



ANNUAL REPORT

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
2016-2017





UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



UN Women works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls.

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COVER: An 11-hour climb took Kanchhi Maya Tamang to the summit of Mt. Everest, with a gender equality message. She is a returnee migrant worker and an advocate for gender equality in sports and women migrant workers. UN Women's Civil Society Advisory Group in Nepal supported the mission. Photo: Courtesy of Sherpa Shepherds

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FOREWORD

It is a time of transformation in Asia and the Pacific. In 32 countries of the region, UN Women is joining women and men, governments, civil society groups, businesses and others in a common aim: gender equality.

The region's vibrant economies and societies have produced historic advances in human well-being. Women have been central to these advances, as leaders of communities and countries, as workers and innovators, as advocates for peace and security.

Yet the advances on gender equality are still not fast enough. Across the region, women are caught in a complex web of inequalities tied to gender as well as to class, ethnicity, religion and geography. They struggle to gain income, assets and services. Some now face new threats from violent extremism or climate change.

Impetus to tackle these and many other issues comes from the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was signed by more than 150 countries and which came into force in January 2016. Its 17 Sustainable Development Goals commit to "leave no one behind". In adopting the SDGs, UN Member States placed gender equality at the heart of the sustainable development agenda. Gender-responsive implementation of the agreement would not only boost the well-being of women but also sustainable development overall—social, economic and environmental.

The fifth Sustainable Development Goal, in particular, calls for women to have an equal voice at all levels of decision-making. They must have equal choice, whether in sexual and reproductive health and rights or access to jobs, property or finance. And they must be able to live their lives freely and securely.

In 2016 and 2017, as this report amply demonstrates, UN Women played an instrumental part in mobilizing people to step up efforts to achieve gender equality and contribute to other goals by the 2030 deadline. Our efforts gave women more voice, more choice and greater safety; they included women most marginalized in their societies.

Women gained elected offices in Timor-Leste and better working conditions in Cambodia and India. In Fiji, a referral system devised for survivors of violence after a natural disaster became a national protocol that meets rigorous international standards. In Afghanistan and in the Philippines' Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, women secured new recognition as architects of peace. A five-year regional programme on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) produced changes in laws, policies and national capacities that could benefit 184 million women and girls.

These are just a few examples of recent progress. Even so, much more remains to be done. Deep structural inequalities that skew the distribution of development benefits against women must be challenged. Harmful social, cultural and religious norms on gender must be eliminated and give way to a new normal in which women and men are equally able to realize their full potential.

UN Women will continue to advocate for scaled-up efforts in these areas and more. We will continue to stand in partnership with the women of Asia and the Pacific and all who seek gender equality. Acting together, we will achieve the 2030 Agenda and its promise of a more equal world.



Miwa Kato,
Regional Director,
UN Women Regional Office for
Asia and the Pacific

2016-2017 SNAPSHOT OF UN WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



I. LEADING THE WAY TO EQUALITY

If we expand women's participation and leadership in decision-making, we can unlock progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals. When there are enough women making decisions, they can demand a full spectrum of their rights, whether in finance or agriculture, education or reproductive health or any other area of life.

Yet today, women hold more than 30 per cent of parliamentary seats in only two countries in the region, New Zealand (38.3 per cent) and Timor-Leste (32.3 per cent).¹ In half of the countries, their share is less than 10 per cent. Overall, the region is behind the global average (23.5 per cent),² with women making up less than one in five parliamentarians: 19.3 per cent in Asia and 17.8 per cent in the Pacific.³ Similar discrepancies persist in executive branches of governments.

It is time for parity; the Sustainable Development Goals aim for women's full participation and leadership in decision-making by 2030. UN Women partners with political leaders, parliamentarians, civil society advocates and others to open more space for women to participate and to make their concerns more visible. We help women achieve their powerful potential as leaders, so they can take their communities and countries towards a future that includes all people.



Alcina Carvalho Dos Santos demonstrates the public speaking skills that helped her to get elected as *Xefe Suku* (village chief) in Timor-Leste's local elections.

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1. Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2017, October 1). Women in national parliaments: World classification, from <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>
 2. Inter-Parliamentary Union, (2017, October 1). Women in national parliaments: World classification, from <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>
 3. Ibid.

CLAIMING NEW SPACE IN ELECTIONS

Women stood with men in leading **Timor-Leste's** struggle for independence from Indonesia, achieved in 2002. Today, their share of parliamentary seats, 32 per cent, is among the highest in Asia and the Pacific. But in the country's conservative villages, many people still think that a woman's place is not in political office.

Change is coming, though, through women like Barbara Garma Soares. In the nationwide local elections in October 2016, she was elected the first female chief of her village, Saku Sau, after tirelessly campaigning on a platform of community improvement. "I campaigned door-to-door," she says. "I didn't make promises, but I said, 'If you choose me, we have to come together to develop our village.'"

Before the elections, a reform of the national electoral law, supported by UN Women, required that there be at least one female candidate for each of the 442 village chief posts. That opened the door for Ms. Soares. She was encouraged by "100% Hau Prontu" (100% I'm Ready), a UN Women-backed project to expand women's leadership in public affairs, and joined 300 other women for training on how to run political campaigns. In some villages, women who gained the new knowledge and skills fearlessly competed against a half dozen or more male candidates. In the end, only 21 women were elected village chiefs—but that was double the number in the previous local elections, in 2009.

By 2017, a new push for equality was on—for Parliament to include gender equality provisions in legislation concerning governance of municipalities. UN Women has helped gender equality advocates join forces to analyse draft legislation and make proposals for amendments. Three demands are already on the table: municipalities must promote gender equality, involve more women in decision-making, and apply gender-responsive budgeting. One advocate, Laura Pina, says 2017 could be "the year women will be empowered as never before".

MAKING INSTITUTIONS MORE INCLUSIVE

By shaping public policies and perceptions, parliaments and news media determine much of the progress countries make towards gender equality. UN Women works with these institutions to quicken the pace of this progress.

In the Autonomous Region of Bougainville of **Papua New Guinea**, UN Women helped get different groups to reach agreement on creating the first Office of Gender Equality. The office is charged with promoting



30 laws
for gender equality
adopted or amended in
13
countries

84 CEDAW
"shadow reports"
prepared by civil
society groups in
7 countries

7
countries
increased budget
allocations for the
advancement
of women

gender equality across the Government. It is part of the office of the Chief Secretary of the Bougainville Administration and reports directly to the President of the Bougainville House of Representatives. UN Women also provided support in the review of the Department of Community Government Act. The Act now stipulates that community government elections must return, in total, equal numbers of men and women. In the 2017 poll, a total of 24 women were elected to 48 community governments.

UN Women also trains journalists to examine and correct gender biases in their stories. In **Samoa**, we sponsored special awards for journalists who endorsed women's participation in elections. On a visit to **Papua New Guinea**, UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka recognized journalists who shed light on the links between two crises there: AIDS and gender-based violence.

BUDGETING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Across Asia and the Pacific, UN Women is a leading champion of gender-responsive budgeting, which takes women's equality and empowerment into account when deciding the collection and spending of public funds.

In **Sri Lanka**, UN Women supported meetings and trainings for government officials that led the Cabinet to mandate that 11 national ministries—as well as all provincial councils and district and divisional secretariats—allocate at least 25 per cent of investments in rural economic development to women. New funds will support gender equality in diverse areas including technical education, fisheries, housing and construction. The Ministry of Finance instructed the ministries to specify plans and allocations for gender equality measures in their 2016-2017 budgetary proposals.

