

**GENDER AND
WOMEN'S ISSUES
IN THE WORLD
OF WORK:
PROGRESS AND
CHALLENGES FOR
THE FUTURE**

**Report on the Asian
Regional Consultation on Follow-up
to the Fourth World Conference on Women,
Manila, 6-8 October 1999**

**INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific**

Copyright © International Labour Organization 2000

Publications of the International Labour Office enjoy copyright under Protocol 2 of the Universal Copyright Convention. Nevertheless, short excerpts from them may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to the Publications Bureau (Rights and Permissions), International Labour Office, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. The International Labour Office welcomes such applications.

Libraries, institutions and other users registered in the United Kingdom with the Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0LP (Fax: +44 171 631 5500), in the United States with the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923 (Fax: +1 978 750 4470), or in other countries with associated Reproduction Rights Organizations, may make photocopies in accordance with the licences issued to them for this purpose.

First published March 2000

ISBN 92-2-112075-9

The designations employed in ILO publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the International Labour Office concerning the legal status of any country, area or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles, studies and other contributions rests solely with their authors, and publication does not constitute an endorsement by the International Labour Office of the opinions expressed in them.

Reference to names of firms and commercial products and processes does not imply their endorsement by the International Labour Office, and any failure to mention a particular firm, commercial product or process is not a sign of disapproval.

For information on how to obtain this publication write to the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, 11th Floor, United Nations Building, Rajdamnern Nok Avenue, P.O. Box 2-349, Bangkok 10200, Thailand (Fax: +66 2 280 1735, or 281 1496; E-mail: bangkok@ilo.org). Catalogues and lists of recent and forthcoming ILO books are available free of charge from the same address.

Printed in Thailand

Preface

The Asian Regional Consultation on Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women offered the ILO's constituents and civil society an opportunity to survey progress made after the Conference, and to point to areas in which more needs to be done. The consultation, organized in cooperation with the Department of Labor and Employment of the Republic of the Philippines, was held in Manila from 6 to 8 October 1999, bringing together representatives of governments, employers' and workers' organizations from 23 countries and one special administrative region . The common understanding that the consultation produced will help guide the ILO's work in the region, and represents a real and valuable contribution to the global follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women.

That conference, held in September of 1995, was the largest ever convened by the United Nations, and trained the eyes of the world on Beijing. It brought together the representatives of more than 189 nations and more than 2,500 non-governmental organizations, while a parallel NGO forum drew another 30,000.

The Beijing Platform for Action that the Conference adopted identifies 12 critical areas of concern. It proposes actions in each of them that would, if taken, help achieve equality between women and men. It is a compass that points us in the direction of a fairer society, a document that maps out a future that offers the world's women the justice they deserve, but too often fail to receive. It also clearly sets out the responsibility of the United Nations system for ensuring that the advances it points to become reality. At least half of the 12 areas identified as critical are especially relevant to the world of work, and therefore to the International Labour Organization. These are:

- protecting and promoting of the human rights of women and the girl-child as an integral part of basic human rights;
- eradicating the persistent and increasing burden of women's poverty;
- eliminating all forms of violence against women;
- removing the obstacles to women's full participation in public life and decision-making at all levels, including in the family;
- promoting economic autonomy of women and access to productive resources; and
- encouraging equitable sharing of family resources.

The technical report produced for the Asian regional consultation showed clearly that, although progress has been made, there is still much to be done. It pointed to some advances: the gender gap between labour force participation rates narrowed in a number of countries between 1990-97; and, in the normative sphere, new legislation targeting sexual harassment as well as a gradual move away from protective measures towards legislation promoting equal employment opportunities. However, it also noted that women were still disproportionately represented in poverty. The Asian financial crisis marred the lives of millions of women, with job losses pushing many back into informal sector and agricultural households where they had to cope with lower incomes and

heavier burdens for themselves, their children, parents, and possibly their husbands who had lost their formal sector jobs.

The report formed the basis for three days of informed and informative discussion, and for a common understanding that will guide the ILO's work towards gender equality in Asia and the Pacific. The common understanding endorsed by participants in the closing plenary session addresses issues in three broad areas: globalization, employment, women and the girl child; women's rights in the world of work; and power-sharing and partnerships.

It is important that we do not allow the results of these deliberations to gather dust. Gender equality is not a vague ideal to be reached at leisure: it is a question of justice. It is simply unfair that women should be discriminated against and denied equality of opportunity for no other reason than we are born women. Gender equality is the responsibility of all. It is an injustice that can affect more than half the world's population. Each one of us has a responsibility to end it.

This is a responsibility that the ILO takes seriously, and the ILO Director-General has used International Women's Day both this year and last year to renew the Organization's commitment to it. There is not a single issue with which we deal which is not a women's issue, and not a single issue which should not be viewed in this light.

Mitsuko Horiuchi
Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific
International Labour Office

Contents

Preface	iii
1. Proceedings	1
1.1 Inaugural session	1
1.1.1 Welcome remarks	1
1.1.2 Message from the ILO Director-General	2
1.1.3 Message from the ILO Regional Director for	2
Asia and the Pacific	
1.1.4 Keynote speech	3
1.2 Introductory session	4
1.3 Session I: Globalization, employment, women and the girl-child	5
1.4 Session II: Women's rights in the world of work	9
1.5 Session III: Power-sharing and partnerships	11
1.6 Session IV: Common understanding	16
1.7 Closing session	17
1.7.1 Closing remarks, ILO Regional Director for Asia and	18
the Pacific	
1.7.2 Closing speech by former Senator Ms Leticia Shahani	19
2. Statement of common understanding	23
Annexes	29
I. Programme	29
II Opening messages and addresses	33
* Mr Bienvenido E. Laguesma, Secretary of Labor and Employment,	33
Government of the Republic of the Philippines	
* Mr Juan Somavia, ILO Director-General	35
Government of the Republic of the Philippines	
* Ms Mitsuko Horiuchi, ILO Regional Director for Asia	37
and the Pacific	
* Ms Karina David, Secretary of Housing, Chair, Housing	41
and Urban Development Coordinating Council	
III Closing remarks	47
* Ms Mitsuko Horiuchi, ILO Regional Director for Asia	33
and the Pacific Government of the Republic of the Philippines	
* Ms Leticia Shahani, former Senator, Government of the	50
Republic of the Philippines	
IV List of participants	57

I Proceedings

The ILO Asian Regional Consultation on the Beijing Platform for Action, Gender and Women's Issues in the World of Work: Progress and Challenges for the Future, was held at the Philippine Plaza Hotel in Manila from 6 to 8 October 1999. The meeting was organized by the ILO in cooperation with the Department of Labor and Employment, of the Republic of the Philippines. This consultation sought to provide an opportunity to review and assess the progress made thus far towards goals articulated in the Beijing Platform for Action relevant to the ILO, to identify gaps and obstacles hindering achievement of these goals, and to determine the strategies and solutions best-suited to advancing towards these goals. Tripartite constituents and observers from the ILO member States of the Asian and Pacific region were invited to this consultation.

The meeting included three technical sessions covering the following themes: globalization, employment, women and the girl-child; women's rights at work; and power-sharing and partnerships. Each of these themes was followed by discussions in separate working groups that subsequently presented their consolidated common understandings to the plenary.

1.1. Inaugural session

Ms. Chita Cilindro, Director of the Bureau of Women and Young Workers, Department of Labor and Employment of the Philippines, opened the session.

1.1.1 Welcome remarks

The Honourable Bienvenido E. Laguesma, Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment, offered a warm welcome, and extended his appreciation to the ILO for hosting the Asian Regional Consultation on Follow up to the Beijing Platform for Action in the Philippines. He particularly noted the Philippines' effort even before the 1995 Beijing Conference to pass significant legislation supporting the promotion of women's rights and gender equality at the workplace. In the wake of the Beijing Conference, the Philippines further provided the blueprint for a 30-year gender-mainstreaming plan – the Philippine plan for gender responsive development. Another gain provided for a five per cent gender budget allocation from government's total appropriation, to be used to implement gender-responsive projects and programmes.

Partnerships with government and non-government organizations are based on the recognition of women as strong advocates and active agents for change in nation building. An indication of the improvement in the position of women is their increasing rate of labour force participation. However, there are still obstacles to women's participation in the development process. Child labour and the girl-child are also serious concerns that need to be addressed. Finally, it is important to document the best practices or affirmative actions that advance the status of women.

1.1.2 Message from the ILO Director-General

A message from the ILO Director-General Mr. Juan Somavia was read by the ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, Ms. Mitsuko Horiuchi. Mr. Somavia said gender equality was at the heart of the ILO's primary goal: to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. The ILO had also committed itself to use its budgetary resources, knowledge and influence to achieve this goal. The Director-General pledged on International Women's Day that gender equality would be a priority concern both within the organization and in its actions and advocacy, and followed this with significant increases in resources for work on gender issues in the next programme and budget. The Director-General's message also cited the ILO's technical report prepared for the meeting, which he said showed that over the past four years women had continued to suffer from discrimination in the labour market, particularly in South-East Asia. The Asian financial crisis inflicted and continued to inflict serious economic pain and suffering on women in terms of unemployment and loss of pay. Since the Beijing Conference there had been some progress at the regional level towards greater economic empowerment, but it was important that more jobs for women should not compromise on quality. The theme, better jobs, was the subject of the Director-General's report to the 1999 ILO Conference, *Decent Work*, and gender equality was a central concern in this agenda. The concept of decent work is based on the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which respects, promotes and realizes basic rights at work regardless of gender. Finally, addressing women's rights cannot be disassociated from the issue of child labour. The Director-General appealed to participants to become actively involved in the ratification and implementation of the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 (No. 182).

1.1.3 Message from the ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific

Ms. Horiuchi delivered her personal message as the Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, International Labour Office, reinforcing the Director-General's message on the ILO's long-standing commitment to social and gender equality, dating back to its inception in 1919. Ms. Horiuchi also recognized positive developments for women's empowerment in the Asian region since the Beijing Conference, focusing particularly on the policy and legal framework. However, existing social and cultural barriers call for continued efforts that require political will and public support. This requires an understanding of both the gains and existing constraints. In the past four years or so positive trends included increased awareness of sexual harassment as a violation of the human rights of women in the workplace and establishing or updating legal frameworks. Ms Horiuchi also noted long-term increases in women's participation in politics, business and the labour movement. The Asian financial crisis showed the dark side of globalization, and confirmed that traditional concepts of gender roles are deeply rooted in Asia. The ILO's work covers both normative activities, through the international labour Conventions and Recommendations, and the technical cooperation programmes. Most of

the 12 areas of critical concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action are relevant to the ILO's work, such as, protecting and promoting human rights of women and girls, eradicating women's poverty, eliminating all forms of violence against women, increasing access of women to decision-making, and promoting economic autonomy and equality of women. Gender equality was simply another way of saying "justice". Discrimination on the basis of sex was unfair, unjust and occurred "for no other reason than that we are born women". To face the challenges of today's world, every society needed to ensure that all its members reached their full potential.

1.1.4 Keynote speech

A welcome was extended on behalf of His Excellency, President Joseph Ejercito Estrada and the Philippines Government by Ms. Karina David, Secretary of Housing and Chair, Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), who delivered the keynote speech. Ms. David began by recognizing the ILO's commitment to fighting gender inequality, and said the issue cut across all four of the ILO's strategic objectives. The four-year period since the Beijing Conference was reviewed in terms of accomplishments, vis-a-vis its goals, taking note both of the international trends and the situation in the Philippines. The discussion on the condition and status of women was described in terms of the major aspirations articulated in the Beijing Platform: eradication of the persistent and increasing burden of poverty for women; full participation of women in public life and decision-making processes; and economic autonomy and equal access to resources and opportunities. In general, women are still confronted with considerable difficulties in achieving these aspirations in view of global and societal pressures. Structural adjustment and globalization, demonstrated by the Asian financial crisis, reinforce poverty among women. The general biases of society toward women still hinder advances in decision-making processes both in public and private life. The major advance achieved in Beijing is the open and formal recognition of gender inequalities that have existed for a long period of time. Although Ms David painted a grim picture of the situation of women, she also addressed positive developments, listing accomplishments after Beijing. She said a generation-to-generation comparison would show that women are in relatively in better positions and gains have been achieved. However, numerous constraints still exist, particularly when their status is compared with men's. All the positive gains – such as increased participation of women in politics, creation of enabling laws and policies, and positive interventions to address women's concerns in the development process – are the result of the efforts of women themselves. Still, much needs to be done, including formally recognizing various forms of unremunerated work performed by women beyond the confines of the traditional definition of employment. Addressing women's issues is more than a "cognitive" exercise. It is a personal quest.

1.2 Introductory session

The introductory session was chaired by Ms. Horiuchi who first outlined for the participants the process and mechanics of the consultations, including the composition of the technical sessions and the respective group assignments. Two presentations were made by ILO staff; Mr. Roger Bohning, the Director of the ILO South East Asia and the Pacific Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (SEAPAT) based in Manila, and Ms. Janine Rogers from the Bureau for Gender Equality based in ILO Geneva.

1.2.1 ILO technical report prepared for the Consultation

The report presented by Mr. Bohning covered those fields of the Beijing Platform for Action that fall within the competence of the ILO: the labour market, women workers' rights and institutional developments surrounding these subjects. Where there are disparities between men and women, either in terms of labour force participation or income, gender gaps exist. The report was intended not only to document gender differentials but also to explain them. The explanations can be characterized as economic factors, cultural or social values, domestic policy influences and the impact of external positive factors. External factors might include the Beijing Conference and the ratification of ILO Conventions or technical cooperation activities. A chapter in the report consolidates recent gender-relevant legislation in the Asian or Pacific countries and ILO standards. The descriptive analysis is arranged under two broad headings: protection and equal opportunities. As regards protection, labour codes across the region often exclude women from particular types of work even where the hazards involved affect men and women indiscriminately or where hazards could be eliminated without denying employment opportunities to women workers. Equal opportunity legislation is being phased in gradually and mostly in the more advanced countries where formal sector employment predominates. The report also provides a set of basic questions that developing Asia Pacific member States of the ILO may wish to consider and adapt to their circumstances. The description of institutional developments in the region covered the following topics: national machinery, the participation of the ILO constituents in the machinery and the participation of women in decision-making in ILO, counterpart ministries and employers' and workers' organizations. The ILO's technical cooperation activities during recent years were reviewed, with the following suggestions:

- (i) allocation of resources for gender mainstreaming & promoting gender equality at work;
- (ii) statistical data base and collection of best practices; and
- (iii) gender sensitivity training for constituents and for the ILO to be better equipped to design and implement activities.

The presentation ended with the hope that the Consultation will not give rise only to more declarations, goals and targets but will result in identification of practical and realizable solutions to obtain concrete results.

