture and other sectors were acknowledged as some of the key measures required to enhance the status of rural women, including marginalized women. Some representatives pointed to interlinkages between promoting sustainability, women's empowerment and poverty reduction, through implementation of climate-resilience programmes in agriculture, organic farming, conservation of indigenous species and crops, as well as development of resilient food systems and called for action in designing a national and regional policy on

food sovereignty. Success stories and the further potential for meaningful engagement of businesses into rural development initiatives as part of social responsibility agenda were also underlined as means of improving rural livelihoods.

33. A representative of the United Nations suggested affordable and accessible information and communication technologies as an efficient tool to accelerate gender empowerment and equality. The representative further reported on successful activities under the E-Agriculture Strategy, developed in collaboration with Food and Agriculture Organization and its impact in effectively promoting agriculture among young women.
34. Representatives of civil society also stressed the importance of partnerships between governments and civil society as a form of accountability to citizens, and reported on effective government-civil society dialogue on rural policy issues, including sexual education, reproductive health and support for young female farmers. As it relates to public-private partnerships, possible challenges were underlined in terms of ensuring accountability, openness and transparency due to certain corporate, legal and contractual conditions.
35. One representative of civil society also stated the need to expand policy discussions to include focused provisions for women in conflict zones and demilitarized areas, as well as to incorporate issues of fisheries, aqua-cultures and marine resources into general discussions around agriculture. Another representative also asked the Meeting to take note of existing gaps in laws and practice in protecting rural women migrants and emphasized the need to consider more gender-sensitive migration policies.

D. Session 3: Review of recommendations

36. Ms. Rhodora M. Bucoy, Chairperson of Commission on Women, Philippines chaired the final session of the Meeting, during which Governments reviewed key recommendations to address the specific needs of rural women and girls in Asia and the Pacific.
37. The recommendations were agreed upon during the session and will feed into the preparations for the CSW62 to be convened in New York from 12 to 23 March 2018. The adopted recommendations are provided under Section III of this report.

E. Closing of the Meeting

38. Ms. Aina Iiyambo, Executive Secretary, CSW & Policy Advisor, Intergovernmental Affairs, UN Women (New York), and Mr. Nagesh Kumar, Director, Social Development Division of ESCAP, and Co-Chair of the United Nations Regional Coordination Mechanism's Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (TWG-GEEW), delivered closing remarks and reiterated the importance of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.
39. Ms. Aina Iiyambo briefed the Meeting regarding the preparations for the CSW62. She highlighted that the information on the CSW62, including the discussion guide for the

ministerial roundtable and the CSW62 draft agreed conclusions are available online. She stressed that inputs received from the Asia-Pacific region and the recommendations agreed upon during the Meeting will contribute to the discussions that will take place during the CSW62. She mentioned that the CSW62 will also agree on the process of review for the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2020 (25-year Review).

40. Mr. Nagesh Kumar emphasized that the empowerment of rural women and girl is vital for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals. He stressed that the adopted recommendations will be carried to New York and will feed directly into CSW's global dialogue. He highlighted that the outcomes of the preparatory high-level Meeting will help ensure that the challenges and opportunities concerning the empowerment of rural women and girls across the Asia-Pacific region closely inform the global dialogue.
41. Ms. Aina Iiyambo and Mr. Nagesh Kumar expressed their appreciation to all the participants of the Asia-Pacific High-Level Meeting for CSW62. Both speakers welcomed the inputs provided by member States of the Asia-Pacific region to the agreed recommendations and thanked civil society organizations present at the Meeting for contributing their perspectives.