In **India**, UN Women and civil society partners helped the state governments of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh to implement gender-responsive budgeting. Odisha's first budget statement showcases, in an accessible format, how much the state has committed to spend on gender equality. Andhra Pradesh agreed to use gender-responsive budgeting to ensure that its social protection policies fully cover the needs of both women and men.

In 2016, a UN Women regional report, *Gender Responsive Budgeting in the Asia-Pacific Region*, offered the first overview of two decades of advances in 26 countries. Many countries have adopted gender-responsive budgeting in principle but face capacity and other constraints in fully implementing it. The report has been widely shared with officials across the region. In **Cambodia**, the findings were used to set up a young professional technical group (with members from five ministries) that is promoting the inclusion of gender concerns in the Government's annual budget call circular. A parliamentary dialogue sparked interest in how gender-responsive budgeting can boost transparency and accountability.

BUILDING EVIDENCE FOR BETTER POLICIES

Solid evidence and data must be gathered to shape public policies that make deep and lasting contributions to gender equality.

UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality supported a study in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka by the Feminist Dalit Organization, a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Nepal, that outlined the barriers hindering marginalized Dalit women from getting education, employment and land. The study made over 30 national and regional policy recommendations. Advocates in **Bangladesh** used the recommendations to secure a government agreement to require, for the first time, a list of Dalit women eligible for public services. The list will be vital in efforts to help the women obtain the services that they are rightfully due.

In **Myanmar**, UN Women partnered with the Government, the United Nations country team and Asian Development Bank to support the first comprehensive assessment of gender equality and women's rights. In carrying out its National Strategic Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women, the Government is drawing on the assessment's recommendations on women and peace, decent work, leadership and participation, sexual and reproductive health care, and services for survivors of gender-based violence.

EIGHT COUNTRIES STEP UP ACTION TO ACHIEVE WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Photo: UN Women/Nguyen Duc Hieu



Through its regional programme on the international Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), UN Women mobilized people in eight countries in South-East Asia to press for women's rights. The five-year project, which ended in 2016, brought changes in laws, policies and national capacities that could benefit some 184 million women and girls.

These changes included the adoption of three new national laws and the revision of 11 laws to align them with CEDAW principles. Training improved the advocacy and monitoring skills of about 1,400 gender equality supporters, including members of parliaments and the judiciary. Training also strengthened abilities to integrate CEDAW principles into national legislation. National human rights commissions now actively monitor the women's rights

situation in partnership with groups such as the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and the International Commission of Jurists.

In 2016, UN Women's CEDAW programme organized the first regional consultation on the rights of lesbian and bisexual women and transgender and intersex persons (LBTI), spotlighting them as among those groups most vulnerable to being left behind. Many of them face multiple forms of discrimination. Of 39 countries in Asia and the Pacific, 18 still criminalize same-sex relationships and/or enforce religious laws penalizing gender non-conformity. Rising conservatism and extremism pose new threats. The regional consultation discussed strategies to better promote and protect LBTI rights, including through law and policy reform and stronger partnerships with national human rights institutions, ASEAN bodies, community and religious leaders, and other key groups.

In **Thailand**, civil society groups that received training from the regional programme sent a shadow report to the CEDAW Committee, a group of international experts monitoring implementation of the Convention. The report drew global attention to unreported cases of abuse of LBTI people and the lack of legal protections. It urged the Committee to call on the Thai Government to correct the situation.

UN Women's sustained advocacy over several years in the **Philippines** resulted in the President instructing all ministries and secretaries of state to take specific responsibilities for promoting gender equality. Eight leading ministries including education, health, finance and justice incorporated gender equality provisions in their 2016 annual action plans. The provisions included doing legal reviews from a women's rights perspective and increasing resources to stem gender-based violence.

PRATIMA GURUNG

“We must be at the table making decisions”



Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

Both in her native Nepal and across Asia, Pratima Gurung is one of the most prominent advocates of the rights of indigenous women with disabilities. Supported by UN Women, she challenged delegates to the 2017 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women to take action to empower these women.

I became disabled at seven, when I lost my hand in a truck accident. Suddenly, everything changed. People had different perceptions about my future—what I should do and not do, whether I should go to school, or whether I should get married.

Within my family, I didn't feel discriminated, but as soon as I left home, I felt it everywhere I went. My parents moved to another city and it was difficult to adjust to all the changes. I struggled within

myself about my disability, even as my parents struggled to care for me and motivate me.

I was lucky that my parents were educated and they never cut any corners with my education. Most indigenous women and women with disability in my country do not get that opportunity like me.

Today, in **Nepal**, I am leading the advocacy for women with disabilities and indigenous women. Most disabled peoples' organizations, indigenous peoples' organizations and state mechanisms in my country don't cater to the specific needs and unique realities of indigenous women with disabilities.

With the changing climate and recurring disasters, indigenous women are more at risk than ever before. Some 80 per cent of the

total population in the 13 districts impacted by the earthquake in Nepal were indigenous and Dalit peoples. If a pregnant woman without shelter is doing a five-hour walk every day to collect water and firewood, she doesn't even realize how this may impact her baby and her health. Rising psychosocial problems, drought and malnutrition are silently causing disabilities in our children.

Empowering [indigenous women with disabilities] means that we must be at the table making decisions about the issues that affect us.

Together, UN Women and activists like Ms. Gurung are helping achieve the Sustainable Development Goals on gender equality and inclusion in all areas of life.

II. EMPOWERING WOMEN IN ECONOMIES

Inequalities have deepened in Asia and the Pacific despite rapid economic growth. Sustainable development can be achieved only if people now living on the margins of society are able to share and benefit from this growth.

Inclusion largely starts with women, especially those most at risk of being left behind. Right now, women are less likely than men to be in the workforce or to own property. They are more likely to be underpaid and poor, and missed by social protection services. This is evident in the female labour force participation rate, which has stagnated over the past two decades and remained significantly lower than that of men in Asia and the Pacific. The widest gap lies in South and South-West Asia where the labour force participation rate is 80 per cent for men and 30 per cent for women. In Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, female labour force participation has declined since the 1990s.⁴

Women are more likely to be underpaid and poor, and have less access to social protection services.⁵ This inequality prompts many women to migrate to the cities and abroad to find better job opportunities, though many end up with some of the worst jobs. As for land ownership, in at least 18 countries and territories in Asia and the Pacific with the most recent data, women hold agricultural land at rates far lower than men.⁶

The Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved unless women are able to participate in and benefit from economic development. UN Women partners with gender equality advocates, businesspeople, policymakers and others to help women gain skills, decent work, protection under the law, and opportunities for entrepreneurial activities.

Photo: UN Women/Pornvit Visitoran



4: UN Women, (2015 - 2016). *Progress of the World's Women 2015–2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*. New York.

5: ILO, (2016). *Women at Work: Trends 2016*. Geneva.

6: ADB and UN Women, *Asia-Pacific Regional Report on SDGs and Gender Equality* (Forthcoming 2018).



Women's economic empowerment policies developed in 15 countries

8 countries' public officials trained on gender-responsive public services for women's economic empowerment

MIGRANT WORKERS CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS

Virginia Carriaga went to Lebanon to work as a domestic helper after her husband, who was in poor health, lost his job in their native **Philippines**. She spent long hours tending a family of 10. Some of them verbally abused her. At times, she wasn't paid. She finally sought help from the Philippines Embassy in Beirut, which provided shelter and helped her return home. After receiving training supported by UN Women, she opened a small variety store in Balaoan in La Union province. Today, it meets the needs of her family.