1.3 Session I: Globalization, employment, women and the girl-child

Professor Mari Osawa of Tokyo University addressed this session, describing the historical background and the set of key events that led up to the Asian financial crisis; Dr. Osawa also briefly summarized the emergence of the crisis, the way in which it had unfolded and its dynamics; this was followed by a presentation of significant research findings regarding the impact of the crisis on women in five countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand. Dr. Osawa ended her presentation with a number of conclusions and recommendations. Her comments and analysis with respect to the antecedents and the development of the crisis and its impact on women as disclosed by the research, and conclusions, are summarized below.

Dr. Osawa opened her presentation by indicating that we have witnessed a general failure on the part of governments, international organizations and markets themselves to prevent or even predict crises. The current crisis has demonstrated the volatility and instability of the contemporary global economy. Dr. Osawa summarized the history of globalization and a number of important milestones that have created the context and conditions that prompted the current crisis. What happened within the Asian crisis was the subject of a major fact-finding effort by the AIT-ILO joint study on the impact of the Asian economic crisis on women, 1998, coordinated by G. Kelkar and M. Osawa.

Overall, this study found that more women than men were hit by the crisis. The unemployment rate in the Philippines had risen to 13.3 per cent and the unemployed population had reached 4.3 million by April 1998. Though more men were laid off than women, and more women than men have found employment in 1998 compared to 1997, the female unemployment rate (15.2 per cent) continues to exceed the male rate (12.2 per cent). Some firms are replacing male workers with women, since they are more likely to accept lower wages and employment under tenuous contracts. Most of the new jobs found by women are in the service industries, and mainly in the informal sector.

In the Republic of Korea, while the unemployment rate continues to be relatively lower for women (5.8 per cent in August 1998) than that for men (8.5 per cent), the economically active population has decreased sharply among women, while it has increased slightly among men during the crisis period (August 1997 – August 1998). Apart from agricultural and fishery sector and professional and administrative jobs, in all occupational categories, the number of women workers has decreased. The largest decrease is found among the clerical workers. The previous occupations of unemployed women reveal that those most affected were service workers, tellers, quasi-professionals, models and sales workers. In industry the hardest-hit areas were manufacturing, retail businesses, and personal and social services. Compared to the previous year, the highest rate of decrease for women is found in regular workers (-19.7 percent) while for men it is -6.4 percent. This fall in numbers of women regular workers suggests that the structural adjustment has hit women harder and that they have been transformed into irregular casual workers (July 1998 compared to July 1997).

According to a study carried out by the Labour Resource Center of Thailand, 60 per cent of the unemployed are women, of whom 23 per cent had been working in the textile and garment industry. Turning to the impact on Thailand's labour markets, a recent nationwide quantitative analysis covering the period to the first quarter of 1998 by N. Kakwani has taken note of gender-based differentials. The study points out that while the crisis' impact on men has been more severe in terms of employment, unemployment, the unemployment rate, and underemployment, a decline in total employment spurred by the crisis is not statistically significant. The crisis has contributed to a shift of employment away from wage and salary to farm work – which is actually a kind of disguised unemployment or underemployment. Due to the crisis and the lack of employment opportunities, people are willing to work for low wages. The levels of real earnings rather than the number of unemployed tell the true story about the impact of the crisis.

Despite the problems obtaining data on the informal sector, research from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand clearly show that homeworkers, traditional artisans, weavers and craft workers were the biggest losers in the crisis.

Dr. Osawa's paper identifies a number of strategies for protecting livelihood and promoting recovery in the wake of the crisis. Those relating specifically to women identify the need to provide support to women in home production, through marketing and management programs. They also recommend that more attention should be paid to policies for gender parity. This could be brought about by an effective legal apparatus for equal employment, and by enhancing women's adequate participation in management and decision-making, in trade unions and within policy implementation bodies. There is a great need for better monitoring of government programmes to ensure that women are given a fair share of public support, be that in the form of employment opportunities through labour-intensive schemes or in agriculture or other activities.

Comments by Employers' spokesperson - Ms. Barbara Burton, Legal Advisor, New Zealand Employers' Federation

Ms. Burton indicated that globalization cannot be halted. It needs to be dealt with constructively and to do so, more entrepreneurial societies can be envisaged as one possible response. With respect to the protection of women, many countries already have such legislation. For instance, laws that can provide for the education of the girl-child are commonly in place. However such legislation is often not enforced and its implementation is generally quite weak. Employers' organizations can play a useful role in ensuring that such laws are better applied. Important principles also can be developed by the ILO at conferences such as this and in other fora. However such principles should not be imposed on individual countries. Each country must evolve its own endogenous standards and practice. Employers' organizations and governments can play a useful and constructive role by raising awareness.

Comments by Workers' spokesperson – Ms. Hinako Watanabe, Assistant Director, Japanese Trade Union Confederation, RENGO

Ms. Watanabe indicated that trade unions, generally speaking, are not against globalization. Globalization has brought progress in quite a number of countries. Globalization, to an extent, has resulted in the improvement of the working and living conditions of workers and of their families. However, globalization of the economy has also resulted in the exploitation of workers. It has brought about limitations on freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively. This has been the case particularly in countries where the authorities have tried to attract foreign investment by creating free economic processing zones. Specifically, women have suffered disproportionately from these negative effects of globalization. This negative impact can be tackled only on a global level, and by establishing international labour standards that should be properly applied at the national level. The workers' group wanted to strongly emphasize the implementation of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. This Declaration, which was adopted at the International Labour Conference in 1998, covers the core labour standards of the ILO: the right to organize and bargain collectively, the elimination of forced labour, equal opportunities for women and equal remuneration for work of equal value and the elimination of child labour. Workers called on governments and employers to enforce these standards because they also provide a good basis for improving the position of women workers.

Summary of comments by other participants:

A number of other important comments were made with respect to a range of issues related to gender and gender equality:

Ms. Lorraine Corner of UNIFEM, East and South East Asia Regional Office, pointed out that when considering women's issues in the labour market, a social perspective often tends to be adopted, while failing to analyze economic issues. As a result we fail to appreciate some significant effects on women of certain special protective measures such as maternity leave or special working conditions. In themselves these differentiate women workers from men and may provide the basis for discrimination. For example, many employers routinely hire women as casual or temporary workers in order to avoid the potential costs of maternity leave. This has the side effect of also depriving the women of access to training and promotion because firms are unlikely to invest in casual workers. More attention needs to be paid to the way in which special measures for women are implemented, and to potential unwanted side effects. If the costs of maternity benefits are socialized through social insurance funds, particularly where all workers contribute (men as well as women) such side effects can be minimized.

A second important issue that also is related to economics is that of access to credit. Mr. Nemani V. Buresova, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Women, Culture & Social Welfare of Fiji, pointed out that rural women may have particular difficulty in gaining access to credit. Micro-finance is not readily available for them and establishing government bureaucracies for this may not solve the problem. Creative measures and appropriate delivery institutions need to be identified. Access to training and employment

opportunities were similarly identified as important issues by Ms. Connie M. Angco of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines. She indicated that it is important to establish appropriate networks with concerned agencies and to build their capacity to provide training in non-traditional trades, newly emerging trades, and entrepreneurship. Such efforts should also cover the needs of rural women and women in the informal sector. The importance of providing coverage to women workers in the informal sector was also confirmed by Ms. Mercy Ravi, General Secretary, Women Committee of the Indian National Trade Union Congress. She pointed to the need to provide protective social security in the unorganized sector, micro-credit systems for women entrepreneurs, better marketing support for women and the restructuring of rural credit systems so that marginal farmers can avoid money lenders. She also suggested that imports should be phased in gradually so that domestic craft-based industries in which women are active will not be precipitously eliminated. In general, more gender awareness should be promoted at policy-making levels. Ms. Zulekha Zar, Vice President, Pakistan National Federation of Trade Unions, similarly identified the importance of providing coverage to women in the informal sector. Ms Zar indicated that appropriate labour legislation ought to be formulated to meet their needs, and also pointed out the often ineffective implementation of labour legislation or the circumvention of labour laws that results in women being denied social protection. For example, employers, in order to avoid paying maternity leave benefits, may declare their pregnant workers casual or temporary. It was suggested that women members be included on labour inspection teams in order to better monitor and assist affected women and make labour inspection more effective.

More broadly it was suggested by Mr. Ubaidur Rehman Usmani from the Employers' Federation of Pakistan that women's issues should be tackled in innovative and creative ways and that we should not limit our perspectives, approaches or solutions to orthodox and conventional thinking. A useful point on which to conclude this summary of participant comments was raised by Ms. Lynn Middleton of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions. She indicated that although positive change can potentially result from the experiences of a crisis, within the context of this particular recent crisis and the resulting economic situation in Asia and the Pacific, positive change had not occurred for women and child workers. Rather, the reverse had happened. Ms Middleton suggested that the aims of the Beijing Platform for Action were not advanced by country responses to the crisis. It was suggested that all speakers including the ILO, governments, employers and workers attending this consultation reach fundamental agreement on the main issues and problems facing women, and that concrete change and improvements have been slow to occur. In order to ensure a better response, each tripartite partner has a constructive and useful role to play with respect to the relevant issues and problems. For example with respect to the elimination of child labour, a goal upon which there is unanimous agreement, governments should provide an economic environment and a social safety net that can promote the elimination of child labour. For their part, employers must stop employing children and instead employ adults. Trade unions must work collectively to advance workers' rights and to claim fair pay and conditions. Each social partner has a role to play and must take genuine and decisive action to achieve an end to child labour and to secure practical improvements for women workers.

1.4. Session II: Women's rights in the world of work

This second Technical Session was chaired by Ms. Chen Ying, Deputy Director General of the Chinese Enterprise Directors' Association, who subsequently introduced the Resource Person, Ms. Usha Ramanathan from the Delhi University, India.

According to Ms. Ramanathan, women workers' rights are viewed in the legal context of protection and equal opportunity issues. Protection for women workers is now translated to labour standards and movement towards increasing humane standards. Equal opportunity on the other hand is provided by ensuring that women have equal access at recruitment stage and at the workplace. The issue of protection covers security and conditions of work. The prevalence of stereotyping of women is still reflected in existing laws and government policies. Certain policy gaps can be observed on the issue of maternity benefits, special protection for night work, sexual harassment and other benefits. There is also an increasing tendency to link maternity benefits with population policies, especially if maternity leave under the law excludes the third or fourth childbirth. In this way, women are unduly asked to bear the brunt of population control policies. Sexual harassment is another issue in the workplace which still needs to be further defined if it is envisioned that an institutional system for grievances and /or complaints will be functional. This is in the light of the cumbersome process by which sexual harassment victims must present their cases, sometimes to the point of loss of credibility. Ms. Ramanathan also expressed anxiety over the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Ms Ramanathan put forward her opinion that, by adopting the standards provided in the Convention, the ILO had pulled essential criminal offences such as child prostitution and the use of children in pornography into the field of work. This, she said, had the potential to give the two offences the status of work-related issues, and that could cause "dilution" of the criminal character of the offences because of the shift from criminal law coverage to that of labour law.

Ms. Barbara Burton from New Zealand, Employers' spokesperson offered the first statement after Ms. Ramanathan's presentation. The employers' group is concerned that in gender-related legislation, a balance be struck between minimum requirements and what should be most effective. This is the point at which involvement of the social partners is of particular importance. The ILO can likewise provide technical assistance through the conduct of comparative analysis of legislation, best practice initiatives and providing appropriate training to government institutions. From the employers' point of view, it is through best practice policies that employment choices are made on a "best person for the job basis." Employers are also encouraged to consider ways in which they can help women accommodate their work and family responsibilities. Moreover, a country's level of economic development is an important factor in gender-related legislation. However, education and training are keys to a country's standard of development, no matter at which level of employment women workers are found.

Ms. Hinako Watanabe from Japan, Workers' spokesperson, provided a picture of realities for working women trapped in sub-human working environments worsened by their subjugation to their husbands. It is true that women workers have all the rights provided

by ILO core labour standards and other UN Conventions on women. However women workers have to contend with grim realities both at the workplace and at home. Affirmative action for women is an essential instrument to enhance equality and ensure that rights are not only provided at the workplace but also at home. The ILO is called upon to design and implement education programs to assist women trade unionists to improve their status in society.

Ms. Maria Lovaga from the Department of Labour and Employment of Papua New Guinea raised the possibility of the ILO providing an improved international standard on maternity benefits for working women. She encouraged employers to utilize a labour cost variable in deciding the merits of employing women. Another point on maternity protection was raised by Ms. Annie Coeroli, an observer from ICFTU-APRO, Tahiti, when she pointed that a significant downgrading of the current maternity protection could occur during the current review undertaken by ILO of its long-standing maternity protection Convention. Since 1919, the ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 1919 (No. 3), on maternity leave has protected pregnant women at work by providing rights, such as paid leave and protection against dismissal while on maternity leave. She further appealed that the proposed Convention expected to be considered in the year 2000 should not in any way reduce the current protections accorded to working women. Ms. Barbara Burton, Employers' spokesperson, replied to Ms. Coeroli's statements by noting that the current maternity Convention has not been widely ratified. Although employers are generally supportive of maternity protection, it is important that the proposed maternity Convention should deal with principles involved. Prescriptive detail, such as that found in the current Convention and largely repeated in the proposed revised Convention, is best contained in a Recommendation. The implementation of maternity protection principles should be a matter for national legislation and practice. Otherwise, the proposed Convention would again encounter difficulty in ratification.

Undersecretary Rosalinda Baldoz of the Department of Labor and Employment, the Philippines, stated that the world of work has always been identified more closely with the formal sector and to a lesser degree with the informal sector. But as women continue to perform multi-faceted roles as homemakers, household work remains unremunerated and excluded from the system of National Accounts. She urged that appropriate actions be taken by governments with the assistance of the International Labour Organization to recognize family and other home-based work as economic activities which should be properly valued and remunerated. This system of homework valuation would help address the problem of stereotyping women who are housewives, but able to contribute to the income of the family to fully develop their potentials and participate in the development process. It would also enable governments to provide appropriate protection for them and equal access to all the opportunities available to working women in the formal sector such as training, education, credit, information, technology, etc.

Ms. Jovita J. Vence, an observer from the Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unionists (BATU) from the Philippines, pointed out that all available legal instruments are only applicable to the formal working sector. Since more and more women are moving towards non-traditional forms of employment and working arrangements, women workers' rights in

the informal sector need to be identified and spelled out. She encouraged multi-sectoral social negotiations as a mechanism to push for informal sector rights.

