



Afghanistan



Bangladesh



Bhutan



India



Maldives



Nepal



Pakistan



Sri Lanka

DHAKA RESOLUTION

Adopted at

Seventh South Asia Regional Ministerial Conference Commemorating Beijing

03-05 October 2010

Dhaka, Bangladesh

WE, the Ministers, and representatives of the Governments in South Asia, women's organisations/networks, members of civil society gathered at Dhaka from the 3rd to 5th October 2010 for the Seventh South Asia Ministerial Conference jointly organized by the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the UNIFEM South Asia Sub-Regional Office

RECOGNISING THAT:

1. The countries of the South Asian region have made positive strides towards creating an enabling legislative environment to promote women's empowerment;
2. Such legislation has translated into strong policies, programmes and greater resource allocations, that are enabling the achievement of the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action;
3. The efforts to mainstream the principle of gender equality in development frameworks, programmes and national plans needs to be further strengthened;
4. In some countries in the region, women still remain under-represented in decision making at all levels, and the voices and experiences of women remain largely unheard, in particular the voices of those women who have been impacted by disparities of class, caste, religion, ethnicity, geographic location, sexuality, and/or disability, and therefore face violence and economic insecurity;
5. Unforeseen challenges emerging out of continuing conflict/post-conflict situations, natural disasters, climate change, the economic crisis, and violence and HIV and AIDS, have compounded the marginalization of women;

6. Unsafe migration and human trafficking remains a major challenge across the region;
7. Violence against women continues to remain a priority concern in attainment of gender equality;
8. Poverty is exacerbated as development priorities shift to disaster management and internal security;
9. Responses to women's needs remain inadequate due to the rise/return of conservatism and religious fundamentalism in some countries, entrenched barriers to women's access to equal opportunities to resources, power and justice, gender stereotypes, and the lack of accountability mechanisms to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels;
10. There is a need to take measures for full implementation of international and regional human rights treaties, including the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating the Crime of Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution, and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
11. Women continue to face social exclusion as persons with disabilities, widows, single women-headed households, and women affected by HIV and AIDS and/or conflict/natural disaster; and
12. Access to economic resources, while essential, does not by itself guarantee economic, social and political empowerment and equality.

AGREEING THAT:

1. Responses to these challenges necessitate overcoming the barriers to gender equality within the dynamics of the changes taking place in South Asia;
2. The pace of responses needs to be accelerated and the frameworks for implementation need to be time-bound and targeted;
3. Legislative and policy initiatives to attain women's equality need to continue, and these should be implemented and monitored effectively through institutional mechanisms;
4. It is vital to undertake concrete actions within the upcoming two year period that involve making women agents of change and that are measurable through qualitative and quantitative analyses to be used by policy makers and planners to further inform programmatic action; and
5. We shall expedite work on implementing the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating the Crime of Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution and further, continue the dialogue among South Asian countries on unsafe migration.

HEREBY RESOLVE to further strengthen our cooperation on a regional level **AND** to identify national initiative(s) that impact on the lives of women, and engage programme implementers and rights-holders to:

1. Undertake qualitative and quantitative research to identify specifics of the issue(s) to be addressed, generate gender-disaggregated data in the identified initiative, to develop programme design and facilitate their use for advocacy, capacity building, programming, policy and decision making Create awareness on the issue(s) at multiple levels;
2. Promote a process of removing existing gender stereotypes that impede gender equality, through the use of, among others, educational curricula and media;
3. Adopt concrete measures to enact and implement relevant legislative commitments and judicial orders to further gender equality;
4. Build multi-level capacities of critical stake-holders for responding to the nuanced needs of women in sector programmes, for programme implementation and long term sustainability;
5. Improve implementation of the initiative(s) by promoting democratic decentralized structures with equal participation of women;
6. Conduct social /gender audits against set indicators to measure programme effectiveness;
7. Draw upon performance and process indicators which directly measure and impact well-being with respect to gender equality, and
8. Engage the youth in promoting a society based on gender equality.

WE URGE UN WOMEN to assist Members States with technical and programmatic and institutional support to address gender-based violence and women's economic security.

WE COMMIT to move forward with implementation of this Resolution to ensure that women continue to realize their rights to substantive equality and continue to be active agents of change.

This resolution may be placed before the appropriate SAARC mechanism with a request to consider and integrate gender equality in the mainstream of the SAARC process.

5 October 2010