Millions of women across Asia and the Pacific work as migrant laborers outside their home countries in search of a better life. According to a recent estimate, women migrants comprise nearly half (48 per cent) of overall migrants to the Asia and the Pacific region and 44 per cent of emigrates are from the region,⁷ where Asia-Pacific hosts 17.2 per cent of migrant workers worldwide (25.8 million persons).⁸

Some find a better life, but many others encounter poor treatment in marginalized jobs. UN Women is helping to ensure that migration is safe for all women, and leads to empowerment, not abuse. We help to strengthen protective legislation, and provide migrant women with training and expanded access to services.

Working closely with the Senate and the House of Representatives in the **Philippines**, UN Women played an instrumental role in supporting a new law in 2016 that reformed the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration. The Administration had been dependent on donations from overseas Filipino workers; the law made it a government-funded institution. The law, which complies with CEDAW, requires the Administration to respond to the specific needs of female migrant workers. It provides the migrants with legal support, assistance in cases of sexual abuse, health-care services, and a reintegration programme for those wishing to return home.

In **Viet Nam**, where countryside-to-city migration is common, more than 10,000 migrant women have benefited from the "We Are Women" project run by the Institute for Development and Community Health-LIGHT, which is supported by UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality. The project has helped the migrants get social welfare, legal and health care services, and job opportunities. The women have regularly gathered to learn about their rights and to advocate for them in meetings with local authorities.

7: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. (2013) International Migration Report 2013, from <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/migration/migration-report-2013.shtml>

8: ILO, Labour Migration in Asia and the Pacific, from <http://www.ilo.org/asia/areas/labour-migration/lang--en/index.htm>



The fertile agriculture of the ASEAN countries provides a wealth of opportunity for women migrant workers, especially in Thailand, which hosts agricultural workers predominantly from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar.

"The group meetings are a real necessity," says Nguyen Thi Hoa. "I have become more confident. I don't hesitate to share my ideas with others. I have also helped other migrant women with the knowledge I gained about our rights."

Ms. Hoa, 45, left a home in the country where there was little to eat. Today, she makes a living peddling chicken and duck eggs in Hanoi.

In **Myanmar**, UN Women has distributed materials to more than 20,000 semi-skilled female migrant workers on how they can protect themselves.

DECENT WORK FOR ALL

Some of the most marginalized female workers in **India** are the Dalit manual scavengers, who despite legal protection still face caste-based discrimination in practice, with many relegated to cleaning filthy latrines for minimal pay. With support from the Fund for Gender Equality, the Jan Sahas organization informed these women about their rights and government support services, and helped them find other jobs. Over 6,600 of them found better jobs, on average quadrupling their incomes. More than 7,000 gathered in community organizations that successfully advocated for the passage of more than 60 local resolutions to stop the practice of scavenging, and to ensure that the women get decent work, social protection and other entitlements.

In five rural districts of Battambang and Siem Reap provinces in **Cambodia**, Banteay Srei, a women-led NGO supported by the Fund for Gender Equality, helped the poorest, most marginalized women improve their livelihoods. Training on agricultural techniques and the use of non-chemical fertilizers and pesticides allowed these women to boost their productivity and incomes, in some cases by as much as 50 per cent.

Another project in Cambodia is run by CARE and supported by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, which is managed by UN Women. The project worked to respond and intervene in sexual harassment and other abuses faced by 70 per cent of women in vulnerable types of employment including those engaged in garment and footwear factory work. Between 2013 and 2016, the project helped 53,000 garment factory workers gain greater awareness of their rights and how to claim them. Some factories adopted policies encouraging workers to report cases of sexual harassment, and committed to take action against perpetrators.

Chun Srey Sros, 24, dropped out of school in 10th grade to work in a factory to support her family. She received training and information from the project, and now speaks passionately against discrimination: "It's not justice, and it's not fair!" "Since the project on sexual harassment started, I have learned a lot," she says. "I understood how we can stop sexual harassment by standing together."

EXTENDING THE REACH OF INNOVATION

Technological innovations can help women improve their livelihoods, but only if women have access to these innovations.

UN Women sponsored **Pakistan's** adaptation of "Million Kitchen", a tech-based home-cooked food ordering platform inspired by a project by social entrepreneurs in India. UN Women supported a training that introduced the concept to home-based workers, social entrepreneurs, transgender people, women living with disabilities, civil society groups and tech companies. Participants learned how to manage all stages of production and marketing, from acquiring raw materials to cooking the food to selling it online.

THE REGION JOINS A GLOBAL CALL FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka is speaking at High-Level Political Forum Side Event - High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment.

Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

To achieve the 2030 Agenda, we must transform economies to fully include women. That was the message of the High-level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, convened by the United Nations Secretary-General, in its 2017 report *Leave No One Behind*.

The panel looked at the causes of economic inequalities and solutions such as fair sharing of unpaid household work, better access to assets, better practices

in public sector procurement, and a stronger collective voice.

UN Women participates in the Panel, which is co-led by Luis Guillermo Solis, President of Costa Rica, and Simona Scarpaleggia, CEO of IKEA Switzerland, the multinational furniture company. Members include leading global experts on the economy and gender equality, such as Fiza Farhan, who represented Asia and the Pacific. As a young entrepreneur from Pakistan,

she has staunchly advocated for including women in unconventional economic sectors such as renewable energy and technology.

As part of the global consultations leading to the panel's report, UN Women and the Self-Employed Women's Association gathered women from across India to share their experiences in organizing and innovating for economic empowerment.



EDNA VALDEZ

“Women need to know their rights.”

Edna Valdez is President of Bannuar Ti La Union, an NGO that works for migrant women’s rights in the Philippines. In close collaboration with UN Women and its partner, the Center for Migrant Advocacy, Ms. Valdez connects migrants to support and services and educates them about their rights and the risks of illegal recruitment and trafficking.

I went to Hong Kong as a domestic worker in 1996. I worked longer hours than my contract stipulated; I couldn’t take time off. When I complained, my employer said I could only get those benefits after two years. Into my third year of contract, when I could finally get benefits, they fired me because, they said, their child was becoming too close to me.

Shortly after I returned home to La Union province, I joined Bannuar Ti La Union and started working for migrant women’s rights.

The main challenge for women migrant workers is that they don’t know what rights they have. Even when there are laws and services in place, they don’t know how to claim their rights or access support. That’s why we continuously lobby the local government to set up migrant Desks at each municipal office, in compliance with the national law, where migrants and their families can access information and support.

As part of Bannuar, I helped a woman who was promised a job as a domestic worker in Hong Kong. When she reached Hong Kong, she was stripped of her clothes and put

inside a cargo box—like a chicken in a box with air holes—and trafficked to Lebanon for sex. Somehow, she managed to escape and the embassy facilitated her return. She received counseling and livelihood trainings from Bannuar and was able to rebuild her life.

Women need correct information about their rights and the risks, before they migrate. The returnees, especially those who have been abused, need re-integration support to pick up the pieces, not only economic opportunities.

Together, UN Women and activists like Ms. Valdez are helping achieve the Sustainable Development Goals on productive employment and decent work for all, gender equality and inclusion.

III. RESPONDING TO CRISIS, REDUCING RISKS

The Asia-Pacific region is home to 40 per cent of natural disasters and 84 per cent of people affected by natural disasters worldwide. 2016 was no different.⁹ During 2016, the region experienced 13 major earthquakes, 37 major tropical storms and the impacts of El Nino which caused drought across many countries in the region.¹⁰

A woman in Asia and the Pacific is more likely to be affected by a disaster than anywhere else in the world. She is also more vulnerable than a man when a disaster strikes and in its aftermath. Her ability to survive and to recover from disaster is also undermined by her subordinate position and lack of rights. This constrains her access to food, fuels, services and resources and makes her more exposed to risks, loss of livelihoods and gender-based violence. Thus, efforts to reduce disaster risks and to respond to disasters must address the specific needs of women and girls. They must ensure women and girls can access services and protection, and can equally participate in and lead in decision-making.