Assistant Secretary Rey Conferido of the Department of Labor and Employment, the Philippines, raised a few questions which he addressed to the Ms. Ramanathan, the session resource person. First, he wanted clarification on the meaning of women's rights in the world of work. He asked whether this meant that women's rights in the world of work should be understood only in the context of an enterprise and economy or if it should include concepts of voluntary or non-remunerated activities, such as those performed at home, which could contribute positively to society. He further expressed concern over Ms. Ramanathan's anxiety regarding the potential she had pointed to for declassification of child prostitution and use of children in pornography from criminal to labour policy, observing that this appeared to lean towards the purity and neatness of legal concepts rather than more practical measures of penalty. On the other hand, he agreed with the resource person's observation that the issue of women's rights in the world of work should be approached from a balanced perspective, considering both protection and equality. This approach should be constantly revisited in light of new developments. For example, according to recent statistics, women normally outlive men and technologies have tended to ease the workload of women. This would suggest that the equilibrium of the principles involved in the delineation of women's rights could change from time to time and that there is a need to reflect these changes.

1.5. Session III: Power-sharing and partnerships

The session chairperson, Ms. Watanabe, of the Japanese Trade Union Confederation, indicated that the two resource persons for this session would focus respectively on national women's machinery and on the impact of NGOs.

Dr. Patricia B. Licuanan began the first presentation by pointing out that it has been more than four years since the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing, China in September 1995. Dr Licuanan said it was important to ask what has happened since. She indicated that the ILO's technical discussion paper for this meeting reports that the present characteristics of women's employment include the following: women are over-represented in the informal sector; women are underemployed or work part-time to a greater extent than men; women are over-represented in unremunerated work; and poverty has a feminine face. The report also repeats earlier facts regarding the basic differentials that exist in the formal labour market, the number of women in vulnerable occupations, the violation of women workers' rights and the under-representation of women in decision-making positions. It was pointed out that this analysis is quite similar to the situation analysis contained in the Beijing Platform for Action. This indicates that, the commitments made in Beijing notwithstanding, and despite the adoption of legislation aimed at the elimination of discrimination against women in the workplace, actual discrimination still exists. It also indicates that *de jure* equality (equality in law) is not yet matched by *de facto* equality (equality in fact).

Dr. Licuanan further pointed that this situation is not new. In the years since 1975, four world conferences on women have been held at five-year intervals with the exception of 1990. These were held in Mexico, 1975; Copenhagen, 1980; Nairobi 1985; and Beijing 1995. In 1990 the Commission on the Status of Women reviewed the implementation of the Forward Looking Strategies of the Nairobi (1985) Conference and decided to hold the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995). The review identified the need for drastic action if the goals outlined in the Forward Looking Strategies were to be achieved by the year 2000. It revealed two important findings. First, it noted there had been significant changes soon after the Nairobi world conference particularly in the area of legislation and that countries had consciously reviewed existing laws and changed those that were discriminatory towards women in conformity with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. However the second finding noted that these changes had tended to level off and the implementation of related laws was much slower in coming. In deciding to hold the fourth world conference the Commission on the Status of Women emphasized that this conference should focus on: i) priority areas of concern and strategic objectives in order to more rapidly reach the desired goals of equality, development and peace; and ii) recommend more specific actions.

One conclusion that can be drawn from the historical experience of these successive conferences is that barriers to gender equality lie not merely in the legal system but in the socio-cultural system as well. Some of the cultural obstacles in women's world of work include: the traditional distinction between men's work and women's work; traditional attitudes towards women's work; protective attitudes toward women; viewing women's work as marginal and dispensable; and a scarcity of adequate role models for women. A useful conceptual framework was presented for analyzing cultural stereotypes in the world of work and the interactive downward spiral that can obtain between unfavorable gender role stereotypes, a lower status of women and gender equity variables within the world of work. This can be a useful tool when seeking to better understand and addressing the preceding cultural obstacles. It was also suggested that the ILO and its tripartite partners might make a more proactive effort to change not simply the rules but the culture of the workplace to encourage sharing of power and genuine partnership. Among the suggested means for achieving this were communication programmes, gender sensitivity training, projection of role models, public recognition e.g. awards to gender sensitive establishments, and promoting management and employer awards.

Another major conclusion involved "value-added partnerships" at the national levels – in order to achieve a better implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action it was important that more of these were established, and that they were more effective. The important role of national machineries for women in the implementation of the Platform was recognized and emphasized. Even so, almost every country in the region already has such a machinery for the advancement of women and the promotion of gender equality. The constraints of small staffs, limited budgets and lack of political clout remain realities and pose an obstacle to progress despite improvements since 1995. Thus, despite such efforts to promote gender mainstreaming to ensure that gender concerns are more systematically taken into account in the policies and programmes of government agencies

and other partners, this does not happen easily. The ILO can help bring this about by working closely with national machineries while improving links their other natural partners. Partnership with the ILO, for instance, can give national machineries better entry into labour departments. In addition, although the private sector has not been a traditional partner of national machineries, this has recently blossomed in the wake of a significant increase in interest in women's issues at APEC. Workers' organizations and trade unions can also form additional value-added partnerships with the national machineries. The ILO is in a unique position to help ensure that all these processes occur more effectively because of its tripartite nature and constituency. Value-added partnerships were seen as important approaches to a better implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

A number of specific action points were additionally recommended for a broader set of stakeholders including governments, national bodies, the private sector, political parties, trade unions, employers' organizations, research and academic institutions, sub-regional and regional bodies and non-governmental and international organizations. These action points were classified into three areas: i) equal representation of women and men in all sectors and at all levels; ii) better monitoring mechanisms to measure and ensure attainment of these goals; and iii) actions aimed at cultural and attitudinal change to make new roles for women and men possible. Important specific action points mentioned under these rubrics were: a) taking positive action to build a critical mass of women leaders, executives and managers in strategic decision-making positions; b) creating or strengthening, as appropriate, mechanisms to monitor women's access to senior levels of decision making; c) reviewing the criteria for recruitment and appointment to advisory and decision-making bodies and promotion to senior positions to ensure that such criteria are relevant and do not discriminate against women; d) encourage efforts by non-governmental organizations, trade unions and the private sector to achieve equality between women and men in their ranks, including equal participation in their decision-making bodies and in negotiations in all areas and at all levels; e) developing communications strategies to promote public debate on the new roles of men and women in society and in the family; f) restructuring recruitment and career development programmes to ensure that all women, especially young women, have equal access to managerial, entrepreneurial, technical and leadership training, including on-the-job training; and g) developing career advancement programs for women of all ages that include career planning, tracking, mentoring, coaching, training and retraining. The appropriate stakeholders previously identified should address the preceding action points. Dr. Licuanan concluded by indicating that in working to achieve cultural change, national machineries must practice patience, persistence and passion. She emphasized the importance of enthusiasm and the wish and passionate desire to bring about change, saying both were indispensable ingredients of sustained effort.

The second resource person to address the session, Thanpuying Sumalee Chartikavanij, President of Thai Women Watch, discussed the role of NGOs in advancing women and promoting gender equality. She too pointed out that although progress has been made since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action there is no question that much more remains to be done. The position of women, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, has

never been more precarious and more fraught with difficulties and deceptions than it is today. Sixty percent of the world's women live in this region and they are among the poorest in the world. Globalization has not been the expected panacea but quite the contrary. Moreover, progress cannot be equated with economic mobility alone and help cannot come from outside the region if there is not local impetus to support it. For all these reasons the NGO movement has gathered force and strength over the past decade and is now a very important instrument in the context of the success of the women's movement.

It is only the growth of non-government organizations, people's movements and alliances working for women's empowerment that can translate the hopes and visions for a better future of the women of the Asia Pacific region into a reality. Recently the Asia Pacific Regional Symposium "Asia Pacific 2000; Gender Equality Development and Peace" was held in Bangkok, Thailand. This symposium brought together 500 people representing NGOs from 28 countries. The Declaration adopted by the Symposium on 3 September 1999 called upon the world's governments to have the courage and commitment to translate the high hopes of the Beijing Platform for Action – "mutual respect, equality and justice" – into concrete actions that can be shared by women in the Asia Pacific region.

Some of the main points of this Declaration were as follows. The women of the Asia-Pacific region are determined to strive for a position of individual and social dignity in which they feel strong, active, creative and empowered and wherein their diverse abilities and talents are valued and they can express themselves with confidence and without fear of violence. Resources, sustainably used, must be shared equally between men and women and equally distributed within and between States, and women fully empowered should participate equally in the definition of structures, systems and policies that determine the framework of their lives.

Affordable services addressing the primary health needs of women was a significant failure ascribed to many governments in the region, as was the lack of gender-sensitive educational policies. Violence against women, exploitation of women and the girl-child, and the inadequate attention paid to those who have been marginalized because of sex, race, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, age or socio-economic status, is continuing and should be deplored. Singled out most strongly was the lack of political will to empower women beyond statements which were rarely translated into action and the all too frequent reliance on micro-schemes and initiatives to address macro, systemic or structural problems. A final important message had been delivered by the Bangkok Regional NGO Symposium's keynote speaker. Linda Burney, the Australian Aboriginal activist, told the gathering that the biggest challenge women faced in the immediate future was adequate political representation, not just in the community sector, but more importantly in the government sector: "In order for women's issues to be taken seriously, women have to increase their numbers in Parliament," Ms Burney said.

Comments by Employers' spokesperson – Ms. Barbara Burton, Legal Advisor, New Zealand Employers' Federation.

Employers are increasingly aware that it makes sound economic sense to maximize the effective use of all the human resources at their disposal. Therefore employers should motivate employees and provide them with appropriate responsibilities based on merit. However, the reality is that women are sometimes disproportionately under-represented in decision-making positions in the private sector and therefore employers' organizations can play a role in promoting power sharing between women and men, including within their own organizations. Since prescriptive means (legislation) are often unsuccessful, employers would support voluntary initiatives to develop and promote equal opportunity policies and practices at the workplace. Some of these have been identified in the technical report for this consultation. In particular employers' and employees' organizations can: i) promote the establishment of separate institutions that promote gender equality at work; ii) incorporate gender concerns in collective agreements where appropriate; iii) provide training and support to enterprise, women workers, and women entrepreneurs; iv) help raise awareness of issues of current importance where necessary; and v) work with appropriate agencies to collect data that is gender disaggregated. The ILO can assist employers with appropriate technical advice and assistance on all the matters mentioned.

Comments by Workers' spokesperson – Ms. Connie Angco of the Trade Unions Congress of the Philippines.

Workers believe that women, who constitute half of the world's population, must be included in power sharing and equal partnership to realize a truly equal society. In the wake of the Beijing Platform for Action, most of the UN member States have set up a women's department or a monitoring mechanism to actively take up gender issues. However, governments have not given departments or mechanisms enough power or funding. The workers call on governments to ensure that women's departments initiate legislation on women's issues, and to provide adequate funding to the women's departments and the monitoring mechanisms. The workers also call on governments to amend legislation to increase women's representation and participation in decision-making by such means as reserving seats for women and introducing quota systems and affirmative actions. Gender mainstreaming should be integrated in policy-making and implementation. In every decision-making body, women's participation should be guaranteed. In order to achieve women's empowerment, it is essential to give due recognition to women's contribution to the economy, society and the nation. More education and training should be provided on issues including power sharing, sharing responsibilities, and equal partnership among workers, employers and governments. Power sharing starts at home and we should remember that all issues are women's issues.

Summary of comments by other participants:

Participants urged a number of improvements to the performance of various stakeholders in order to speed progress towards the advancement of women and the promotion of gender equality. Ms. Kyungjin Song of ICFTU-APRO, Singapore, indicated that some

governments have shown insufficient political will to promote gender equality. Women's departments or monitoring mechanisms often have not been given the power to initiate legislation on women's issues and they have not received sufficient funding. Information on gender issues and the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action have not been made available to trade unions and the unions have not been included in the consultation and implementation process. Moreover not all member States in the Asia Pacific region have ratified the relevant Conventions on women and the ILO should step up its efforts to encourage these countries to ratify. However, the ICFTU's internal gender policy to achieve 30 per cent women's participation has been very successful and has increased women's representation and participation in all decision-making bodies. Even so regarding women's participation Ms. Lorraine Corner of UNIFEM pointed out that although goodwill and passion may be important in their own right, they are not a substitute for solid institutionalized requirements for women's participation. She congratulated the ILO on its monitoring of the participation of women in its own meetings and delegations. Ms. Mercy Ravi of NTUC, India indicated that slots should be reserved for women at all decision-making levels so that they may also serve as role models for the grass root levels. Ms. Maria Lovaga of the Department of Labour and Employment in Papua New Guinea indicated that NGOs have not always maintained their role as society's conscience in making public calls that draw attention to gender equality issues and promote international agreements and understandings. Finally it was suggested by Ms. Jovie Vence of the Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unionists that the ILO should expand its traditional social partners to also include tripartite-plus groups and organizations representing women.

Separate working groups were organized after each of the three technical presentations made to the plenary. The results of the discussions on each topic were then consolidated to arrive at a Common Understanding. The Common Understanding is presented in the Annex.

1.6. Session IV: Common understanding

The deliberations of the working groups and the resulting Common Understanding on the three themes of the consultation was the subject of discussions at the closing session of the consultation.

Ms. Shipra Chatterjee of the FICCI Ladies organization, India suggested that the following modifications be made:

- point 5: insert "after consultation with the national government" after the words "donor funding"

Ms. Betsy Selvaratnam of the Ceylon Workers Congress pointed out that trade unions are responsive to all aspects of the world of work and workers' concerns whereas NGOs focus only on particular parts of it. Both have legitimate, but distinctive roles to play.

Ms. Preet Verma of the Ministry of Labour, Government of India, wished to see the following modifications made to the common understanding:

- point 1b: insert "whenever possible" between "standards" and "as well as"
- point 5: insert "after consultation with the national government" after the words "donor funding"
- point 6b: replace "conclude" by "consider concluding"
- point 6d: replace "ensure" by "consider ensuring"
- point 16: add the following sentence at the end: "governments need to consider this aspect keeping in mind their particular national situations"

Ms. Mercy Ravi of the Indian National Trade Union Congress regretted the absence of any reference to women in conflict situations, where they face particularly acute problems.

1.7. Closing session

The closing session was chaired by the ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, Ms. Mitsuko Horiuchi. The session included statements from the spokespersons for governments, workers and employers represented by Ms. Champa Verma, Ms. Hinako Watanabe, and Ms. Barbara Burton.

The government representative, Ms. Verma, expressed positive recognition of the wide coverage of the consultation on gender issues in the world of work and of how these were covered in the technical themes in the workshop groups. Government interventions took the form of ratification of relevant ILO Conventions and application of these standards in the context of bilateral agreements and legislation, in consultation with the social partners. Government efforts, including funding support, should be undertaken in consultation with the social partners, in cognizance of the peculiarities of their situations. The representative put emphasis on women in the informal sector as the priority concern that should be addressed in ILO technical cooperation with member countries.

With regard to the concerns of women workers, Ms. Verma identified several points that need to be examined in tackling women's issues, namely: i) women are more vulnerable in the increasing globalization of economies; ii) there are more women in export processing zones in which there is a prevalent lack of protection for basic workers' rights such as the right to organize, right to collective bargaining and safety in the work environment; iii) provision of maternity benefits is a human rights issue which should not be solely the concern of women but of society as a whole; and iv) the adverse effects on women are reinforced by the existing international economic structure and structural adjustment programmes. These can be addressed by incorporating gender perspectives in trade union participation within structural adjustment programmes, and by encouraging women's participation in international economic fora, governments and international organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF.

