



Asian Women for a Culture of Peace
Viet Nam 2000

HANOI - VIETNAM
6-9 December 2000



ESCAP

ASIAN WOMEN FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE

REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Hanoi, 6-9 December 2000

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam in co-operation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) is organizing a Regional Conference entitled *Asian Women for a Culture of Peace* to be held in Hanoi, 6 - 9 December 2000.

Organized as an important step in a continuous effort to mobilize women and men for the transformation of societies away from expressions of war and violence, this conference will focus on women's contribution to a culture of peace and sustainable development in Asia. It will provide a forum for discussion and an opportunity for Asian women to outline a possible strategic plan of action to strengthen their impact and contribution to achieving a culture of peace as a prerequisite for sustainable and environmentally sound development.

"There can be no lasting peace without development, and no sustainable development without full equality between women and men."

(UNESCO Statement on Women's Contribution to a Culture of Peace, 1995)

Significantly organized during the year 2000, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly as the International Year for the Culture of Peace, this conference is part of the UNESCO initiated Culture of Peace process. It also forms part of preparations for the UN Decade on a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), as well as for the International Year for Dialogue among Civilizations (2001) and the International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (2001).

OBJECTIVES

The ultimate goal of this Conference is to significantly impact decision-making processes in the region by providing a forum for Asian women to co-ordinate their actions for a Culture of Peace.

Immediate

1. Share information on Asian women's exemplary practices for achieving a culture of peace and their contribution to sustainable development in the family, in local communities and on macro-economic and political levels;
2. Raise awareness among high-level politicians and policy makers of the relevance of the concept of a culture of peace and its intrinsic links to democracy, development and gender equality;
3. Identify the root causes of violence and other conflicts in the region from a gender perspective by initiating discussions on how the traditional roles of men and women affect their attitudes towards violence and their ability to deal with conflicts, giving particular attention to the socialization of boys and young men;
4. Formulate forward-looking strategies for Asian women's action to combat violence and promote full partnership with men for a culture of peace including through the development of appropriate operational mechanisms and networks based on information and communication technologies;
5. Help create an enabling environment to promote networking and dialogue among Asian women.

Long-term

6. Strengthen women's community based organizations and networks as a nurturing ground for poverty reduction, building a culture of peace and to reinforce solidarity between women from different backgrounds;
7. Promote women's role and participation in favour of sustainable human development, conflict prevention, non-violent conflict resolution and peace-building in Asia including through the stimulation of research into and documentation of traditional and innovative methods of non-violent conflict transformation;
8. Integrate women fully in democratic processes and decision-making. Raise awareness among political decision-makers of the capacity and potential of women to contribute to economic and political issues;
9. Promote women's education and training to further their empowerment and increase their access to economic and political opportunities;
10. Pursue strategies and initiatives that facilitate the transformation of attitudes and gender stereotypes, particularly through the mass media and communication;
11. Engage women's information services in Asia for peace building.

THE FRAMEWORK

The Conference builds on major UN conferences, decisions and achievements, in particular the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) that have contributed to creating a global consensus around the understanding that equality, development and peace are closely interconnected. It further links to the UNESCO World Conference on Science (Budapest, 1999) and to the Education for All Conference (Dakar, 2000).

"The empowerment of women and equality between women and men are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among all peoples"

(Beijing Platform for Action, 1995, par. 41)

Based on relevant UN resolutions the Conference will pursue in practical terms, the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in areas often considered "gender neutral" such as disarmament, peace, security and other legal and political matters.

"...the need to mainstream a gender perspective systematically into all areas of their work, in particular in areas such as macroeconomics questions, operational activities for development, poverty eradication, human rights, humanitarian assistance, budgeting, disarmament, peace and security, and legal and political matters..."

(ECOSOC, July 1997)

"Asian Women for a Culture of Peace" is in pursuance to the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995); the UNESCO Statement on Women's Contribution to a Culture of Peace (1995) and the UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

"A climate of regional cooperation and peaceful coexistence should be encouraged as part of the promotion of a culture of peace. Governments are encouraged to work active towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control"

(ESCAP, December 1999)

DISCUSSION TOPICS OF THE CONFERENCE

Session 1: *The role and status of women in peace-building and non-violence in Asia five years after the Fourth World Conference on Women*

The Conference will discuss the role and situation of Asian women in the context of a culture of peace based on gender analyses and assessments of Asian women's political, social, cultural and economic realities as prepared for the *Special Session of the UN General Assembly*, June 2000.

Based on these analyses and reports from different countries and organizations, participants will present exemplary practices and forward looking strategies for promoting the role of women in political decision-making notably in relation to conflict prevention, non-violent conflict resolution and peace building.

Session 2: *Women's role and potential for building peace and non-violence in Asia*

Participants will discuss how women can best organize their actions and networks for a culture of peace. The focus will be on four areas:

- (i) education, training, socialization and research: learning the tools for living together peacefully and with respect for differences;
- (ii) engaging women in mass media and communication in Asia against violence and for peace building;
- (iii) identifying strategies, initiatives and partners that promote access to greater economic opportunities for women and reduce poverty, focusing on the family and community;
- (iv) a gender perspective on peace building and political decision-making.