UN Women partners with people working on disaster management, climate change and humanitarian response to help make gender equality part of everything they do. We assist in putting gender equality at the centre of disaster preparedness and response, and directly support women during crises. We work towards reducing women's vulnerability and build resilience, such as by supporting them to gain a voice in community affairs and improve their livelihoods.



In February 2016, Tropical Cyclone Winston devastated Fiji. To respond to this disaster, UN Women adapts its existing Markets for Change project to help women farmers and women vendors get back on their feet.

Photo: UN Women/Lauretta Ah Sam

9. OCHA Regional Office for Asia Pacific, (2017, January 19) 2016 Year in Review, from <https://ocha.co/2016-year-in-review>

10. Ibid.

11. World Health Organization, (2013, December 20). Gender, Climate Change, and Health and United Nations, Gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters: Report of the Secretary-General, E/CN.6/2014/13, from, <http://undocs.org/E/CN.6/2014/13>.

PROTECTION AFTER A STORM

At Rakiraki Market in Suva, **Fiji**, Varanise Maisamoa made a decent living selling fish, cooked food and produce for 11 years. Then Tropical Cyclone Winston hit in February 2016. One of the most powerful cyclones ever in the Southern Hemisphere, it destroyed the market and the farms that supplied it. This was devastating for her and other vendors, three-quarters of whom are women.

“After the cyclone, women market vendors came to the market to sit and talk,” Ms. Maisamoa says. “Sometimes we would sit in silence and cry. But now we need to be brave and put a smile on our faces. We are trying to rebuild our lives because life has to go on.”

After first making sure her children and her home were safe, Ms. Maisamoa set out to restore her livelihood.

UN Women, already working with the vendors through its Markets for Change programme, brought hope for a quicker recovery. Within days, UN Women was helping women in 10 markets get tents, tables and chairs to set up temporary stalls to sell their goods, and distributed seeds and other agricultural supplies so they could replant crops.

Across Fiji, with national partners, UN Women also helped protect survivors of gender-based violence; such attacks typically increase after a crisis. It developed a national referral pathway to guide first responders on where and how to refer cases. UN Women distributed information on potentially life-saving care to 20,000 women and girls, and helped link 13,000 who had experienced violence or were at risk of it to essential support services. It included nearly 400 women with disabilities.

The experience with the referral pathway encouraged the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation to work with UN Women experts to develop the country's first national protocol for responding to gender-based violence. The protocol outlines guiding principles and the roles and responsibilities of health, social services, shelter and justice service providers and the police. The protocol meets rigorous international standards, aligning with the global essential services package jointly developed by UN Women and four other United Nations agencies.

LEADING THE WAY TO RECOVERY AND BUILDING RESILIENCE

During the year, UN Women continued supporting efforts to relieve the impact of the devastating earthquakes in **Nepal** in 2015. And it continued to position women at the heart of recovery and reconstruction. The national Post-Disaster Recovery Framework established a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Unit in the National Reconstruction Authority; the unit recently reserved for women 37 per cent of seats on local reconstruction committees. A Gender Equality Resource Guide that was incorporated into the new national Emergency Response Preparedness Plan aims to strengthen gender responsiveness in all aspects of preparedness and response.

Working with women's groups, UN Women supported multipurpose women's centres in three districts that were among those worst-hit by the quake. In 2016, these centres provided over 11,000 women and girls with psychosocial counselling, job counselling, skills training and other services to help them rebuild livelihoods and participate in reconstruction. Over 1,000 women participated in community dialogues that encouraged them to take the lead in planning, reconstruction and preparedness.

In disaster-prone **Viet Nam**, UN Women helped the Women's Union become a full member of the National Committee for Natural Disaster Prevention and Control. This allowed the union to join in setting and carrying out national policy on disaster risk reduction and management.

UN Women also helped the Government of Viet Nam develop new guidelines on integrating gender concerns into community disaster risk planning. Nearly 200 local officials in four provinces were given training on the guidelines; this led to gender concerns featuring prominently in eight communal disaster risk reduction plans. The guidelines state that disaster risk trainings will be held at times when women can attend. More women will be involved in rescue teams. Poor female-headed households will get priority in a programme for building flood-resilient concrete houses. For the first time, plans were developed in a fully participatory process involving equal numbers of women and men. In 2016, Viet Nam experienced its worst drought and salt-water intrusion in 60 years, affecting about 2.3 million people.



8 countries'
public officials trained on
**gender
mainstreaming**
in disaster risk reduction,
in comparison with
only 2 countries
cumulative,
2 years earlier

100%
of the region's
post-disaster
needs assessments
included
gender analysis¹²

Through UN Women's advocacy, gender concerns featured prominently in needs assessments. As a result, emergency response and recovery efforts by the Government, United Nations agencies and non-governmental partners consistently targeted poor, nearly-poor and female-headed households. In five of the most affected provinces, hygiene kits were distributed to nearly 23,000 women and girls.

The Regional Asia-Pacific Conference on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction, sponsored by UN Women and held in May 2016, was the first meeting in the region on integrating gender concerns into implementation of the Sendai Framework for Action, a global commitment to disaster risk reduction. The conference, attended by over 300 experts from 22 countries, recommended getting better data on the specific risks for women and improving women's livelihoods and services in order to reduce these risks.

Through advocacy by UN Women, gender equality provisions were integrated into the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework. The Asia Regional Plan is the most gender-sensitive regional disaster risk reduction plan in the world; for example, it says disaster risk reduction should include universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services. All countries involved have agreed to collect, by 2020, disaster loss data broken down by gender.

A SPOTLIGHT ON GENDER AND CLIMATE

To mark the anniversary of the Paris Agreement on climate change, UN Women broke new ground by issuing the report, *Gender Dimensions of Vulnerability to Climate Change in China*. Based on extensive interviews with nearly 3,500 people, the report comprehensively explored an issue with limited visibility in **China**: women's greater vulnerability to climate change due to their unequal access to information, livelihoods, technology and resources. It made 15 recommendations to close the gap.

Following these recommendations, policymakers established collaboration between climate change and disaster institutions and gender experts, and provided officials with gender analysis skills and training. The report was shared online along with a powerful call to action by well-known actress and UN Women National Goodwill Ambassador Hai Qing. She reached over 150,000 people via the Weibo messaging platform and other multimedia channels.

12. Four countries in the region conducted post-disaster needs assessments.

NGUYEN NGOC LY

“Climate policies cannot afford to miss women’s voices.”

Photo: UN Women/Norman Gorecho

Nguyen Ngoc Ly is the founder and director of the Center for Environment and Community Research in Hanoi, **Viet Nam**. She is a member of the Climate Change Working Group, which UN Women supports to expand women’s participation and leadership in climate change action and disaster risk reduction. At the 2016 meeting of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UN Women sponsored an event in which Ms. Ly called for full attention to gender-specific climate risks.

In rural areas in Viet Nam, a country severely affected by climate change, women are overburdened with work. They do not have time to engage in community meetings and are less likely to be involved in leadership and decision-making processes. These deficits increase their risk and vulnerability to climate disasters.

There are cultural and traditional barriers too, particularly in the rural areas, preventing women’s leadership and meaningful

participation in disaster risk reduction. Women are considered less important than men and often get less information. Decision-making is perceived as a male role.