Ms. Burton, representing the employers' group expressed appreciation for the opportunity to listen to the problems and experiences of other countries in the Asia Pacific region.

National legislation promoting equality between men and women has been put in place in other countries; however, this should be accompanied by other measures to ensure movement towards this objective. Education and advocacy can be effective measures to promote equality and sharing of responsibilities between men and women during the early stages of schooling. At the workplace, employers can adopt and encourage family-friendly work policies and practices, appointments and promotions based on merit that are perceived to promote the advancement of working women. That gender equality makes good business sense is a notion that can be advocated and supported among employers. In the informal sector, ILO technical assistance, training and other interventions are valuable forms of assistance for women workers. More importantly, access to knowledge and information on the rights of women workers are critical interventions for governments, non-government organizations and concerned individuals.

Ms. Watanabe also made a statement on behalf of the workers' group stating that there has been minimal advancement towards the goals specified in the Beijing Platform. Priority concerns for workers were identified, namely: i) implementation of ILO Conventions particularly those referring the basic rights of workers; ii) recognition of workers in the informal sector; iii) training and education for trade union women workers; and iv) social safety net and social justice measures. These last should in turn consider the following: i) shared responsibilities at home and in society at large; ii) health and work environment; and iii) poverty among women. In conclusion, she reaffirmed the agenda for women's empowerment in general, and women's economic power and increased decision-making in tripartite consultations, in particular. She also emphasized that NGOs cannot replace trade unions and employers' organizations as representative groups for workers and employers in the tripartite machinery. However, she clarified that NGOs can be partners in programmes and activities.

1.7.1 Closing remarks, ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific

Ms. Horiuchi thanked the delegates for their participation and acknowledged the valuable support of the Government of the Philippines, in particular the Office of the President, DOLE and TESDA, and of the individuals whose assistance contributed to the success of the meeting. She also gave particular recognition to the relevant contributions of the Nairobi and Beijing Conferences which laid the groundwork for this consultative meeting – referring in particular to the participation of former Philippines Senator Ms. Leticia Shahani who served as the Secretary-General of the Nairobi Conference and the contribution of Dr. Patricia Licuanan who chaired the preparatory committee for the Beijing Conference. The Platform for Action arose from long-term commitment and continuous work of women. In view of this, she urged the participation and commitment of society as a whole to achieve meaningful changes and progress towards the goals set out in the Platform.

Ms Horiuchi said that women have always been aware of their problems but more often than not, such problems are forgotten or neglected. The Common Understanding – which covers a comprehensive set of both normative and concrete actions – can guide the governments, employers' and workers' groups as they steer the course of society towards gender equality. As a next step, Ms. Horiuchi observed that it would be useful to

prioritize these broad-based actions. She then confirmed ILO support and commitment to these actions through providing services, knowledge, advocacy, technical assistance and capability building. Finally, she emphasized that although gains have been made since Beijing, it should be recognized that women still find themselves in difficult positions and situations. Concurring with Ms Shahani's message at the Conference in Nairobi, she said political will was an important element that will urge members to work together in order to secure progress towards equity, security and human dignity for the next generation.

1.7.2 Closing speech by former Senator, Ms. Leticia Shahani

The closing speech for the Consultation was delivered by former Senator Leticia Shahani of the Philippines. Ms Shahani began by thanking Ms. Horiuchi for her invitation to the meeting and Mr. Szal for the assistance consistently given by the ILO office in Manila to the people and Government of the Philippines. She then reminded the audience that time has gone by rapidly since Beijing 1995 and that we must all redouble our efforts to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and monitor its enforcement. Despite our most intense efforts we can easily feel overwhelmed by the vast amount of work that remains to be done in the field of women's rights, and to address related problems of poverty, unemployment and discrimination. Still, we should not lose hope nor despair, and we must continue to recognize and remember that changes in attitudes and structural reforms move slowly. In this respect a sense of historical perspective can help. But mere verbal activity, debate and analysis cannot provide the solutions we need. And even the best legislation is inadequate. Likewise, a purely sectoral approach towards women will not suffice.

At the start of the 21st century we have entered the era of integrated development and social solidarity. There is an urgent need for value-based sustainable national and global development, if concrete results are to be achieved. The scientific and technical approach, so basic to human progress, by itself will be sterile unless balanced by the exercise of moral and spiritual values accompanied by political will that is committed to the good of the majority, and is also underpinned by a sense of social solidarity on the part of the population and civil society. The challenge of the 21st century will be to develop these conditions while giving the highest priority to the security as well as to the empowerment of people. In this respect Ms. Shahani praised ILO Director-General Juan Somavia for his statement that we must, "move from the more limited notion of a welfare state to a larger vision of a state of equity".

She also recalled specific parts of the vision of the World Summit on Social Development – also held in 1995 – chaired by Ambassador Somavia: "We are deeply convinced that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, which is the framework for our efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people ... in both economic and social terms the most productive policies and investments are those that empower people to maximize their capacities, resources and opportunities. We acknowledge that social and economic development cannot be secured in a sustainable way without the full participation of women and that equality and equity between women

and men is a priority for the international community and as such must be at the centre of economic and social development.”

Ms. Shahani pointed out that in relating the Declaration of Copenhagen on Social Development to the Beijing Platform for Action, it was not her intention to subsume or subordinate the rights and responsibilities of women, but rather to demonstrate that women are at the very centre of the development process because they constitute half of the world's population and their potential has not yet been fully appreciated or utilized.

Moreover, women also should not accept roles as mere subjects or objects in the ongoing globalization process; they must be proactive in shaping it in order to provide a woman's ethical and spiritual orientation, thereby humanizing globalization. But before women can transform the world they must simultaneously transform themselves. Ms. Shahani called on women to exemplify through their lifestyles and daily behaviour the very values on which we should build this new world. The self-transformation should be on a moral and spiritual basis, otherwise it cannot be sustained over the long term or acquire its own power. And it should further demonstrate the values of sharing with and caring for one another, of being accountable and self-reliant and of being tolerant of cultural diversity.

Finally, Ms. Shahani indicated that although governments have legal and financial power, we cannot rely solely on governments, whether at the national, regional or local levels, to achieve gender objectives. Private enterprise is already proving that it can be more powerful than governments. And what the 21st century really requires to achieve development is the solidarity of civil society as well as the exercise of good governance. This means the cooperation of all social actors – government, private industry, NGOs, churches, academe, people's organizations of farmers, workers, etc. Indeed, all sectors of society with common cause must act together to survive and prosper. Within these emerging trends, women can and should play a major role. And they must help remove the scourges of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion not only as these relate to women but also to oppressed groups and individuals within their communities.

Ms. Shahani complemented these views by indicating that the Beijing Platform for Action is already strong on the subject of women and economy. It recognizes that employment policies should integrate the gender perspective more fully. Indeed, the economic independence of women is the beginning of true equality between men and women since without her own income, a woman too easily remains a victim and a subject of men and of society in general. She indicated that the ILO technical report for this consultation, *Towards Gender Equality in the World of Work in Asia and the Pacific*, also deals with both old and new problems relating to the employment of women: i) the negative and positive effects of the globalization process on the employment of women; ii) the booming sex industry; iii) the unprotected status of migrant women; iv) the unrecognized status of domestic and home workers; v) the continuing neglect of employment of women in the agricultural sector; and vi) the non-implementation by governments of the ILO Conventions which they have ratified coupled with the weak enforcement of labour laws at the national level.

She also shared a number of more specific insights and lessons learned through experience centred round the successes and obstacles that, as a former Senator and legislator in the Philippines, she had encountered while trying to bring about improvements in a series of issues. These issues included: equal pay for work of equal value; remuneration for work performed by housewives; improvement of the employment of women in agriculture, fishing and in the formal and informal sectors; combating violence against women and trafficking; and improving budgetary allocations in women's programmes in government and non-government organizations.

Ms. Shahani concluded her presentation by indicating that the implementation and enforcement of laws are grave shortcomings in many countries in the region and that it is her hope that the ILO through its regional and national offices can assist, at the request of the governments in Asia and the Pacific, with the implementation of important legislation dealing with women and related areas. Ms Shahani concluded by again thanking Ms. Horiuchi and the ILO for inviting her to participate in this important consultation.

II Common understanding

Globalization, employment, women and the girl child

1. In the context of globalization, governments can promote equal employment opportunities for women through:
 - a) commissioning studies to gather data on gender gaps and sharing the results, including surveys on emerging job opportunities in the 21st century;
 - b) ratifying and applying international labour standards, as well as enforcing national legislation more forcefully;
 - c) improving women's access to training, credit facilities, productive resources, and markets;
 - d) aiming to ensure girls and boys have equal access to schooling at all levels, paying particular attention to rural areas, and to change attitudes in favour of gender equality – in families as well society at large; and
 - e) ensuring that women have equal access to public works programmes, special social funds, and social safety nets.
2. Employers' and workers' organizations can facilitate women's equal access to training (in particular in non-traditional trades), credit, support services, social safety nets, etc. Employers should understand that it makes good business sense to promote equal employment opportunities and treatment for women and men. Trade unions should establish a special monitoring system to ensure women's equal access to resources, training, markets, legislation enforcement, etc.
3. The tripartite partners should meet regularly to agree on specific action plans and monitoring mechanisms.
4. Governments and employers should be encouraged to provide child care facilities, where they are lacking and needed.
5. Donor funding should be directed towards social support systems and social safety nets, and should include funds to organize women in the informal sector.
6. In order to reduce the vulnerability of migrant workers, States should:
 - a) consider ratifying relevant UN and ILO Conventions;
 - b) conclude bilateral agreements to facilitate regular migration and employment;
 - c) promote alternative employment opportunities in areas of high emigration; and
 - d) ensure freedom of association for migrant workers, as well as social security and assistance and counseling.

Gender and women's issues in the world of work

7. In migrant-receiving countries, rescue homes should be established and migrants made more aware of their rights, and migrant-sending countries should appoint women staff in their embassies abroad to look after female migrant workers.
8. In order to reduce the vulnerability of girl child, States should consider ratifying the ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 concerning Minimum Age, 1973 and Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999, and launch a tripartite campaign to raise awareness of the ills of child labour.
9. In order to make home workers and domestic workers less vulnerable, States should extend the reach of labour legislation to cover employees who work in their own home and in the homes of others.
10. The ILO should intensify dialogue with international financial institutions so they ensure that:
 - a) the burden of structural adjustment does not fall disproportionately on women workers;
 - b) adequate social services are provided equally to women and men workers; and
 - c) special consideration is given to funding women's entrepreneurship and self-employment schemes.
11. The ILO should provide the following assistance:
 - a) undertake gender sensitization training for its own staff and constituents;
 - b) involve more women in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages of technical cooperation projects;
 - c) increase women's participation in its activities and improve the gender balance of its staff, and seek to persuade constituents that women should constitute a greater proportion of ILO delegates;
 - d) establish a gender-disaggregated data bank, and distribute gender-relevant information; and
 - e) assist countries to carry out gender-based analyses and develop gender-sensitive training programmes in various sectors of the economy, including in non-traditional forms of employment.

Women's rights in the world of work

12. To achieve gender equality at work, efforts to change attitudes on gender questions should begin in primary schools and extend to media, civil society, government officials and the social partners.

13. Governments should set a good example and targets for employing women workers through, for example, gender budgeting and flexible work arrangements, including those designed to address family responsibilities.
14. Anti-discrimination legislation is needed. It should be simple and capable of being implemented in the particular circumstances of an individual country.
15. Ratification of international Conventions is not enough. Their principles need to be effectively incorporated into national legislation.
16. Labour legislation should apply to all employment sectors, and all categories of workers.
17. Governments should consider broadening the role of labour inspectors beyond enforcement. New roles should include promoting good practices in the area of working conditions, both in the formal and informal sectors.
18. Appropriate legislation is needed to combat violence at the workplace, and it should be effectively implemented.
19. Special efforts should be made to make women and men more aware of their rights at work.
20. Commissions or institutions concerned with the status of women should be established or strengthened to promote gender equality, in particular in the world of work.
21. Where existing legislation combating discrimination on grounds of sex does not yet apply to the world of work, governments should consider extending its coverage to do this, and should set up supervisory bodies in this field.
22. Care should be taken to ensure that protective legislation does not adversely affect women's access to employment, training, etc.
23. Where legislation is lacking or deficient in areas such as maternity benefits, consultation or collective agreements can encourage employers to take innovative measures.
24. Employers could also be encouraged to promote gender equality within enterprises through incentives, recognition and awards.
25. In all its activities, ILO should promote attitudinal change, recognize all forms of work and take into account women's particular needs.
26. The ILO should provide the following assistance:

- a) help develop a system for monetary evaluation of unpaid work such as household duties;
- b) carry out analyses of the economic implications of international standards relevant to women workers such as maternity benefits; and
- c) share and widely distribute information on best practices for achieving gender equality at work.

Power-sharing and partnerships

27. Governments are encouraged to integrate gender perspectives in all policies. They should:
- a) ensure equal access to social security benefits for both men and women;
 - b) make children more aware of the need for sharing family responsibilities in primary schools;
 - c) consider the ratification of the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, No. 156, and integrate its provisions in national legislation;
 - d) consider providing financial support to “family-friendly” employers, providing child care and other support services for sharing family responsibilities; and
 - e) compile existing laws regarding the protection of women workers and equal rights in one reference document.
28. National authorities are encouraged to adopt positive action for women in decision-making, especially at the policy-making level, as well as in hiring and employment practices, in particular in the public sector.
29. Governments, trade unions and NGOs should undertake awareness-raising training on women workers' rights and existing social services.
30. Data and information on various gender-related issues could be updated by government in collaboration with employers' and workers' organizations.
31. Women should be encouraged to organize themselves to form political platforms and seek seats in legislative bodies. Governments, employers' and workers' organizations, as well as NGOs, should also promote women's participation in decision-making. The representation of women should be ensured and promoted in national tripartite committees.
32. Media and NGOs could be used to strengthen women's networks and to change attitudes, including among women themselves.

-
33. Employers' organizations should:
- a) inform their members that diversity in the workplace makes good business sense;
 - b) undertake sensitization training for managers on gender equality at work; and
 - c) consider promotional measures to recognize family-friendly practices through award systems.
34. Employers' and workers organizations should be encouraged to negotiate measures that provide for flexible work arrangements and child-care support, subject to minimum requirements of relevant legislative provisions.
35. Trade unions should establish women's wings at the union level, and a women's committee at the federation level.
36. To achieve equal representation in decision-making positions in the world of work the following measures should be considered by governments, employers' and workers' organizations:
- a) establishing a compendium of women capable of filling such positions, at national or other levels;
 - b) applying a merit-based appointment and promotion system; and
 - c) giving attention on a regular basis to issues of gender equality at meetings of national tripartite consultative committees.
37. The ILO can help its constituents through:
- a) supporting the translation of its publications on gender and women workers' issues into national languages;
 - b) supporting capacity building to promote gender equality in governments, employers' and workers' organizations at both national and local levels; and
 - c) distributing the Common Understanding of this Regional Consultation to all relevant government ministries in member States, through ministries of labour.