Sessions 3: *Outline of a possible Plan of Action for Women's Contribution to a Culture of Peace and Sustainable Development in Asia*

Participants are encouraged to outline a possible Plan of Action on Women's contribution to a culture of peace and sustainable development in Asia. This document will consequently be the sum result of the discussions held over the four days and will reflect the strategic thinking of the participants as well as concrete actions to be implemented by the participants themselves, non and intergovernmental organizations and governments to build gender equality and a gender-sensitive culture of peace in Asia.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- An overall assessment of Asian women's political, social, and economic empowerment and the educational and training requirements needed to strengthen their capacities to transform societies towards a culture of peace and ensure gender equality in the region;
- Greater awareness and understanding of Asian women's actual and potential roles in peace-building, development and human, social and economic security;
- New and strengthened strategies and initiatives for reducing women's poverty levels providing safeguards against the uncertainties and changes in conditions of work associated with globalization;
- Concrete suggestions for actions, possibly presented in the form of a *Women's Plan of Action for a Culture of Peace and Sustainable Development in Asia*, to be implemented in relation to the UN Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010).

Political commitment and support for concrete follow-up activities to this conference will be sought from the Asian Heads of State and Government, major regional organizations, as well as other national, regional and UN bodies, including the governing bodies of UNESCO and ESCAP.

PARTICIPANTS

Approximately 150 participants (maximum 4 per country) are expected to attend the conference. These include women leaders, politicians, gender and peace researchers, educators, writers and philosophers, national and community-based peace promoters, and media and communication professionals known for their commitment to peace and non-violence. Coming from all the countries of Asia¹, the participants will attend in their personal capacities.

Other organizations of the UN System, National Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations and regional institutions are also being invited to actively participate as partners or observers.

The organizers will cover the travel costs and living expenses for the resource persons and for one additional participant per country.

PREPARATORY CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

The Preparatory and Co-ordination Committee consist of the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO, UNESCO and ESCAP and other possible UN, national and NGO partners.

¹ Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, People's Democratic Republic of Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME and TIMETABLE OF WORK

Tuesday, 5 December 2000:

16:00 - 19:00 Registration commences

Wednesday, 6 December 2000:

9:00 - 10:30 Opening Ceremony and Introductory Remarks	12:30 – 14:30 Lunch
10:30 - 11:00 Coffee Break	14:30 – 16:00 Plenary: <i>The role and status of women in building peace and non-violence in Asia five years after the Fourth World Conference on Women</i> ; Countrywise short presentations on obstacles, exemplary practices, innovative, forward looking strategies and practical measures
11:00 - 12:30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adoption of Programme and Timetable ▪ Elections of President and 4 Vice-presidents, Rapporteur and 4 co-rapporteurs ▪ Introductions to the theme: <i>The role and status of women in building peace and non-violence in Asia five years after the Fourth World Conference on Women</i>; ESCAP, UNESCO and Keynote speaker 	16:00 - 16:30 Coffee Break 16:30 – 18:00 Continuation of plenary

Thursday, 7 December 2000:

9:00 - 10:30 Plenary: Keynote speeches introducing the themes of the four working groups	12:30 - 14:30 Lunch
10:30 - 11:00 Coffee break	14:30 - 18:00 Continuation of Working groups
11:00 - 12:30 Four Working groups: <i>Women's role and potential in peace building and Non-violence in Asia</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ education, training, socialization and research: learning the tools for living together peacefully and with respect for differences; ▪ engaging women in mass media and communication in Asia against violence and for peace building; ▪ identifying strategies, initiatives and partners that promote access to greater economic opportunities for women and reduce poverty, focusing on the family and community; ▪ a gender perspective on peace building and political decision making 	

Friday 8 December 2000:

9:00 - 10:00 Plenary: Reports from the four working groups	16:00 - 18:00 Plenary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion of a possible Plan of Action on Women's contribution to a Culture of Peace and Sustainable Development in Asia ▪ Recommendations
10:30 – 15:30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meeting of the Drafting Committee ▪ Excursion for all other participants 	

Saturday 9 December 2000:

9:00 - 13:00 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adoption of the final document ▪ Closing Ceremony 	13:00 Lunch
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Substantive papers, providing factual information and critical insights into the themes of the Conference will be commissioned for the occasion. In addition, each participant is expected to participate actively and is encouraged to bring written information and proposals.

As one of the means to ensure that this Conference breaks new ground, facilitators will be designated to encourage an open debate during the round tables and to foster constructive group dynamics.

PARTNERS

The Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO will organize the conference in co-operation with UNESCO, ESCAP and possibly other UN, national and NGO partners, as well as with the support of the Lao and Korean National Commissions for UNESCO.

CONFERENCE LANGUAGE

The official conference language will be English.

ORGANISERS

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