We work with ethnic women in a mountainous area where drought and flash floods are very common. If you call for a meeting to discuss how to prepare for these disasters, you will hardly see any women, although they are working in the fields, growing cassava. But since they don’t get the timely information and knowledge—for example, how to protect their properties and assets during a flash flood—they lose everything. Disasters are now part of our lives in Viet Nam.

We need action at multiple levels to ensure women’s participation and leadership in disaster risk reduction. National policies and plans cannot afford to miss women’s voices and perspectives. Planning and policy organizations need more capacity-building to integrate gender into their respective areas of work and ensure women have decision-making roles.

Further, the media has an important role to play in shaping attitudes and changing the prevalent norms that push women to the backseat of disaster preparedness and management. And it is critical to provide women with the requisite knowledge about climate disasters and how to prepare for them. For example, how preparing for a drought relates to conserving water, or how the management of drainage systems and solid waste relate to reducing flood risks.

None of this is possible without adequate financial resources. National and international climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies must include women’s engagement and financing for women.

Together, Ms. Ly and UN Women are helping achieve the Sustainable Development Goals on ending poverty, achieving gender equality and combating climate change.

IV. ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women and girls is the biggest obstacle to the safe and peaceful societies envisioned in the 2030 Agenda.

In Asia and the Pacific, 31 out of 39 countries¹³ have laws against gender-based violence, yet it remains widespread, especially among spouses and intimate partners. Thirty-eight per cent of women experience violence during their lifetimes.¹⁴ The vast majority of the cases go unnoticed, unreported and unpunished because of cultural acceptance, inadequate resources, and limited capacity or willingness of service providers to enforce the laws.

UN Women partners with providers of shelter, health care, legal assistance and police protection to prevent and respond to this violence. We address root causes, and support the passage and enforcement of laws and policies. We work with educational and faith-based institutions to transform society's norms, and mobilize activists dedicated to ending violence. UN Women effectively engages men, boys and youth to promote healthy masculinities by strategically using media and sports.



Meri Seif Bus is a female-passengers-only transport where 400 women have been using the service daily.

Photo: UN Women/Marc Dozier

Meri Seif Bus

13. This includes Australia and New Zealand.

14. UNFPA, (2016). Know VAW Data, from http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Violence_against_women%20in_A-P_UNFPA.pdf.

A CALL FOR A SAFE CITY

A sea of orange flowed through the sweltering streets of Port Moresby, **Papua New Guinea**, in late 2016. Led by Governor Powes Parkop, about 500 people marched while holding aloft cardboard placards shaped into orange hands. The hands were signed with personal commitments to make the city and all public spaces safe for women and girls; the marchers presented them to the Prime Minister's representative. As the crowd cheered, the Governor called on every resident of the city to make the same pledge. "We must show the way, take the lead, shine the light, be the example, so the rest can follow," he said. On 8 March 2017—International Women's Day—85,000 people joined him in a Walk for Peace; they vowed to keep marching until violence against women ends.

UN Women's work to make Port Moresby safer began in 2011 with the local launch of a flagship global project, Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces. The project helps people understand how to prevent violence against women and girls and act on any threats. Taking the bus, selling goods in the market, walking on the street—these and other typical urban activities can bring sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence. As a result, women and girls lose opportunities for education and employment, and the basic right to move freely in public spaces.

After receiving training from UN Women, female market vendors in Port Moresby did a women's safety audit of markets and bus stations. Their findings prompted the authorities to make those places safer by improving shelter, sanitation, lighting and management of crowds.

UN Women trainings helped about 400 bus and taxi operators learn how to look out for and prevent sexual harassment. A campaign calling on men and boys to halt violence against women and girls in public spaces reached 50,000 people through radio and TV talk shows, social media, activities in public places, and special sessions in schools and churches. This brought new voices into the conversation about women's safety.

SCALING UP PREVENTION AND PROTECTION

China passed its first law against domestic violence in 2016, with support from UN Women and other United Nations agencies. Efforts then immediately focused on implementation. UN Women supported training on prevention and protection measures for police, court officials, health-care providers, women's federation members and other service providers in three provinces.

Regular training teams were formed at county, township and community levels to raise awareness of the new law and steps to enforce it, such as helping domestic violence survivors speak out and referring them to essential support services. UN Women helped establish in three counties a collaborative model in which providers of different services coordinated their assistance to survivors. As a result, the number of survivors who sought such assistance increased dramatically. In Ningxiang County, for example, 116 survivors received legal aid services in 2016, double the number in 2015.

In 2016, the Government of **Myanmar** drafted the country's first comprehensive law on ending violence against women; UN Women, the Gender Equality Network and other United Nations agencies supported the drafting. The draft law goes well beyond the Penal Code of 1860. Civil society groups and an inter-ministerial law drafting committee participated in the highly consultative drafting process.

Advocacy and community-based programming by UN Women in **Viet Nam** contributed to the Government's approval and funding of the implementation of the National Thematic Project on Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response, which was developed to support the implementation of laws in this area. The Government plans to adopt strategies from UN Women's Safe Cities and Safe Public Places programme as well as from past work on community mobilization and engaging male advocates and volunteers through partnerships with Da Nang Women's Union.



99
organizations
partnered with to
develop and disseminate
information on
violence
against women

17 laws
adopted
or strengthened
to address
violence
against women

MOBILIZING YOUTH

With their mission to mold young minds, schools and universities can significantly help change attitudes and practices that underpin violence against women.

UN Women worked with four universities in **Bangladesh** to adopt standard operating procedures for new and expanded measures to prevent violence on campus and to support survivors. Sexual harassment prevention committees now manage dedicated telephone hotlines so students can easily get help. They refer the students to counselling services and to university authorities and the police. In campaigns supported by UN Women, students and faculty members used theatre, music, art and sports activities to reach out to 20,000 people to inform them about how to prevent violence.

In **Papua New Guinea**, 10 years of civil war in parts of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville have left conflict-related trauma and high rates of gender-based violence. In an innovative violence prevention and response project supported by UN Women, over 1,530 young women and men engaged in a series of community conversations held at village assemblies. They learned about peacebuilding, non-sexist attitudes and behaviours, and ways to prevent gender-based violence. One result has been a decline in reports of physical violence by an intimate partner. While the rates are still far too high, the percentage of women in the project who reported having experienced violence at the hands of their partners fell from 75 per cent in 2015 to 58 per cent in 2016. This project shows that big changes are possible even in a short time, and that violence is preventable.

FILLING THE INFORMATION GAP

Responses to gender-based violence are often hindered by a limited understanding of what services and costs are required to meet the immediate and longer-term needs of survivors.

During the year, UN Women supported a series of studies that calculated the cost of providing essential services such as counselling, health care, the police and judiciary, shelter and emergency assistance. Covering **Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic** and **Timor-Leste**, the studies provided the first multi-country evidence of its kind in Asia.

The studies show that the costs of action are much lower than the costs of inaction. For instance, delivering comprehensive support services to women who experience violence would cost only 0.25 per cent of gross domestic product in Lao People's Democratic Republic. That is just a fraction of the estimated costs of gender-based violence, which include the costs of not only health and justice services but also lost opportunities for work and education. The study findings directly led to increased investments in essential services. For instance, they prompted authorities in Jakarta to double the municipal budget for violence-related services. In Timor-Leste, a women's NGO that provides shelter for survivors of violence used the findings to successfully lobby for more funding.

AFGHANISTAN

"Need to protect and support survivors of violence"

In Afghanistan, UN Women funded the steady expansion of services to protect and support female survivors of violence in 17 provinces. A package of essential services provided assistance for over 4,000 cases in 2016. Referral, protection, mediation and monitoring systems all improved. Communities became more aware of women's rights under Islamic and national law. Here are three case studies of women who used the essential services. Their names have been changed for their protection.