Annex I: Programme

**Asian Regional Consultation on Follow-up
to the Beijing Platform for Action: Gender and Women's Issues in the
World of Work: Progress and Challenges for the Future
(Manila, Philippines, 6-8 October 1999)**

Wednesday 6 October 1999

0800 – 0900 Registration

0900 – 0930 Inaugural session

MC: Ms Chita Cilindro, Director, Bureau of Women and Young Workers, Department of Labor and Employment, Philippines

Addresses

- Welcome message: Hon. Bienvenido E. Laguesma, Secretary, Department of Labor and Employment, Philippines
- Message: Ms. Mitsuko Horiuchi, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, International Labour Office
- Introduction of keynote speaker: Hon. Rosalinda D. Baldoz, Undersecretary, Department of Labor and Employment, Philippines
- Keynote speech: Hon. Karina C. David, Secretary on Housing and Chairperson, Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, Philippines

0945 – 1045 Introductory Session

Chairperson: Ms. Mitsuko Horiuchi

Report of Consultation: Mr Roger Böhning, Director, South-East Asia and the Pacific Multidisciplinary Advisory Team, ILO Manila

Briefing: Ms Janine Rodgers
Bureau of Gender Equality, ILO Geneva

10.45 – 11.15 Meeting of constituents' groups

11.15 – 12.30 Session I: Globalization, employment, women and the girl-child

Chairperson: Hon Rosalinda D. Baldoz, Undersecretary
Department of Labor and Employment, Philippines
Ms. Amelou Benetiz-Reyes
National Commission on the Role of Filipino
Women

Resource Person: Prof. Mari Osawa, Tokyo University

Presentations and discussion

1400 – 1530 Session I (continuation)

Employers' spokesperson
Workers' spokesperson
Discussion

1545 – 1730 Working group meetings
1800 - Reception hosted by the ILO

Thursday 7 October 1999

0900 – 1030 Session II: Women's rights in the world of work

Chairperson: Ms Ying Chen, Deputy Director General, Chinese
Enterprise Directors' Association

Resource person: Ms Usha Ramanathan, Delhi University

Employers' spokesperson
Workers' spokesperson
Discussion

1045 – 1230 Working group meetings

1400 – 1600 Session III: Power-sharing and partnerships

Chairperson: Ms. Hinako Watanabe, Assistant Director Japanese
Trade Union Confederation – RENGO

Resource Persons: Dr Patricia Licuanan, President, Miriam
College, Manila
Ms. Thanpuying Sumalee Chartikavanij,
President, Thai Women Watch, Bangkok

Employers' spokesperson
 Workers' spokesperson
 Discussion

1800- Working group meetings
 Dinner hosted by the Department of Labor and Employment, Philippines

Friday 8 October 1999

0845 Distribution of common understanding and draft report

930 Departure by bus from Westin Philippine Plaza hotel for visit to TESDA's National Vocational Training and Development Centre for Women

1145 – 1230 Lunch offered by TESDA

1330 – 1530 Session IV: Common Understanding

Panel Chairperson: Ms Mitsuko Horiuchi

Members: Chairperson of Session I – Ms Rosalinda D. Baldoz
 Chairperson of Session II – Ms. Hinako Watanabe
 Chairperson of Session III – Ms. Ying Chen

Presentations and comments

1445 Closing session

Chairperson: Mr Rueben Dudley, ILO Deputy Regional Director
 Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok

Closing remarks Government representative: Ms Preet Verma
 Employers' representative: Ms Barbara Burton
 Workers' representative: Ms Hinako Watanabe

Closing remarks: Ms Mitsuko Horiuchi, ILO Regional Director
 Asia Pacific Region

Introduction of guest of honour by Ms Mitsuko Horiuchi

Special address: Ms. Leticia R. Shahani

Annex II: Opening addresses and messages

Speech by

Mr. Bienvenido E. Laguesma
Secretary Department of Labor and Employment, Government
of the Republic of the Philippines

Greetings,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Philippines and I extend my sincere appreciation to the ILO for holding here in Manila the Asian Regional Consultation on the Follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action adopted during the Fourth World Conference on Women

I recall that in that historic conference, the Philippine delegation figured prominently and was given a key leadership role in recognition of the significant strides that the Philippines had already achieved in promoting the rights of women in general and gender equality at the workplace in particular.

We believe that we laid down a strong policy and legal foundation when, in 1989, we passed the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, followed in 1992 by the Women in Development and Nation-building Act. And right after the Beijing conference, we adopted the 30-year blueprint of gender mainstreaming – the Philippine Plan for Gender-responsive Development that served as the main vehicle for implementing our commitments to the Conference. With the subsequent passage of the General Appropriations Act for Gender and Development, at least five per cent of the annual total appropriations of all government agencies are being allotted annually for the implementation of women-specific gender-responsive programmes and projects. Within this framework, there is a free flow of ongoing interventions that the Government does by way of joint projects with the various women NGOs.

Friends, since then, the passion and the zeal of various women's organizations in the country, both governmental and non-governmental, does not die down and has never been in vain.

Jointly, we have built a strong social partnership founded on clear and enabling policy and legal framework necessary to achieve a sure goal of harnessing to the fullest the potentials of women as advocates and active agents of change in nation-building.

Like many countries in the world, more and more Filipino women are entering the labour force and the increasing trend in their number alone can no longer be ignored. Their participation rate in the labour force is on the rise. And if the trend continues, there could

be more women in the labour force than men in the near future. While in the past, they tended to be concentrated in the rural areas, there is now a growing urbanization of women in the workforce in the Philippines. We also note the faster growth of women in employment, less growth in unemployment and lower displacement among them.

On the other hand, we also note the need to overcome various problems like the persistent gender typing, by occupations and industries, by choice of careers and course, by class of workers, their marginalization as entrepreneurs, their growing informalization and flexibilization, their need for more social protection, particularly our migrant women workers, the problem of harmonizing family and work responsibilities, and the continuing discriminatory practices at the workplace. These, to my mind, remain serious concerns, which if not overcome, can pose serious obstacles to the full participation of women in development.

As the agenda of this conference also suggests, the problem of the girl-child worker is likewise a serious concern that needs to be looked into. We have 22.4 million Filipino children, 3.6 million of whom are working children, with 1.2 million as female child workers. While tradition tells us to help parents, we must ensure that children are not deprived of their rights to education and leisure, as part of their full development into mature human beings.

Lastly, lest we forget, we also need to highlight and document “best practices” or best affirmative actions that allow women to inch and break through the so-called glass ceiling. With these interesting topics in mind, I hope I was able to perk all of you up to participate actively in this consultation.

On this note, I welcome all of you!

Thank you and good day.

**Message from Mr. Juan Somavia
Director-General
International Labour Office**

I am very pleased to greet you all, representatives of governments, employers' and workers' organizations of the Asia and Pacific Region, colleagues and friends.

Your presence in this Conference shows the commitment of the whole of the ILO community to move forward on gender equality. This objective is at the heart of the primary goal of the ILO: to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. This objective embraces all sectors of the economy. That means not only wage workers in formal enterprises, but also the self-employed, casual and informal workers, the hidden workers of the care economy or of the domestic scene. Women workers are all too often concentrated in such work, lying beyond the reach of labour legislation and social protection.

The ILO has committed itself to mobilize its budgetary resources, knowledge and influence to assist its Members in achieving this aim. Just a few days after I took office as Director-General of the ILO, I spoke on the occasion of International Women's Day. I then pledged that this concern would be a priority for me both within the Organization, and in its actions and advocacy. I have already started to act, significantly increasing the resources for work on gender issues in our next programme and budget, both within our new Bureau for Gender Equality, and in the technical sectors of the Office. I will continue to defend and promote gender equality as a cross-cutting theme in the work of the ILO.

The ILO preparatory report to this meeting shows that over the past four years women have continued to suffer from discrimination in the labour market, particularly in South-East Asia where the financial crisis inflicted and continues to inflict serious economic pain and suffering on women in terms of unemployment and loss of pay. Since the Beijing Conference there has been some progress at the regional level towards greater economic empowerment: the high economic growth and high shares of labour-intensive production have resulted in a reduction of gender gaps. That is an encouraging step towards the realization of equality. But it is important to stress that more jobs for women should not compromise on quality and that in order to ensure gender equity, economic growth should go hand in hand with better jobs. This will be an important consideration in the UN Special Session on Beijing in June 2000.

I have made that theme, better jobs, the subject of my report to the ILO's Conference this year, under the title of Decent Work. Decent work means work for all, but not any work: it means work which secures a decent income, with adequate social protection and conditions of work, with democratic representation and dialogue, jobs which preserve the dignity of workers and respect their basic rights at work. In all of these respects, women

face disadvantage, often severe. Within the Decent Work agenda, gender inequality is a central concern.

The foundation of decent work lies in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. In adopting this Declaration in 1998, the ILO provided its Members with a practical tool to respect, promote and realize in good faith basic rights at work for all workers regardless of sex. These rights are: the absence of forced labour and child labour, freedom of association, the right to organize and bargain collectively, equal remuneration for work of equal value, and the elimination of discrimination in employment. As part of the promotion of the Declaration I would like to draw particular attention to the worldwide issue of child labour and appeal for your active involvement in the ratification and the implementation of Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, unanimously adopted this year by the International Labour Conference. Women's rights cannot be achieved if their children are not freed from intolerable exploitation. Particular attention needs to be paid to the situation of girls, frequently more vulnerable both in visible situations such as prostitution and trafficking, and in invisible exploitation as domestic workers.

Let us all pledge on this occasion that we will give our full attention to effective action in this essential dimension of social progress. In that you may count on my support.

Speech by

**Ms. Mitsuko Horiuchi
Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific
International Labour Office**

The Honourable Bienvenido Laguesma
The Honourable Karina David
The Hon. Ms Rosalinda Baldoz
Participants, resource persons,
Distinguished guests, and ladies and gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome all of you to this important Asian Regional Consultation on Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women. At the very outset I would like to thank His Excellency the President of the Republic of the Philippines Joseph Ejercito Estrada who has requested the Secretary on Housing and Chairperson of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council the Honourable Ms Karina David to deliver the keynote speech for this conference. My very particular thanks also go to the Secretary of Labor the Honourable Mr Laguesma and the Under-Secretary Ms Baldoz and their staff for cooperating so well with the ILO to host this meeting. I am very honoured that the Government of the Philippines is represented by two Ministers here today and one top official at this opening session.

I am both professionally and personally pleased to organize this meeting. Professionally because I was twice involved in United Nations world women's conferences – in Nairobi and in Beijing, once as a member of the United Nations secretariat, and once as a member of the government delegation. When I began to consider organizing this meeting, Manila seemed an ideal venue, particularly in view of the role played by the Philippines. The Government was the spokesperson for the G-77 to the Beijing Conference, an organization which was one of the key negotiators. A number of eminent women from the Philippines also contributed significantly. Here I particularly mention Dr Patricia Licuanan, the chairperson of the preparatory committee for the Beijing Conference and architect of its success. Even more importantly, the Philippines is a leading country in Asia in promoting gender equality.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Asian region and the ILO both share a long-term commitment to gender equality. In 1893, New Zealand became the first country in the world to recognize women's rights to vote in national elections. It was a milestone for the women's suffrage movement, which nevertheless had many hard years of struggle ahead. The New Zealand decision gave added inspiration to the women's suffrage movement globally, as it pushed on with its campaign well beyond the turn of the century.

In 1919, some quarter of a century after the New Zealand decision, the ILO was created. It was born in the wake of one of the greatest tragedies the world had ever seen – the First World War. Social justice and gender equality were both at the heart of the principles set out in the Treaty of Versailles that established our Organization. Gender equality has remained one of the Organization's core principles, a guiding light for all its work. It is a tradition of which the Organization is justly proud, dating back well before the birth of the United Nations in 1945. As the message from the Director-General has just reminded us, it is just as strong a commitment today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As recently as four years ago, the People's Republic of China hosted the Fourth World Conference on Women. It was an historic occasion, and was the first of these women's conferences to be held in Asia. This Conference played an important part in increasing awareness of gender equality all over the world - and, of course, in Asia.

In our region, women are moving slowly but surely towards greater empowerment. Our goal of an egalitarian society is still a long way off, but we are making progress. In our region, for example, there is increased awareness of sexual harassment as a violation of the human rights of women in the workplace and this has become a new legislative area. Over the past five years or so, a number of governments have provided or updated a legal framework to address sexual harassment. These include Australia, Fiji, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam and Hong Kong, China. A landmark judgement from the Supreme Court of India in 1997 and the resulting guidelines represents another notable development. Other countries are considering formulating codes of practice or legal frameworks, such as Malaysia and Nepal.

Even so, we sometimes find ourselves sliding backward, and particularly when society faces difficulties such as the Asian financial crisis. Such events remind us that achieving gender equality calls for continuous effort. Political will and public support are essential to promote the kinds of measures required to tackle the social and cultural barriers that still confront women in our region. Gender equality must become a fundamental part of our societies – it must be woven so tightly into the fabric of day-to-day life, that outside events cannot tear it away. This is a responsibility that all of us must bear, it cannot be left to women alone.

In today's world, society faces an Herculean but essential task – achieving equal access to decent work for women and men, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Indeed this is the primary goal of the ILO today. This consultation is intended to help achieve this goal by reviewing progress, and taking stock of the constraints that remain. We pause for a moment on the side of a mountain, and look back down at the obstacles we have overcome. Looking at the distance we have climbed, not just in the past four years, but beyond, will help give us the confidence we need to press on toward our goal. Not so very many years ago, women faced a host of legal restrictions that limited their access to training, to jobs, and even to basic education. Now, many of those

restrictions have been lifted, and new horizons are opening up. Women are moving into new areas, where they do more than just succeed – they excel. Women political leaders are becoming increasingly common – among them the former President of the Republic of the Philippines Her Excellency Corazon Aquino, and currently, the President of Sri Lanka Her Excellency Chandrika Kumaratunga, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh H.E. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and the Prime Minister of New Zealand the Right Honourable Jenny Shipley. More and more women are appearing among the ranks of business leaders and within the labour movement. Still, compared to men, their numbers are few, and we have a long road to tread before we achieve equality. The Asian financial crisis showed once again that traditional concepts of gender roles – that is, men at work and women at home – are still deeply rooted in Asian society.