III. Recommendations

42. Rural women and girls in Asia and the Pacific face persistent structural barriers that prevent them from fully enjoying their human rights and constrain efforts to improve their lives. Rural women and girls regardless of their race, colour, ethnicity, language, marital status, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, birth, disability, HIV and AIDS, as well as occupational, migrant, legal or other status, are facing a number of common challenges, including: lack of land rights and land tenure security; food insecurity and malnutrition; violence and harmful practices; sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; limited access to quality education; as well as impacts of climate change, disasters, armed conflicts and financial crises.
43. The Asia-Pacific High-Level Meeting for the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62) considered the priority theme of CSW62 on “Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls”, in the context of the following normative frameworks: the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1), and the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (ESCAP resolution 71/13). Taking into consideration the specific needs of rural women and girls in the Asia-Pacific region, the participants of the Asia-Pacific High-level Meeting for CSW62 jointly identified and agreed on the following recommendations to be considered by the respective governments for subsequent incorporation into national priorities and legislations, with an emphasis on

means of implementation, toward advancing the empowerment of all rural women and girls.

A. Strengthen normative and legal frameworks, and ensure coordinated action for the empowerment of rural women and girls, including:

1. Strengthen and enforce laws, policies and regulations that prohibit discrimination against rural women and girls in all forms which are consistent with international human rights treaties, such as CEDAW and the UNSC resolution on women, peace and security.
2. Ensuring National Women's Machineries shall have decision-making powers and sufficient financial and human resources to sensitize all line Ministries and advocate for the needs and priorities of rural women and girls.
3. Promoting a comprehensive and integrated approach by all Ministries and entities to mainstream the needs and priorities of rural women and girls in policies, programmes, plans, budgets and initiatives.
4. Promoting partnerships and evolving mechanisms to enhance inclusive dialogue and multi-stakeholder engagement in policy and programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
5. Intensifying efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and harmful practices against rural women and girls.
6. Undertaking necessary approaches including legislative and administrative reforms or measures to protect and promote the rights of rural women and girls to land and land tenure security.
7. Enhancing multi-stakeholder and inclusive dialogue and platforms to review, improve and adapt macroeconomic frameworks and trade agreements ensuring that they promote the attainment of rural women's human rights and opportunities, income generation, food security and safety, and nutrition.
8. Promoting the leadership skills of rural women and girls to enhance the quality of life of farmer households towards improving their livelihoods, tackling social issues and protecting the environment.
9. Enhancing food and nutrition security to cater to the needs of rural families and communities in achieving a healthy and sustainable nutritional status.

B. Implement policies for the social and economic empowerment of rural women and girls, including:

10. Strengthening and ensuring socioeconomic policies, programmes plans, budgets and initiatives to reflect and include the human rights of rural women and girls, and recognize and emphasize their valuable role and contribution to sustainable development.
11. Ensuring the active and meaningful participation of rural women and girls in shaping and reshaping public policies and investments.
12. Recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care, agricultural and domestic work through equal sharing of responsibilities and provision of the requisite infrastructure.
13. Ensuring that social protection and child care services are available and accessible to rural women and girls to allow them to seek remunerated and decent employment.

14. Ensuring the right to work and human rights at work through promoting enforcement of gender-equitable labour standards in the informal and formal economy to improve rural women's access to fair wages, occupational safety, and health care services.
15. Promoting financial inclusion of rural women and girls in financial activities, including access to low-interest credit, loans without collaterals, grants, saving schemes and financial skills, and promoting financial literacy towards the inclusion of rural women.
16. Creating an enabling market environment that supports rural women and girls to pursue entrepreneurship initiatives, environment-friendly business models and sustainable livelihoods.
17. Ensuring rural women's access to and ownership of land, access and control over marine resources and forest resources, productive resources and assets, property, inheritance, agricultural inputs, including seeds, and their effective and meaningful participation in natural resource management and conservation.
18. Promoting women's decision-making in food sovereignty and supporting rural communities, including their food production and consumption.
19. Supporting smallholder agricultural production, sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and ensuring food security and nutrition of rural women, girls and their communities, including in areas affected by climate change, armed conflict, natural disasters and environmental degradation.
20. Building the resilience of rural women and girls to climate change and environmental degradation, including climate-resilient agricultural production that promotes agrobiodiversity and the promotion of gender-responsive disaster-risk reduction and humanitarian response through raising awareness of women and girls to climate change and its impact.
21. Promoting renewable energy that takes into consideration the needs and well-being of rural communities, in particular rural women.
22. Promoting access to diverse sources of energy and electricity for remote rural communities who are not reached by national grid structures.
23. Ensuring that rural women's intellectual property rights are protected by laws.
24. Ensuring access to health facilities such as mobile clinics for rural women and girls through the establishment of a comprehensive healthcare system for their needs as well as access to legal aid, medical and psychological support, shelters, counselling and rehabilitation services.
25. Ensuring access to broad psychosocial services and interventions for rural women and girls affected by domestic violence and other forms of violence.
26. Strengthening measures to ensure that rural women and girls have access to sexual and reproductive health services and emergency health care, and to improve the quality of family planning services, awareness-raising and counselling services, particularly in rural areas.
27. Reinforcing awareness-raising programmes targeting rural areas, on the negative effects of discriminatory stereotypes and harmful practices affecting women's enjoyment of their human rights.