Shakila Bibi, 60, was referred to a family guidance centre to file a case against her brothers, who refused to honour her right to a share of her father's inheritance under Islamic teachings and Afghanistan's inheritance law. Through the village leader, she requested counselling sessions with her brothers. After several sessions, her brothers agreed to give Shakila Bibi her share.

Tahira, 16, suffered constant physical violence from her brother and father, who also refused to allow her to continue her education. She filed a complaint with the police, but this put her life in danger, so the police referred her to a family guidance centre. Tahira asked the centre staff to ask her brother and father to let her continue her studies. At four counselling and mediation sessions, her brother and father were told that physical abuse and forbidding education are both sins in Islam and crimes under Afghanistan's laws. They agreed to let Tahira go back to school, a commitment witnessed by the police. Tahira's father signed a guarantee that she would not be harmed; centre staff follow up regularly to ensure she remains safe.

Farkhunda, 22, married Mohammad four years ago and they had two children. But Mohammad severely beat Farkhunda and his mother. Farkhunda fled with her children to live with her brother-in-law. She

got mediation help from a family guidance centre, and returned home after Mohammad promised to change his ways. Centre staff continue to check in on the family.

Together, UN Women and Afghanistan's providers of services for survivors of gender-based violence are helping to achieve Sustainable Development Goals on gender equality, health and well-being, and on establishing peaceful, just societies.

ABOUT THE PHOTO: Minister of Women's Affairs, H.E. Delbar Naziri, with women's rights activists at the official opening event of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence in Afghanistan. Members of Afghanistan's Government, women's rights activists, the diplomatic corps and UN agencies came together for the event, which was held at the Presidential Palace in Kabul on November 23, 2016.

V. ACHIEVING PEACEFUL SOCIETIES

Peace remains an elusive goal in parts of Asia and the Pacific. Some of the region's conflicts have persisted across generations as marginalized groups seek greater participation or self-determination. Others are more recent, exacerbated by violent extremism.

Conflict has distinct impacts on women and girls, including the risk of sexual violence due to gender norms and discrimination. Yet women are largely absent from peace tables despite growing evidence that their engagement can improve the delivery and quality of humanitarian assistance, accelerate economic development and reduce the chance of a relapse into violence. Also, if women are excluded, policymakers may not see or may not act on the gender-related causes of conflict.

UN Women partners with diverse groups within and outside the United Nations system to ensure that women participate equally in all efforts to keep and build peace, and that they benefit from its dividends. We help carry out Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, as well as the Sustainable Development Goal commitment to peaceful societies. We are focusing more attention on violent extremism, where women are often deliberate targets and potentially could work as agents for positive changes.



Every year UN Women, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and Rapid Action Force (RAF) collaborate to conduct training for approximately 30 RAF officers including men and women on critical peacekeeping issues.

A COMMON QUEST FOR EQUALITY

Fifty-five female leaders gathered from across the **Philippines'** Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao as well as areas to be included in the proposed new Bangsamoro region, such as Lanao del Norte and North Cotabato. Until recently, these areas had been riven by many years of conflict between the central government and insurgents. But at the reunion, different organizational and community loyalties faded into the background as the women sang and acted out lessons from their common advocacy for gender equality in the peace process.

Norjanna Dalid, a teacher in North Cotabato, remembered thinking that the struggle for independence was only for those in positions of power. She said she now realizes that, "We are all connected... this is my struggle too."

The women received training from UN Women, in partnership with the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, on how women can bring peace to their communities, and redress historical injustices and marginalization. The training prompted the women to successfully lobby Cotabato City to expand maternity leave and ban discriminatory dress codes for women at workplaces. The women persuaded the leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front to prohibit the recruitment of child soldiers, and the provincial government of Basilan to earmark a budget for activities led by women.

In late 2016, with UN Women's assistance, female leaders presented a common gender equality agenda to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Regional Government. Many had never spoken in such a forum before. Their presence and poise as empowered Bangsamoro women inspired other women and encouraged local governments to welcome women's advocates into local planning and budgeting processes. The government of South Upi city, for example, activated its Women's Federation and invited all women's groups to take part in shaping plans to reduce poverty in indigenous communities.

Peace in Mindanao will be a long process, but step by step, UN Women's work with female leaders contributes to furthering the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro between the Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The peace agreement is one of the most celebrated in the world for its gender-responsive provisions. It calls for women to take central leadership roles in the transition to peace and the formation of the new autonomous Bangsamoro political entity. It says women must be protected from all forms of violence.

In **Myanmar**, UN Women and the Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process brought together parliamentarians and 112 female leaders of different ethnic groups to create a women's peace agenda. They agreed to advocate to meet the minimum CEDAW benchmark of 30 per cent representation of women in Myanmar's peace process and ensure inclusion of women's priorities in national peace deliberations.

KEEPING THE PEACE BY AND FOR WOMEN

The international missions that safeguard peace around the world must be equipped to respond to women's concerns. They face increasingly complex challenges that have specific gender dimensions, such as the targeting of women and girls by violent extremists.

A UN Women partnership with the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping provided training that prepared **India's** specialized Rapid Action Force police officers for overseas deployment. The officers learned about legal frameworks, human rights, and sexual violence, exploitation and abuse during civil conflicts. In 2016, a new child protection module was added. Almost half the trainees were women. Instructors from the United Nations and Indian Police Service brought experiences from six major peacekeeping missions on three continents. For the first time, the training was held at the Rapid Action Force's prestigious Academy of Public Order, a signal of sustained commitment.



For the first time,
17 countries
 gathered together
 to discuss
**National Action
 Plans on Women,
 Peace and Security
 in the region**

11 countries
 worked on the
 implementation of their
**Women, Peace
 and Security
 action plans**

China has committed to training 2,000 female peacekeepers from all over the world by 2020. UN Women joined the Ministry of National Defense to launch a 10-day course on peacekeeping and humanitarian action, protection of senior female officers and children, and the use of force. Forty senior female officers from 27 different countries gained the skills needed for deployment as senior officers or commanders in the United Nations peacekeeping missions.

CARRYING OUT RESOLUTION 1325

In October 2016, representatives from more than 70 countries and 30 international organizations met in Brussels to consider the social, political and economic stability and development of **Afghanistan**. The Working Group on Women, Peace and Security put up for discussion the issue of women's empowerment, which it said was a prerequisite for meaningful progress in the country.

UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka joined Rula Ghani, First Lady of Afghanistan, at a well-attended dialogue on how civil conflict uniquely affects women and girls, and how women can play equal roles as architects of the country's future. Both Afghan government and international representatives voiced unanimous support for giving priority to gender concerns. They agreed to create prosecution units dedicated to handling cases of violence against women, and to strengthen enforcement of anti-harassment regulations.

The Working Group, which is supported by UN Women, brings together officials from Afghan ministries, the High Peace Council, civil society groups and the international community. At home, it has supported the first National Action Plan on Security Council resolution 1325. A UN Women study of the activities of donors, United Nations agencies and civil society groups showed strengths and gaps in carrying out the plan; costing and budgeting were reshaped accordingly. The Working Group also worked closely with the National Security Council in developing a National Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism.

Timor-Leste launched its National Action Plan on resolution 1325 in 2016, the third country in South-East Asia to do so. UN Women supported the development of the plan, which calls for promoting women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding, and ensuring that women can live free from violence.