The Asian financial crisis showed the dark side of globalization. Although globalization has brought us jobs in some sectors, it also carries risks, such as the crisis, and women are particularly vulnerable. Women's employment declined, their incomes declined, and they struggled with the increasingly heavy burden of ensuring that their families' basic needs were met. Too often, this is a burden they carry alone. Yet, as the financial crisis eases, millions of women still suffer from discrimination and poverty. Across Asia and the Pacific, millions of women remain under paid, under valued and under employed. Millions more perform work for no pay at all.

A recent United Nations study shows that two thirds of the wage gap between women and men cannot be explained or justified by differences in education, work experience and other variables related to qualifications.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Fundamental difficulties remain. Among them is the lack of accurate data and information, in particular about the informal sector, where the majority of the women of this region work. Without this information, it is difficult to make an accurate assessment of where we stand.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The ILO's work includes addressing the gender dimension of poverty, protecting and promoting women's rights at work, and power-sharing and partnerships. Its work is a unique combination of the normative – in the form of its international labour standards – and the operational – in the form of technical cooperation that helps countries put those standards into practice. It helps provide a legal framework and an enabling environment for both women and men. Gender equality is a central theme of those standards. Perhaps the best-known is the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100). When it was adopted in 1951, it was at the forefront of thinking on gender equality at work. It did not call for equal pay for equal work – but for equal pay for work of equal value. Almost half a century later, it is just as relevant. Its fundamental importance was recognized at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, and it was last year included in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work as one of the Seven

Fundamental Conventions. The ILO's most recent Convention, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), also has special relevance for women and the girl-child. Its provisions deal with, among other things, slavery, trafficking, prostitution, pornography, and use of a child for illicit activities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Beijing Platform for Action agreed upon 12 critical areas of concern, most of which are highly relevant to the work of the ILO. They include: protecting and promoting the human rights of women and the girl child; eradicating women's poverty; eliminating all forms of violence against women; removing the obstacles that prevent women from taking part in public life and decision making; promoting the economic autonomy of women; and promoting equitable sharing of resources.

To me, the Platform for Action is a compass that points us in the direction of a fairer, more equitable society that will bring better lives for all. I hope that this consultation will help us all to form a clearer picture of our common goals, and of the measures and strategies needed to reach them. I hope that over the course of these three days we will forge a broader alliance between governments, employers' and workers; organizations – and I must add, between women's NGOs and civil society – that will help us work together as one.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In conclusion I would remind you that gender equality is really only another way of saying “justice”. Discrimination on the basis of sex is unfair, it is unjust, and it is discrimination for no other reason than we are born women. When discrimination prevents women playing an equal part in society, society loses half of its potential. Society becomes infinitely poorer. To face the challenges of today's world, every society needs to ensure that all its members reach their fullest potential.

I wish you well with your deliberations, and I look forward to all of your valuable contributions to our discussions.

Thank you

Keynote address by

Ms. Karina Constantino-David
Secretary of Housing
Chair, Housing and Urban Development
Coordinating Council

Introduction

It is my honour and privilege on behalf of His Excellency President Joseph Ejercito Estrada, the Philippines Government and my fellow Filipinos to welcome you all to the Philippines. We are indeed especially privileged to serve as your host for this very important event.

May I also articulate our collective appreciation to the International Labour Organization for bringing us together in this Asian Regional Consultation on Follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action. Truly, the ILO has put upon its shoulder the serious responsibility of ensuring that the Beijing Platform for Action is implemented and its objectives of equality, development and peace for women are realized.

Bringing about gender equality for women is not a novel task for the ILO. Certainly this goal has been in its agenda long before the Beijing Conference. Gender inequality, after all, is one issue that cuts across all of the ILO's four strategic objectives: the promotion and realization of the fundamental principles and rights at work; the creation of employment; the enhancement of coverage and the effectiveness of social protection; and the strengthening of tripartism and social dialogue, all of which are adequately captured and interwoven in the notion of decent work.

Revisiting Beijing

It seems quite recent, but four years have already passed since the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing. In my case it does seem just like a year ago when we were shuttling back and forth between the NGO conference and Beijing, linking up with women and men in and out of government, finding common bonds and strengthening linkages for the future. While four years may be a relatively short period to be able to fully reckon with the concrete and significant steps, or at least, abiding faithfully to the roadmap that we laid down in Beijing four years ago. We need to do a thorough accounting of what has been done to enable us to truly gauge our accomplishments vis-a-vis our goals. This occasion also gives us the opportunity to review the approaches and strategies adopted to carry out the Beijing Platform for Action, with a view to strengthening or recasting them, as necessary, especially in light of new global changes taking place in our midst.

Hoping to accelerate the international process of empowering all women that was launched during the International Women's Year in 1975, the Beijing Conference was a defining moment of unity for the women of the world. It was meant to finally achieve for

women a truly equal status with men. It was meant to force rightful recognition of women's contribution to national, regional and world development. It was meant to conclude efforts to liberate women from social, economic and political subjugation.

Of course, these aspirations should have been achieved long before the Beijing Conference, or even before the First World Conference on Women in Mexico held more than 20 years ago. Unfortunately the stubborn fact persists that women's concerns are still often forgotten, ignored or downplayed, even ridiculed.

I agree with the former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali that the Beijing Platform for Action is a call to make a difference. It is a call to change the conditions of women who, for one unjustified reason or another, have been put in generally disadvantageous positions. As has been set out in Beijing, we can realize the aspirations for women, if we:

- eradicate the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women;
- remove the obstacles to women's full participation in public life and decision-making at all levels;
- promote economic autonomy for women, and ensure their access to production resources.

A glance at the situation – looking through Beijing

We know the basis for this call. In all countries in the world, inequality, discrimination and marginalization of women exist. Four years ago, we spoke of women as constituting the overwhelming majority of the world's more than 1 billion poor. Today we note the feminization of poverty and the increasing unemployment of women, exacerbated by ill-designed structural adjustment measures that were necessitated by the globalization of economies.

We observe that women remain in the backseat of decision-making and governance, both in public and private spheres. And this, to a large extent, is due to society's lack of recognition of, and belief in, women's competencies and potentials. We still feel the gripping reality that women are being compelled to accept jobs without the benefit of regularity of employment and social protection. Worse, a great number of them are under-remunerated and exposed to dangerous working conditions.

Indeed, many women workers still do not enjoy the same opportunities as men. Generally, their career options are limited. More men occupy higher and more responsible positions, with just a few women breaking the glass ceiling. Thus, women are paid lower wages, are less secure in their jobs, and are often discriminated against in employment and promotions.

The most important message of the Beijing experience, therefore, is that women can and should stand equal with men – that there is no superior sex. For both sexes have their respective competencies – at times overlapping and at times complementing.

A glance at the situation after Beijing

Gender inequality is at the root cause of many a woman's woe. It may have been borne not long after men and women started sharing the same planet. Yet culture and tradition have kept the problem in the closet. It was only in the recent decades that we have brought this issue out in the open. The Beijing Platform for Action is a moving testimony to this assertion. But more than this fact, Beijing is an earnest resolve to do away with the manifestations and conditions of inequality.

It is now time to ask: Are women today better off than they were four years ago?

To this, we may not have ready answers. But at least we know that today more and more women are asking the question and are asserting their rightful places at all levels of the economic, political and social spheres. As rightfully noted by the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), an international advocacy network for the empowerment of women, "women are now daring to cross political, religious, cultural and ethnic borders in solidarity against violence, oppression and injustice. They are moving into uncharted territory of gender-balanced governance. And while they are bearing the burden of economic globalization, they now refuse to be broken by its cruel deprivations."

Sparked by the Beijing process, more and more countries are now experiencing the entry of their women in politics. Countries in Europe, Asia and Africa are increasingly electing or appointing women in their parliament or official cabinet, indicating that women are really breaking the barriers to a gender-balanced and gender-responsive political representation.

Laws and policies to curb domestic violence against women, sexual trafficking and sexual harassment have also been formulated in many countries like Mexico, Germany the United Kingdom, Thailand and Japan to name a few. While we do not have solid information on how these measures have uplifted the conditions of women, there is reason to believe that these measures are promoting prevention of violation of women's rights.

To ensure the direct involvement of women in the development process, several countries have gone ahead by instituting policy interventions to promote women's equal opportunity in employment. The principle of non-discrimination in employment or occupation has been translated into specific employment-related laws in many industrialized and developing countries in Europe and Asia.

But despite some progress made, we have yet to make a strong, positive impact on the lives of women. This means we are still way behind our purported goals. The general indication is that women remain marginalized and discriminated against in almost every part of the world.

Four years after the Beijing Conference, more women than men are still languishing in poverty. No less than the International Labour Organization has confirmed the veracity of this observation. In as much as women are over-represented in agriculture where poverty is most pronounced, it goes without saying that women are disproportionately affected by poverty. This is particularly true in the developing countries where dominance of agricultural activities exists. It is estimated that 65 to 90 per cent of the women in the developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region are engaged in agricultural work.

The fast pace of change in the global economy, rather than yielding positive results, may be creating instead an increasingly worsening employment situation for many women. Though I would like to believe that this is only temporary, it is nevertheless hurting the women sector.

Because of the changing world economic relations, women are increasingly being relegated outside the mainstream of development activities. Globalization is demanding high efficiency, which in turn is concerning those in the formal sector. As a result, more and more women are being eased out of the formal sector and are trooping to informal work, despite their already being over-represented in that sector. In Asia, only 16 per cent of women participate in the formal labour market, the rest are in the informal sector. And as we know too well, the informal sector is generally characterized by low-income, low-productivity jobs, offering no social protection and poor working conditions.

Furthermore, women continue to manifest more vulnerability to flexible work arrangements. For instance, available statistics in some countries in the Asia Pacific region such as Australia, Japan and Korea show an upward trend in the number of women participating in part-time employment. In these countries, women account for more than two-thirds of the total employed in this type of work arrangement.

Moreover, women, as always, dominate the world of unpaid work which consists largely of household and voluntary work. While there is a dearth of information on the extent of unremunerated work, we cannot deny that a very high percentage of this work is performed by women.

In addition, the trend in overseas employment remains biased against women. It is saddening to note that the international labour market is relegating women migrants, particularly Asians, to vulnerable occupations.

As if their situation were not bad enough, the Asian crisis has made the overall plight of Asian women more alarming. According to the ILO, the impact of the Asian crisis on women's situation clearly indicates a worsening picture in some countries and more mixed results in others. In the Republic of Korea, women's employment has drastically dropped by 20 per cent while that for men has dropped by only 6 per cent. Here in the Philippines, women's unemployment rate has gone up to 9.8 per cent, which is slightly higher than the 9.5 per cent figure for men.

In Thailand, although women's employment levels suffered higher decline compared to that of the men – 3.8 per cent as against 2.5 per cent – their incomes have been noted to have dropped by less than those for men. In Indonesia the reverse trend has been noted. The women's unemployment rate there declined by 14 per cent compared to the men's 27 per cent. However, the Indonesian women's incomes went down more than men's, with 6 per cent and 4 per cent differentials, respectively.

Likewise, the Asian crisis is believed to have also increased the number of children out of school and into work. In some countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea, there are indications that the impact has been worse for girls than boys. Studies have shown that in these countries, the incidence of school dropouts is higher among girls compared to that of the boys. This is a disturbing picture. In the short term we will see these girls being dragged to work under highly exploitative conditions and in the longer term an army of women whose options are severely limited.

On top of these, the women today are still facing the same problems that have saddled the women in the past – the problems of sexual harassment in the workplace, violence at home and the burden of multiple roles. Clearly all these are but manifestations of gender inequality.

Closing in on the Beijing goals

But what is positive and partially reassuring about the situation is that there are concrete actions being put in place to improve their conditions. In fact I would like to think that we have done our fair share. More than 70 per cent of the world's 187 governments that adopted the Beijing Platform for Action have already formulated their own national action plans to address the needs and priorities of their women.

At least 77 countries have established national offices to follow up on commitments they made in Beijing, 36 of them are empowered to initiate legislative actions. At least 64 countries have enacted laws and adopted policy measures to address women's rights and almost one third have increased their budgets for women's programmes since the Beijing Conference.

The distinguishing mark of these accomplishments is that they were realized with the efforts of various sectors, particularly women's movements. Had it not for their spirited involvement we could not have covered so much ground. And yet plans and long documents are only as good as the concerns they instill, the determination with which they are pursued, and the results they actually achieve.

In the Philippines, some favourable results are being realized out of the efforts we have made. For instance, our women today are increasingly showing a stronger hold in traditionally male-dominated bastions. A case in point is the faster rise in the number of women executives compared to that of men executives. On the average, women executives are increasing by 38 per cent per year as against 19 per cent for men. A slight increase in the Filipino women's participation in governance in elected and appointed

positions has also been realized. In last year's national election we have elected a woman vice-president and 25 congresswomen compared to an earlier record of 24. Likewise, in the present Congress, we have four women senators as compared to 3 in the previous Congress.

Filipino women have even surpassed Filipino men in terms of educational achievements. Based on the 1995 Census of Population, women account for the majority, 55.9 per cent of the total academic degree holders. In the high school educational level, the number of women is slightly higher than that of men. In this level, women and men account for 28.0 per cent and 27.6 per cent of their respective total population. And yet we must also note that despite their accomplishments, women are still last to be hired and first to be fired.

On this note I wish that you will realize the objectives you have set upon yourselves in this consultation. May you have a pleasant stay in the Philippines.

Maraming salamat at mabuhay kayong lahat!

Annex III: Closing remarks

Comments by

Ms. Mitsuko Horiuchi
Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific
International Labour Office

Ms Baldoz,
Ms Leticia Shahani
Distinguished guests,
Participants,
Ladies and gentlemen

I would like to thank all those who are present here, both women and men, for their active participation in this very important consultation in Asia and the Pacific. The success of our meeting is due to your dedication and the partnerships you have forged – and I thank all of you for your efforts.

The meeting's success is also due to the efforts of the Philippines. My special thanks go to His Excellency President Joseph Ejercito Estrada and the Philippines Government for all that has been done to make this meeting so memorable. It was at the request of His Excellency President Estrada that the Secretary of Housing Ms. Karina David delivered her inspiring keynote address on Monday. Her blend of thoughtful scholarship and personal experience helped set the tone of the following three days and focused our attention squarely on the challenges we still face. My special thanks must also go to Secretary Laguesma and Ms. Baldoz. Both have given more than generously of their time, and without the support of the Department of Labor and Employment, the meeting could not have achieved anywhere near the success that it has. Our resource persons have also contributed enormously to our discussions, and I extend my thanks to you all. In addition, the acting director of the TESDA women's centre Ms. Imelda Taganas and her staff also provided all of us with a valuable insight into the workings of the centre, which is one of the most notable developments to occur in Asia in the years since the Beijing Conference. Please also allow me to pause for a moment to thank the staff who have worked so hard behind the scenes – some even working through the night to produce the copies of the draft report distributed this morning

This meeting has really reminded me of the discussions at Nairobi and Beijing. And I am especially reminded this afternoon as my chief at the time of the Nairobi Conference is sitting here in this room. Mrs. Leticia Shahani – whose extraordinary list of career credits includes becoming only the second-ever woman Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations – was the Secretary-General of the Nairobi Conference. I am both pleased

and honoured that Mrs. Shahani has agreed to deliver a special address to us today at this closing session. To me, it seems that not only Beijing, but also Nairobi, were only yesterday. I still vividly remember the feeling of elation among the delegates when the then PLO representative said, "I accept" (to the proposed wording), at midnight on the final day. That was, for me, the one moment that defines success. My friend, Patricia Licuanan, who chaired the preparatory committee for the Beijing Conference, also reminded me yesterday of the discussions that we held to agree upon subtitles for the Nairobi Conference. The success of the Beijing Conference was built upon the foundations laid at the Nairobi Conference.