C. Undertake measures and approaches that enhance rural women and girls' meaningful participation and representation in society and access to justice, including:

28. Establishing mechanisms and processes for rural women's participation in the development and implementation of policies and normative frameworks across various sectors of development.
29. Ensuring access to equal opportunities for rural women and girls to participate in decision-making process at all levels.
30. Supporting and creating space for rural women's civil society organizations, enterprises, cooperatives and trade unions to gather and unite rural women, supporting their voice and representation in decision-making processes in the political and economic spheres.
31. Recognizing the importance and support to women's movements and their activities, as well as women's groups in promoting rural women's and girls' participation in decision-making and leadership.
32. Promoting capacity building and education opportunities for rural women and girls through affordable and available training, skill-building and mentorship that address their needs and challenges.
33. Promoting legal aid and mechanisms to support rural women and girls' access to justice, and protection of women's human rights.
34. Protecting and promoting rural women's rights to exercise free, prior and informed consent, including awareness-raising on development projects that may adversely affect their ancestral domains, livelihoods and environment.
35. Enhancing rural women's awareness of their human rights and their legal literacy.
36. Enhancing the infrastructure, quality and accessibility of the formal justice system in rural areas.

D. Establish innovative financing models to support the advancement of rural women and girls' human rights in all sectoral areas, including:

37. Applying and strengthening gender-responsive budgeting across government operations and line Ministries.
38. Developing fiscal policies that facilitate investment in essential infrastructure services - including sustainable energy, sustainable transport and safely managed water and sanitation - and social protection to improve livelihoods, well-being and resilience of rural women and girls.
39. Identifying and harnessing diverse sources of financing including through public-private partnerships which nurture the interests of rural women, as well as public-public partnerships, and other innovative financing mechanisms.
40. Conducting gender impact assessments and audits on social, economic and financial policies.

E. Enhance access to and use of ICT and other technologies by rural women and girls, including:

41. Building capacity of policymakers to develop initiatives that support ICT development for rural women and girls.

42. Increasing dedicated investments in sustainable and innovative technologies with a focus on the needs of rural women and girls.
43. Promoting rural women and girls' skills development, digital fluency and literacy and financial literacy to support their labour market entry and livelihoods.

F. Improve availability of data and generation of gender statistics to enhance evidence-based policy making for rural women and girls, including:

44. Promoting the importance of generating gender statistics among policymakers and practitioners across all sectors, with consideration for the urban-rural divide.
45. Increasing investment in collection of data disaggregated by sex, age, urban-rural and other status.
46. Supporting capacity-building initiatives of policymakers and practitioners - including statisticians, researchers, surveyors, among others – to collect, analyse use, and disseminate reliable and comprehensive data and statistics.
47. Improving the collection, analysis and use of qualitative data and promoting its importance in addressing the needs and priorities of rural women, as well as in tackling the discrimination they face.

Annex I. List of Participants

**Asia-Pacific High-level Meeting for CSW62
Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women
and girls**

**23 February 2018
Conference Room 4
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Bangkok**

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