In the **Maldives**, UN Women helped organize a discussion on resolution 1325 involving the Government, independent institutions, civil society groups and political parties. They agreed that the meaningful inclusion of women is the greatest but most underused tool for achieving peace and security. They discussed how women can help prevent violent extremism, and how they can participate in politics and take leadership roles in Muslim societies—topics increasingly prominent in civil society debates and activism.



SHAHZADI GULFAM

“Aim high... to achieve your dream.”

*Shahzadi Gulfam served in several United Nations peacekeeping missions, and won the first United Nations International Female Police Peacekeeper Award for many years of achievements. Currently, she is a Deputy Superintendent of Police in Punjab, **Pakistan**.*

My childhood was spent in a small village in Punjab. Both my parents, especially my father, wanted all of their children—sons and daughters alike—to be educated in a manner where we could contribute back positively to the society that raised us. My father was my supporter and role model. He was the one who made the bold decision and sent me to Lahore for college and university studies.

In 1985, when the Punjab Police announced recruitment of women police officers, I immediately knew what I had to do. As a young girl, I had always dreamt that one day

I too would join the police force, wear a uniform and serve my country. Following my training, I was posted as an Investigating Officer within many stations. Fieldwork was very demanding and as a female, I faced a number of prejudices from citizens who had never had dealings with female police officers. I had to be very tactful when dealing with the public and even with my force.

In 1997, I was selected for my first UN peacekeeping mission, to Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was an unbelievable moment for me! I was the first woman police officer from Pakistan ever to be selected. My second peacekeeping mission was to Kosovo, and my last was to Timor-Leste.

The most painful moments on mission were interacting with the many victims of abuse and violence—from broken marriages,

prostitutes, victims of illegal human trafficking or abused children. I could feel their pain deep in my heart because at the end of the day I am human too.

Women are taking a proactive role in building our society and societal mindsets need to keep changing, for the better. Today I see young women joining the police force, armed services and becoming fighter pilots—these jobs were unimaginable for girls in my younger days. My message to the young girls living in developing countries is that they must focus on their studies. Aim high and put your honest and sincere efforts to achieve your dream.

Together, UN Women and leaders like Shahzadi Gulfam are helping achieve Sustainable Development Goals on gender equality and on just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

VI. GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT FAR AND WIDE

Gender equality depends on everyone taking a stand and taking action. Across the region, UN Women calls on public figures and people of all backgrounds to champion societies where no one is left behind.



UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka visits the Afghanistan National Institute of Music which joins UN Women's HeForShe campaign.

Photo: UNAMA/Fardin Waezi

MEN STAND UP FOR EQUALITY

Vietnamese singer and composer Hoang Bach remembers his mother as a gifted singer who had to give up her career to take care of her family. He thought about her when he signed on to UN Women's HeForShe campaign, which encourages men and boys to push back against attitudes and actions that hinder the achievement of equality for women. Despite **Viet Nam's** rapid modernization, many old attitudes remain. Bach committed to changing these by joining a global groundswell of men involved in HeForShe.

Bach spread messages on how men and boys can do their part for gender equality to 700,000 social media users in Viet Nam. He called on them to do their equal share of housework, and to stop domestic abuse and sexual harassment in public places. Along the way, Bach says he discovered "how gender stereotypes are still negatively governing our lives". He tells men that gender equality is about ridding themselves of these harmful notions. "HeForShe has set me free," he says.

UN Women's HeForShe action reporting system shows that HeForShe campaigners like Bach collectively have taken over 1.3 billion actions to promote gender equality around the world.

In 2016, **Afghanistan's** National Olympic Committee joined the campaign, urging its athletes to be champions not only in sports, but also in standing up for women's and girls' rights. Governors of various provinces organized events to launch the HeForShe campaign. During a visit by UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Afghanistan National Institute of Music joined HeForShe and committed to reaching men and youth across the country.

India Post and the United Nations Postal Administration jointly issued postage stamps showcasing the HeForShe campaign to celebrate International Women's Day. Indian President Pranab Mukherjee inaugurated the stamps.

Over
2,400,000
people joined the
16 Days of Activism
against Gender-based
Violence against
women campaign.

Over
13,500,000
people reached
through
social media



On International Women's Day 2017, men in Viet Nam wore high heels and joined a solidarity walk to promote gender equality and UN Women's HeForShe campaign.

Photos: UN Women/Mamamy Viet Nam

STOPPING THE TIDE OF VIOLENCE

2016 saw several creative and far-reaching campaigns to end gender-based violence.

In **Pakistan**, the “#BeatMe...I am UNbeatable” video campaign was shortlisted for the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, and received 36 international and two national awards. It reached over 2.6 million views in Pakistan and internationally. The video features an attention-grabbing scenario where a woman invites a man to “beat” her—at things in which she excels. Naseem Hameed, the fastest woman in the 2010 South Asia Games, invites men to beat her with their feet. Famous singer Meesha Shafi dares them to beat her with their voices.

At least 2.4 million people in Asia and the Pacific joined the global 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign in 2016. Sisters in Danger, an Indonesian group, won the regional UNiTE Campaign Song Contest with the song “16 Oranges”. The name refers to the unmistakable, vibrant color of the United Nations Secretary-General's campaign, UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign, which is coordinated by UN Women. The band dedicated the song to all survivors of violence and activists trying to stop it.

WOMEN TRANSFORM INDIA

A series of high-visibility events and advocacy campaigns in **India** resulted in 70 million media impressions and an additional 200,000 Twitter followers. They included Women Transforming India, sponsored through a partnership between NITI Aayog, the top government planning body, and the United Nations country team led by UN Women. An online contest crowdsourced stories of women making a difference; government and business leaders selected the 12 best stories from among 1,000 entries.

On International Women's Day in March 2017, UN Women launched a one-month campaign that took messages on women's economic empowerment to trains of the Delhi Metro. Visually dynamic posters urged riders to support equal pay for equal work, share in unpaid household care work, and make workplaces violence-free.

At an event in Mumbai attended by leaders in business, the arts and activism, UN Women joined the IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industries to call for more investment in efforts to economically empower women and to end gender-based violence. UN Women's new partnership with the Chamber, which has 250,000 members, is aiming to empower women through new skills, innovations and opportunities for entrepreneurship, and making workplaces and public spaces safe.

1,494%
increase in
Twitter followers

111
knowledge products
developed and disseminated
by UN Women

ENGAGING WITH RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO STOP DISCRIMINATION

Religious leaders can help change the beliefs that underpin harmful social norms on gender and relationships, making them crucial partners in advocacy for gender equality.

UN Women has worked with leaders from different religions in **Myanmar**, and in 2016 partnered with Religions for Peace Myanmar, a branch of an international coalition, to bring together Buddhist, Hindu, Christian and Muslim leaders. They gathered on International Women's Day to highlight how all faiths uphold the equality and dignity of women, showing that discrimination has no roots in religious doctrine.

UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality supported two groups, AWARE and Solidaritas Perempuan (Women's Solidarity), that worked with religious leaders to identify 10 examples of how religious texts are consistent with the gender equality commitments of CEDAW. The examples were used to advocate for new laws aligned with CEDAW principles in **Indonesia**, **Malaysia** and **Singapore**; this included amendments to the Family Justice Bill in Singapore. Over 560 gender advocates from the three countries formed a network to share strategies to promote implementation of CEDAW. They connected with about 650,000 people through radio, television and newspapers, website, blogs, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

CELEBRITIES SPEAK OUT FOR CHANGE

UN Women partnered with celebrities who have the clout to call on broad audiences to endorse gender equality.

In **India**, the film director, classical dancer and writer Aishwaryaa Rajinikanth Dhanush became the UN Women Advocate for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. An inspiring figure particularly for girls and women, she urged people to achieve gender parity, a "Planet 50:50", by 2030.