Now, four years after Beijing and in the wake of our discussions this week, we have a clearer picture of the Conference's impact. The Platform for Action was not created from scratch. It was formulated on the basis of the long-term commitment and continuous work of many people – although unfortunately, most of this work was done by women alone. I do not for a moment mean to denigrate this work – it was vital, valuable and its results still guide us. However, I think it is clearly recognized that the transformations needed to achieve gender equality require the commitment of society as a whole. This cannot be the responsibility of women alone – it has to be the responsibility of each and every citizen.

We women all know the particular problems that we face today. However, as Ms. David reminded us, the stubborn fact persists that women's concerns are still too often forgotten, ignored, downplayed or even ridiculed. Because of this, we need unity. Because of this, we need a concerted effort to achieve real and lasting change. The common understandings which you have produced provide a lasting record of your joint undertakings and a guide that will help us set a course for a more equal society. I must once again thank you for your contribution to gender equality. Your common understandings are very comprehensive, and cover a wide range of actions that governments, employers' and workers' organizations and society as a whole should take. These understandings are also a good combination of normative measures and operational activities – a mixture of legislative and grass roots recommendations. Perhaps our next step is to consider how to prioritize these actions that we have identified.

The need to ensure women's participation is one of the clear messages delivered to the ILO. Perhaps I can say that the ILO's function is to serve as a house of service, knowledge and advocacy – and naturally we will continue to make analyses and to provide assistance, especially through capacity building for our constituents.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In conclusion it is important for us to gather here to confirm that, although progress has been made, it is far from satisfactory. Globalization is sometimes brutal to women, and many women are still marginalized, working in the informal sector beyond the reach of legal protection. The passion which we all share for an egalitarian society must go hand in hand with practical action.

As Mrs. Shahani stressed when she headed the United Nations Secretariat as Secretary-General to the Nairobi Conference, political will is still crucial. Let us continue to work together to ensure that the next generation lives and works in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

Once again, may I extend my thanks to you all, and my best wishes for a safe journey.

Thank you

Speech by

**Ms Leticia Ramos Shahani
former Senator, Philippines Government**

It is an honor and privilege to be the concluding speaker at this ILO Regional Consultation on Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing.

I should like to thank the Asia Pacific ILO Regional Office, in particular its Regional Director, Mitsuko Horiuchi, for the ILO's invitation for me to participate at this important meeting. It is with a sense of pride that I share again the same platform with Ms Horiuchi, having worked with her fourteen years ago during the exciting period of preparations for the 1985 Third United Nations Conference on Women in Nairobi. This event today also gives me the welcome opportunity to thank the ILO Office in Manila under the present leadership of Mr Richard Szal, for the devoted assistance it has consistently given to the people and Government of the Philippines. I hope all the participants from abroad who have come to this consultation have had a pleasant stay in our country.

With the preparatory meetings for Beijing +5 taking place in many parts of the world, those of us who were in Beijing in 1995 realize how fast time has flow. We are reminded that we must redouble our efforts to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and monitor its enforcement. Yet despite our most intense efforts, we are sometimes overwhelmed by the vast amount of work that remains to be done in the field of women's rights and its related problems of poverty, unemployment and discrimination.

But we should not lose hope nor despair; human nature being what it is, changes in attitudes and structural reforms, unfortunately, move slowly but a sense of historical perspective should help at this point. Since the founding of the United Nations in 1945 and the subsequent adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in which document the equality between women and men was proclaimed, definite progress has been achieved in the realization and exercise of women's rights the world over. Let us also remember that the ILO, as the oldest of the United Nations specialized agencies, having been established during the period of the League of Nations, has pioneered in advocating and implementing the rights of working women and has led the way in setting minimum international standards for conditions of work. I remember the period I spent as a Philippine representative to the UN Commission on the Status of Women during the years 1968-1975. At that time when women's issues were not given much importance at the United Nations, the ILO had already its Conventions awaiting the ratification of governments, strengthened by its tripartite system to monitor and oversee the implementation of these Conventions. Significantly the ILO has moved from its early position on the protection of women workers to the equalization of opportunities between men and women in the workplace.

But on the eve of the third millennium, with the completion of the UN Decade for Women, 1975-1985, and advocacy of its theme: “Equality, Development and Peace,” and with the culmination of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, we should not be satisfied merely with citing and repeating the recommendations of these and related conferences. Mere verbal activity, debate, and analysis cannot provide the solutions we need. Even the best legislation is inadequate. Likewise, a purely sectoral approach towards women will not suffice. Why?

Because at the start of the 21st century we have entered the era of integrated development, social solidarity; the need for a value-based sustainable national and global development – if concrete results are to be achieved. The scientific and technical approach, so basic to human progress, by itself, has proven to be sterile and mechanical; it is a dead end unless balanced by the exercise of moral and spiritual values, by a political will that is committed to the good of the majority and a sense of social solidarity on the part of the population and civil society. The challenge in the 21st century is to give the highest priority to the security as well as to the empowerment of people. In the words of the eminent Director-General of the ILO and a good friend of mine, Juan Somavia, we are no longer threatened by the nuclear bomb, but by the “social bomb” so that we need to “move from the more limited notion of a welfare state to a larger vision of a state of equity.” I thought there was no better way of clarifying the wide-ranging implications of the Beijing Conference than by relating it to the conclusions of the World Summit on Social Development which was also held in 1995 and chaired by one of its driving forces, Ambassador Juan Somavia. Let us recall some parts of that seminal vision contained in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development: “We are deeply convinced that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, which is the framework of our efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people ... we also recognize that broad-based and sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development is necessary to sustain social development and social justice.” The Copenhagen Declaration goes on to say: “We recognize, therefore, that social development is central to the needs and aspirations of people throughout the world and to the responsibilities of governments and all sectors of civil society. We affirm that, in both economic and social terms, the most productive policy and investments are those that empower people to maximize their capacities, resources and opportunities. We acknowledge that social and economic development cannot be secured in a sustainable way without the full participation of women and that equality and equity between women and men is a priority for the international community and as such must be at the centre of economic and social development.”

In relating the Declaration of Copenhagen on Social Development to the Beijing Platform for Action, it is not my intention to subsume and subordinate the rights and responsibilities of women to social development; neither am I relegating women to social welfare. On the contrary, my objective is to demonstrate that women are at the dead centre of the development process since they constitute half of the world’s population and because their potential has not yet been fully appreciated nor utilized. Women have a key and unique responsibility in the 21st century. With the central role of women in the family

and the community, their proven talent and efficiency in the workplace, their tested integrity and honesty in whatever activity they undertake, their compassion for all living things and their capacity to heal and offer motherly love, they could well be the principal instruments in bringing the world to the threshold of a new human order. Women should not accept to be mere subjects or objects of the ongoing globalization process, they must be pro-active in shaping it, give it a woman's ethical and spiritual orientation and thus humanize the globalization process.

But before women can transform the world they must first transform themselves. The self-transformation I am speaking of has a spiritual and moral basis, otherwise it cannot be sustained over the long term, nor will it acquire its own power. We, women, must exemplify through our lifestyle and daily behavior the very values on which we should build this new world. Let us demonstrate the values of sharing with and caring for each other, of being accountable and self-reliant, of being tolerant of cultural diversity. Women of Asia and the Pacific, arise and unite for this great task!

Looking at the violence and widespread poverty and misery in the world, it is evident that the traditional approaches to diplomacy and military alliances have not brought about world and regional peace and security. Neither has the delivery system of government bureaucracies facilitated full employment and the economic independence of women. What we are beginning to talk about in the 21st century is not only about the security of states and governments but more important, about people's security and empowerment, without which there can be no long term peace and progress. We must continue to demand from those who claim to be our leaders of society: "Empowerment for whom?" "Security for whom?" The only valid answer is "empowerment and security for the people." People however, must go deeper to ask themselves: "What is life for?" "Who am I?" The reply seems to be that the human being has a moral and divine nature. Past experience in government and international relations have shown that the moral and spiritual have a great effect on progress and human development. However, it is not my task to explore at length the relationship between the physical and the metaphysical. My intention here is to point out the close relationship between the material and the spiritual.

Although governments have the legal and financial power, we cannot rely only on them, whether at the national, regional or local levels. Private industry is even proving that it can be more powerful than governments. The 21st century requires the solidarity of civil society as well as the exercise of good governance which means the cooperation of government, private industry, the NGOs, the churches, academe, people's organizations of farmers, workers, etc; indeed all sectors of society with a common cause to survive and prosper together. In these emerging trends, women can and should play a major role. They must help remove the scourges of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, not only as these relate to women but also to oppressed groups or individuals in their communities. Remember the sign at the entrance to the Beijing NGO Forum at Huariou: "Look at the world through women's eyes". That world as experienced by women at present is impoverished and victimized; but that world as envisaged anew by women can be transformed to become humane, prosperous and just, if they take part in shaping that

world. In other words, we have to eliminate not only material poverty but spiritual poverty as well, It is the spiritual which will transform our vision.

The Beijing Platform for Action is strong on the subject of women and the economy. It recognizes that employment policies should integrate the gender perspective more fully; indeed the economic independence of women is the beginning of true equality between men and women. Without her own income, a woman remains a victim and a subject of men and of society in general.

The ILO Report considered by this consultation entitled, *Towards gender equality in the world of work in Asia and the Pacific*, deals with both old and new problems relating to the employment of women: (a) the negative and positive effects of the globalization process on the employment of women; (b) the booming sex industry, with the men, of course, behind this demand-driven sector; (c) the unprotected status of migrant women; (d) the unrecognized status of domestic and home workers; (e) the continuing neglect of employment of women in the agricultural sector; (f) the non-implementation by governments of ILO Conventions which they have ratified and the weak enforcement of labour laws at the national level.

I believe the most credible way for me to demonstrate at this stage what we, who have long laboured in the vineyard of the women's area have done, is to share with you some of my insights directly harvested from my experience as a former Senator and a law-maker of the Philippines on the following issues:

- Concerning equal pay for work of equal value, I authored in 1986 the Republic Act No. 6725 which amended the Labor Code of the Philippines by identifying certain acts of gender discrimination as punishable such as unequal pay for work of equal value and unequal promotion, training and scholarship opportunities. Although considered a historic and landmark piece of legislation, this law remains unimplemented due to the fear of women of losing their jobs should they bring their employers to court. Thus, the easier recourse is to accept out-of-court settlements, if ever these are satisfactorily concluded for the women workers. Thus the spirit of the law is killed.
- Concerning remuneration for the work performed by housewives, I successfully inserted an amendment to the Revised Philippine Social Security Act, Republic Act 8282, to the effect that housewives can be part of the national security system on a voluntary basis. Although it fell short of its being compulsory, at least the amendment is a major step towards that distant goal of remunerating housework. Again, in this case, implementation and enforcement are the obstacles.
- As former Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Food and Agriculture, I have continuously pressed for an improvement of the employment of women in agriculture including fisherwomen, in the formal and informal sectors. Let us not forget that the majority of migrant women came from the agricultural sector in order to escape rural poverty and want. Ministries of Agriculture tend to overlook

this vast sector of women underemployed in the rural economy. The departments of labor, agriculture, trade and industry and national machineries of women, all together, should assist rural women especially to become self-reliant entrepreneurs.

- As regards violence against women, I authored the Republic Act 8353 known as the Anti-Rape Law of 1997 which makes rape a public rather than a private crime and making rape punishable by life imprisonment or death, depending on certain circumstances. However, this law falls gravely short of effective enforcement.
- Realizing that trafficking in women and committing violence against them is not only a legal issue but also a moral and spiritual challenge, both for men and women, I have advocated and continue to advocate an educational program on values called "A Moral Recovery Program:" I launched this program in the belief that spiritual and moral values are so important in realizing the dignity of men and women and in developing a family and nation. Although the sex industry has to be recognized as an economic sector in official statistics, I would not encourage it as a desirable means of livelihood for women or to be part of the North-South dialogue!
- Women's programs receive inadequate budgetary allocations, both in government and in non-governmental organizations. Yet budget is the ultimate policy tool and the acid test of the political will. Recognizing this, I had inserted in the 1997 General Appropriations Act of the Philippine Government a provision requiring that five per cent of the budget of every government department or agency must be allocated to programs for women, Five per cent seems small at first glance but in this year's government budget this represents some P28billion or about US\$500 million. So much can be done with this sum if properly utilized. Again, this provision is not yet fully implemented due to lack of knowledge on how to devise effective programs for women in many agencies of government.

It is obvious that the implementation and enforcement of laws is a grave shortcoming in many countries of our region. It is my fervent hope that the ILO, through its regional and national offices, could assist, at the request of the Asian and Pacific governments, in the implementation of important legislation on women and related areas. There seems to be no better way to show commitment to the spirit and letter of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Dear sisters and brothers, the historic struggle for women's rights has been tortuous and painful. Much has been achieved but much remains to be done in implementing the gains of the past. But more than preoccupation with the past and the present, we see a new world emerging in the near future. If we wish to improve the human condition, highest priority should be given to people's security. People's security can be achieved by empowering women all over the world. We are not just talking about mainstreaming women in the existing order or making them adjust to the status quo as created by men.

We mean remaking the world, through affirmative action, to become more just and equitable for all.

Let us therefore take initiatives in the Asia and Pacific region to create a new world and invite the men to become our equal partners in the moral and spiritual uplifting of our individual selves and in the structural transformation of our societies. As each of us lights a candle and keeps that flame burning, we can, step by step, set the world aglow with justice and equity, as well as the protection of the environment and respect for human rights of both men and women.

Annex IV: List of participants

Australia

Ms. Joan Napoli
Senior Advocate
Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Melbourne, Victoria

Ms. Helen Creed
Vice-President, Australian Council of Trade Unions
Subiaco, Western Australia

Bangladesh

Ms. Forquan Begum
Senior Assistant Secretary
Ministry of Labour and Employment
Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh

Mrs. Rokeya Quader
Member
Bangladesh Employers Federation
Dhaka

Mr. A.M. Nazimuddin
Asst. General Secretary
Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal
Dhaka

Cambodia

Ms. Prak Chantha
Secretary of State
Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour Vocational
Training and Youth Rehabilitation
Phnom Penh

Ms. Keo Keang
Interpreter for Ms. Prak Chantha
Oxfam Hong Kong, Women's Agenda
Phnom Penh

China

Ms. Tong Meng
Assistant Researcher
Ministry of Labour and Social Security
Beijing

Ms Ying Chen
Deputy Director-General
China Enterprise Confederation
Beijing

Ms. Xuemei Wang
Section Chief International Liaison Department
All-China Federation of Trade Unions
Beijing

Fiji

Mr. Nemani V. Buresova
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Women, Culture & Social Welfare
Suva

Ms. Judy Yee-Joy
Vice-Chairman, Human Resources Council
Fiji Employers' Federation
Suva

Hong Kong, China

Ms. Wai-Yue Cheng
Senior Labour Officer
Labour Department
Hong Kong, China

Ms. Shuk-fan Koon
Manager
Employers' Federation of Hong Kong
Hong Kong

Ms. Lai Ha Cheung
Member of the HKCTU Women Committee
Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions
Kowloon, Hong Kong, China

Ms. Ban Lee
Interpreter for Ms. Lai Ha Cheung
Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions
Kowloon, Hong Kong, China

India

Ms. Preet Verma
Director, Child & Women Labour
Ministry of Labour, Government of India
New Delhi

Ms. Shipra Chatterjee
Secretary of FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO)
Tansen Marg
New Delhi

Ms. Champa Verma
Vice Chairperson, Women Committee
New Delhi

Mrs. Mercy Ravi
General Secretary, Women Committee
Indian National Trade Union Congress
Trivandrum (Kerala)

Indonesia

Mr. Sutanto
Head, Regional Office Nusa Tenggara Barat
Department of Manpower
Mataram, Indonesia

Ms. Berlia Saridanti
Jalan Cikini

Ms. Ruminati
Secretary Women Committee
All Indonesia Workers' Union (FSPSI)
Jakarta

Islamic Republic of Iran

Mr. Abbas Taghipour
Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs
for Parliament and Social Affairs
Tehran

Mr. Hossein Haghbayan
Member of Board
Iran Confederation of Employers' Association
Tehran

Ms. Soheila Jelodarzadeh
Head of Women Centre in Labour's House
Workers' House
Tehran

Japan

Ms. Atsuko Muraki
Director, Women's Policy Planning Division
Women's Bureau, Ministry of Labour
Tokyo

Ms. Minako Nishijima
Deputy Director
Labour Legislation Division
Japan Federation of Employers' Associations
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo

Ms. Hinako Watanabe
Assistant Director, International Division
Japanese Trade Union Confederation, (RENGO)
Tokyo

Republic of Korea

Ms. Min Sun Song
Ministry of Labour
Women's policy division
Government Kwachon Complex

Mr. Ho-sung Lee
Manager, Employment & Welfare Team
Korea Employers Federation
Seoul

Ms. Hye-Ja Kwon
Fellow of Research Office
Federation of Korean Trade Unions, FKTU
Seoul

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Ms. Baykham Khattiya
Labour Specialist in Employment Promotion
and Skill Development Division
Ministry Labour and Social Welfare
Vientiane

Mr. Khamphanh Senthongkham
Administrative Director
Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Vientiane

Malaysia

Ms. Omana d/o P.V.C. Pillai
Senior Assistant Director of Labour, Department of Labour
Ministry of Human Resources Malaysia
Kuala Lumpur

Ms. Bay See Choo
Consultant - Industrial Relations
Malaysian Employers Federation

Ms. Promodini Viswanathan (nee Menon)
Vice Chairperson
Malaysian Trades Union Congress

Mongolia

Ms. Sanjmyatav Regzen
Officer for Gender Policy, Strategic Management
and Planning Department
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Mongolia
Ulaanbaatar

Mr. Jantsan Dagdan
Vice President
Mongolian Employers' Association
Ulaanbaatar

Mr. Perenlei Gantumur
Steering Committee Member of CMTU
Confederation of Mongolian Trade Unions
Ulaanbaatar

Nepal

Ms. Renuka Manandhar
Under Secretary
Ministry of Labour
Kathmandu

Mrs. Meena Shrestha
Joint Secretary
Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI)
Kathmandu

Mrs. Madhu Sharma
Executive Member
Nepal Trade Union Congress
Kupondol, Lalitpur

New Zealand

Ms. Anne Riley
Senior Policy Analyst (Labour Market)
Department of Labour
Wellington

Ms. Barbara Burton
Legal Adviser
New Zealand Employers Federation Inc.
Wellington

Ms. Lynn Middleton
Policy Coordinator & Women's Officer
New Zealand Council of Trade Unions
Pakistan

Mr. Zia-ul Hasan
Research Officer
Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis
Islamabad

Mr. Ubaidur Rehman Usmani
Member, Managing Committee
Employers' Federation of Pakistan

Ms. Rahila Zareen
Executive Member
All Pakistan Federation of Trade Unions
Lahore

Mrs. Zulekha Zar
Vice President
Pakistan National Federation of Trade Unions
Karachi

Papua New Guinea

Ms. Maria Lovaga
Acting Assistant Secretary, Policy and Planning Division
Department of Labour, Employment, Culture and Tourism

Mr. Raga Maro
Director, Industrial Relations
Employers' Federation of Papua New Guinea
Port Moresby

Ms. Alwina Joku
General Secretary
Sanduan Timber Workers Union
Papua New Guinea Trade Union Congress
Boroko

Philippines

Ms. Rosalinda D. Baldoz
Undersecretary
Labor Relations and General Administration
Department of Labor and Employment
Intramuros, Manila

Dr. Amelou Benitez-Reyes
Chairperson
National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women
Office of the President
San Miguel, Manila
(Alternate Government Participant)

Ms. Maria Del Cannen Zaldarriaga
Chairperson of ECOP Committees
Employers' Confederation of the Philippines
Makati City

Ms. Consuelo M. Angco
Chairperson, Development Action for Women in TUCP (DAWN-TUCP)
Trade Union Congress of the Philippines
Quezon City

Singapore

Ms. Li San Tan
Assistant Divisional Director
Ministry of Manpower
Singapore

Ms. Christine Lee Ting Yeh
Secretary, NTUC Women's Committee
National Trades Union Congress
Trade Union House, Shenton Way
Singapore 068810

Solomon Islands

Mr. Stanley Dick Pirione
Senior Industrial Relations Officer
Ministry of Commerce, Employment and Tourism
Honiara

Mrs. Hilda Tango
General Secretary
Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce & Employers

Mr. Kendrick Sang
Executive Member
Solomon Islands Council of Trade Unions
Honiara

Sri Lanka

Mr. P.I. Perera
Labour Officer, Department of Labour
Ministry of Labour
Labour Secretariat
Colombo

Ms. Ransirini Panditharatne
Industrial Relations Advisor
Employers' Federation of Ceylon

Mrs. Betsy Selvaratnam
Adviser Women's Committee & Gender issues
Ceylon Workers Congress
Colombo

Thailand

Ms. Benjamas Prachankhadee
Director of Women and Child Labour Division
Department of Labour Protection and Welfare
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
Bangkok

Ms. Saowanit Ratanawichit
Committee of Women & Child Labour
Employers' Confederation of Thailand
Bangkok

Ms. Anong Chansanangphop
Vice President FBFT, affiliated to LCT
Labour Congress of Thailand
Samutprakarn

Viet Nam

Ms. Hoa Le Viet
Researcher, Division of General Affairs & Planning
Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
Institute of Labour and Social Policies Studies
Hanoi

Mrs. Thuy Huong Vu
Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Vietnam
Hanoi

Ms. Chien Pham Thi
Expert of Organizing Department
Hanoi

International Trade Union Organizations

Ms. Kyungjin Song
Senior Officer - Women Department
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
Asian and Pacific Regional Organisation (ICFTU-APRO)
Singapore

Ms. Annie Coeroli
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
Asian and Pacific Regional Organisation (ICFTU-APRO)
Trade Union House 3rd Floor Shenton Way, Singapore 068810
Tahiti

Ms. Janet C. Dellaban
Chairperson
Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unionists, Women's Commission (BAWC)
Manila

Ms. Jovita J. Vence
Consultant
Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unionists / Women's Commission (BAWC)
Manila, Philippines

UN Agencies

Dr. Revathi Balakrishnan
Regional Rural Sociologist and WID Officer
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
Bangkok

Ms. Jana Grace Ricasio
Gender Focal Point and Assistant Resident Representative
United Nations Development Programme
Makati City, Philippines

Mrs. Lucille C. Gregorio
Specialist in Science and Technology Education/Girls & Women's Education
United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
Bangkok 10110

Mr. Jose Abraham Ongkiko
Programme Officer
Local Policy & Institutional Development -
Coordinator for Luzon
UNICEF,
Philippines.

Ms. Lorraine Corner
Regional Programme Adviser
United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)
Bangkok 10200, Thailand

International Institutions

Dr. Manoshi Mitra
Social Development Specialist
Social Development Division
Asian Development Bank
Metro Manila , Philippines

Ms. Sonomi Tanaka
Gender Specialist
Asian Development Bank
Metro Manila , Philippines

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)

Ms. Angela Kuga Thas
Programme Manager
Asian-Pacific Resource and Research
Centre for Women (ARROW)
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Ms. Luz Maria Martinez
Manager of Research and Advocacy for
ISIS International Manila

Ms. Zenaida Toquero
Head and Consultant, Gender and Development Unit
SEAMEO Regional Center for Graduate Study and
Research in Agriculture (SEARCA)
Philippines

Government Observers

Ms. Mary B. Johnson
U.S. State Department
Washington, United State of America

Mr. Richard W. Nelson
Labor Attache
Embassy of the United States of America
Manila, Philippines

Mrs. Srisuda Ubol
Senior Labour Officer
Department of Labour Protection and Welfare
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
Bangkok, Thailand

Government Observers (Philippines)

Department of Foreign Affairs
Philippines

Ms. Eva G. Betita
Director for Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Affairs
Office of the United Nations and other International Organizations

Ms. Ruth Limjuco
Mr. Renato Duenas

Ms. Febes A. Almeda
Committee on Women
House of Representatives (Congress of the Philippines)
Philippines
Philippines

Ms. Aileen Ian Gay S. Natal
Planning Officer
Monitoring and Evaluation Division
National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women
Manila, Philippines

Nueva Viola A. Gacutan
Senate Commission on Youth, Women and Family Relations
Office of Sen. Teresa Aquino Oreta

Ms. Norma J. Lozano
National Council of Women of the Philippines
Philippines

Ms. Daphne Roxas
Philippine NGO Beijing Score Board
Department of Labor and Employment
Manila, Philippines

Reydeluz Conferido, Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs
Merle Cabaero, Institute for Labor Studies
Hector Morada, Bureau of Local Employment Statistics
Teresita Mananzala, Bureau of Local Employment
Chita Cilindro, Director, Bureau of Working Conditions
Irma Valiente, Bureau of Women and Young Workers
Cielo Cabalatungan, Bureau of Rural Workers
Virginia Son, Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration
Dulce Estrella-Gust, Executive Director, Occupational Safety and Health Center
Agripina Zafra, Technical Education Skills and Development Authority
Ma. Jesusa Cabrerros, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
Alda D. Alfaro, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
Erlinda Capones
Allan Millar, Senior Economic Development Specialist

Resource Persons

Dr. Patricia B. Licuanan
President
Miriam College
Philippines

Thanpuying Sumalee Chartikavanij
President, Thai Women Watch (TW2)
Bangkok, Thailand

Prof. Mari Osawa
Associate Professor
Institute of Social Science
Tokyo University

Ms. Usha Ramanathan
Law Researcher
Delhi University
New Delhi, India

Persons attending the meeting

Ms. Marwati Suwindi
The Assistant Minister II
Ministry of Role of Women
Co-Chair of the National Steering Committee of the
ILO/Japan Project on Employment Opportunities
Indonesia

Dr. Nirmal Pandey
Honorable Member of the National Planning Commission
Chair of the National Steering Committee of the
ILO/Japan Project on Employment Opportunities
Nepal

ILO

Ms. M. Horiuchi
Regional Director
Asia Pacific Region
ILO/ROAP, Bangkok

Ms. Viriyaporn Amphan
Secretary to the Regional Director

Mr. Rueben Dudley
Deputy Regional Director
Asia Pacific Region,
ILO/ROAP, Bangkok

Ms. Carmela I Torres
Chief Technical Adviser, ILO/Japan APSDEP
ILO/ROAP, Bangkok

Ms. Penny Ferguson
Asia Pacific Region
ILO/ROAP, Bangkok

Ms. Yuko Fukawa
JICA Expert on Gender
(Attached to ILO Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, Bangkok)

ILO Headquarters, Geneva

Ms. Janine Rodgers
Bureau for Gender Equality
ILO Geneva

Mr. Tom Netter
PRESSE
ILO Geneva

ILO East Asia Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (EASMAT)

Ms. Nelien Haspels
Specialist in Gender and Women Workers Issues

Mr. Moazam Mahmood
Specialist on Labour Market Policies

ILO South-Asia Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (SAAT)

Mr. Raphael Crowe
Senior Specialist on Employers' Activities

Ms. Joyti Tuladhar
Specialist on Gender and Women Workers' Issues

Mr. Tim de Meyer
Specialist on International Labour Standards

ILO Jakarta

Ms. Akiko Suzuki
Associate Expert

Ms. Pudji Aswati
National Project Coordinator
ILO/Japan Asian Regional Programme for the Expansion of
Employment Opportunities for Women
Indonesia

ILO Kathmandu

Ms. Nita Neupane
National Project Coordinator
ILO/Japan Asian Regional Programme for Expansion of
Employment Opportunities for Women

**ILO South-East Asia and the Pacific Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (SEAPAT),
Manila**

Mr. Richard Szal
Director, ILO Manila

Mr. W.R. Bohning
Director, SEAPAT

Mr. Mario Galman
Programme/Information Officer
ILO Office Manila

Ms. Dianne Respall
Programme Officer, ILO Office Manila

Ms. Hilda Tidalgo
Programme Officer, ILO Office Manila

Ms. Anna Maria Leida Pacano
Programme and Fellowship Officer, ILO Office Manila

Mr. Freek Thomasson
Senior Specialist in Workers' Activities, SEAPAT

Ms. Naoko Otobe
Economist and Technical Gender Specialist, SEAPAT

Mr. Gopal Bhattacharya
Senior Specialist on Vocational Training, SEAPAT

Mr. Max Iacono
Senior Specialist on Small and Medium Enterprise, SEAPAT

Mr. Lejo Sibbel
Associate Expert, SEAPAT

Mr. Nic van der Jagt
Associate Expert, SEAPAT

Ms. Sylvia Fulgencio
Programme Officer, SEAPAT