Pakistan's first National Ambassador for UN Women, the artist, writer, singer and motivational speaker Muniba Mazari delivered her first International Women's Day message. Ms. Mazari is widely known for her accomplishments after she was injured in a car accident and started using a wheelchair. She called on women to celebrate their strengths, and to empower themselves so as to empower entire generations.

In **Thailand**, through the "HeForShe Arts Week Bangkok", several cultural initiatives brought gender equality to public attention. Artists and creative people who embody the vision of UN Women and the spirit of the HeForShe movement performed in the heart of the city, and inspired the community to shift culture positively.

Thought-provoking exhibits, performances, wall painting, film screenings, and discussions promoting gender equality and rights of women and girls were held for free at Bangkok Art and Culture Centre. All events were jointly organized with the governments of Australia, Spain and Sweden; private sector firms such as VISA, AccorHotels, Orami, Valencia F. C. and IKEA; and celebrities.

A film festival was organized at SF World Cinema Central World in Bangkok during March 2017 featuring seven award-winning films and documentaries from Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sweden and Turkey. The movies showed what millions of women and girls across the world endure daily including domestic violence, child marriage, so-called "honour" killings, sexual harassment and rape, limited access to education, unsafe labour migration and other serious human rights violations.

VII. SUPPORTERS AND THANKS

UN Women Asia and the Pacific would like to thank donors and supporters who made generous financial contributions and provided pro bono services, as well as donors who made contributions through UN Women headquarters.¹⁵

Donors and supporters who made financial contributions and provided pro bono services to UN Women Asia and the Pacific from January 2016 to July 2017 are:

- Asia Foundation
- Government of Australia
- UN Women Australia National Committee
- Banlue Group
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- Ford Foundation
- Government of France
- Government of Iceland
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- Government of Japan
- UN Women Japan National Committee
- Government of Republic of Korea
- Korean Women's Development Institute
- Government of Lithuania
- Multi-Donor Trust Fund Office
- Government of the Netherlands
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“ The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development gives us new tools to drive change. Its ambitious targets demand innovative solutions and new partnerships to mobilize resources, including from national governments, international development assistance partners, private businesses, foundations and individuals, but above all, for us to unite in various interrelated challenges that face the world today. UN Women is very grateful to all the partners who allow us to support women and girls across the region. ”

Miwa Kato, Regional Director
UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

15. For detailed information on financial contributions to UN Women headquarters, please refer to the UN Women Annual Report 2016-2017, from <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/6/annual-report-2016-2017>

QUIZ QUESTIONS

1. Who said:

"I raise up my voice—not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard...we cannot succeed when half of us are held back."

- a) Ms. Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Prize Laureate, Pakistan
- b) Ms. Tsai Ing-wen, President of Taiwan
- c) Ms. Helen Clark, New Zealand's former Prime Minister

2. As of September 2017, 23.6 per cent of all members of the world's national parliaments were women. Which of these countries is doing better than the global average?

- a) Viet Nam
- b) Timor-Leste
- c) New Zealand
- d) All of the above

3. An increasing number of countries are applying quotas in order to promote women's political participation. In 2016, which country introduced a mandatory 25 per cent quota for women's representation in local government?

- a) Sri Lanka
- b) Bhutan
- c) Japan

4. In 2016, the Government of Sri Lanka directed their 10 ministries to:

- a) Allocate one fourth of funds in rural development projects to benefit women
- b) Develop action plans to increase the proportion of female senior public officials to one third
- c) Train at least half of their public officials in gender mainstreaming

5. In 2016, the Prime Minister of this country declared "There is no honour in 'honour killing'." A few months later, the parliament passed a historic bill to curb the murders of women and girls. Which country is it?

- a) Pakistan
- b) Nepal
- c) Afghanistan

6. Hajra Khan made history when she became the first Pakistani female _____ to sign a contract to play abroad.

- a) Tennis player
- b) Footballer
- c) Chess player

7. The United Nations Security Council has encouraged governments to develop National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security with clear goals and timetables. How many of the 53 United Nations Member States in the Asia-Pacific have not yet adopted such a plan?

- a) 3
- b) 20
- c) 42

8. South-East Asia is an economic powerhouse and a hotspot for labor migration. What percentage of workers migrating within the region are women?

- a) 24.4%
- b) 48.7%
- c) 76.2%

9. In 2016, with support from UN Women, Pakistan launched its Status Report on Women's Economic Participation and Empowerment. The report says 87 per cent of men are getting loans. What is the percentage for women?

- a) 13%
- b) 33%
- c) 63%

10. Disasters affect men and women differently. The Asia-Pacific is the world's most disaster-prone region. In 2016, the region accounted for how much of the global total of USD 175 billion in economic losses from disasters?

- a) 34 billion USD
- b) 87 billion USD
- c) 126 billion USD

11. Sexual harassment and sexual violence are everyday occurrences for women and girls around the world. What percentage of women ages 18-24 in Quezon City in the Philippines reported having experienced street harassment or sexual violence in public places during their lifetimes?

- a) 22%
- b) 55%
- c) 88%

12. The "culture of silence" inhibits many women from reporting violent attacks to authorities. In 2016, the Lao People's Democratic Republic launched the country's first national survey on violence against women. According to the report, what percentage of women who experienced violence from their spouses turned to authorities for help?

- a) 20%
- b) 40%
- c) 60%

ANSWERS AND COMMENTS

QUIZ 1. a) Malala Yousafzai. Malala Yousafzai, advocate for education of girls and the youngest-ever Nobel Prize laureate, on 12 July 2013, in her first public speech after being shot by the Taliban.

QUIZ 2. d) All of the above. 9 countries in the region have over 23.6% women parliamentarians, including all of the above countries. With 34.2%, New Zealand has the highest percentage of women in parliament in the region.

QUIZ 3. a) Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka, in a February 2016 Amendment to the Local Authorities Election Act.

QUIZ 4. a) Allocate one fourth of funds in rural development projects to benefit women. Gender-responsive planning and budgeting has become an internationally acknowledged, critical tool to correct gender inequality.

QUIZ 5. a) Pakistan. Pakistan passed bills to curb honour killings and to make DNA testing mandatory in rape cases.

QUIZ 6. b) football player. Ms. Khan, Captain of Pakistan's Female National Football Team, was the first Pakistani female footballer to sign a contract to play abroad, in the Maldives National Women's League in 2014.

QUIZ 7. c) 42. Globally, over 60 countries have adopted such plans.

QUIZ 8. b) 48.7%. And the percentage continues to grow.

QUIZ 9. a) 13%. While considerable progress has been made in increasing access to financial services, big gaps persist in many countries.

QUIZ 10. b) 87 billion USD. The earthquake on Kyushu Island, Japan, in April inflicted the heaviest losses between USD 25 billion and USD 30 billion.

QUIZ 11. c) 88%. In 2015, Quezon City became the first city in the Philippines to join UN Women's global flagship programme "Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces".

QUIZ 12. a) 20%. "It's time to break the silence on violence against women and confront this scourge that takes such a heavy toll," said Bounsavath Bouppha, Vice Minister at the Ministry of Justice, at the release of the report.



UN WOMEN IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION*

UN Women carries out its work in the Asia-Pacific region via a network that encompasses 32 countries including a regional office, two multi-country offices, eight country offices and 13 project offices:

- REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
- MULTI-COUNTRY OFFICES
- COUNTRY OFFICES
- PROJECT OFFICES

UN Women also carries out programmes and activities in countries in the region where there is no office presence such as Malaysia, Mongolia and Singapore.

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