



## **Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)**

---

### **Report on Review of the Achievements of the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children, and Consideration for Future Action**

The present report outlines the work of the Social Development Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) towards achieving the goals of the WSC Plan of Action, through its mandates to serve the needs of various population groups in Asia and the Pacific, including youth<sup>1</sup>, women and persons with disabilities.

ESCAP's work relate to the following Articles of the WSC Plan of Action: A. Role of women, maternal health and family planning (Articles 15 through 17); B. Basic education and literacy (Articles 20 and 21); C. Children in especially difficult circumstances (Articles 22 through 24); and D. Alleviation of poverty and revitalization of economic growth (Articles 28 through 32). Thus, the present report discusses ESCAP's work in these four areas under each Section of the document.

#### **PART I. ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN UNDER PARAGRAPH 35 OF THE WSC PLAN OF ACTION**

##### **I. Contribution of ESCAP to the achievement of the goals and strategies in the Declaration and the Plan of Action**

**and**

##### **II.B. The extent to which ESCAP has ensured that within its mandate the fullest possible support has been given for the achievement of these goals**

##### **A. Role of women, maternal health and family planning (Articles 15 through 17)**

---

<sup>1</sup> The United Nations definition of youth is between age 15 and 24.

ESCAP's mandate to enhance the status of women in the Asia-Pacific region is outlined in the Jakarta Declaration for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific (1994) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995).

ESCAP's role in providing a forum for governments has been key in addressing the issue of women's status in the region, including gender disparity in access to basic social services. The Second Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Women in Development, which was organized by ESCAP, adopted the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific in 1994, as a means of accelerating the attainment of the objectives of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies in the Asian and Pacific region (1985), and to contribute to preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (1995). The Conference pledged participating countries' efforts towards the advancement of women in the region in twelve critical areas, as listed below:

- Women and poverty
- Education and training for women
- Women and health
- Violence against women
- Women and armed conflict
- Women and the economy
- Women in power and decision-making
- Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- Human rights of women
- Women and the media
- Women and the environment
- The girl-child

ESCAP's role in the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific is primarily that of coordination, which includes:

- Assisting countries in the formulation and implementation of national plans and policies for the advancement of women;
- Providing training to enhance the skills of national personnel, from both government and NGOs, in areas covered by the Plan;
- Organizing research in relation to the advancement of women;
- Facilitating intraregional exchanges of experience and expertise;
- Disseminating regional information; and
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Plan.

In addition, ESCAP has been implementing activities to promote ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which seeks to guarantee the human rights of girls. One of these activities, for example, entitled "Promotion of CEDAW through NGO-networks in the Pacific" had a series of activities designed to facilitate promotion of CEDAW in the four Pacific Island countries, which had ratified CEDAW, namely Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Vanuatu. Information,

Education and Communication (IEC) materials such as posters, drama and flip charts were produced and used by NGOs in their awareness-raising.

ESCAP's support to the Pacific on CEDAW promotion was further facilitated by co-organizing a consultative meeting with UNDP and the Pacific Community on the implementation of CEDAW and promoting women's rights. After these activities, one country in the Pacific ratified the Convention and several others initiated action to present their country reports to the CEDAW Committee. The Regional Conference on Trafficking in Women held in Bangkok in November 1998 resulted in the adoption of the Bangkok Accord and Plan of Action to combat trafficking in women.

Based on the recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting on the Promotion of Women's Rights as Human Rights held in August 1996, a project to further promote formulation and implementation of policies and regulations regarding the protection and promotion of women's human rights including revision of gender discriminatory laws, formulation of laws on eliminating violence against women at national level was carried out in South Asia in 1997-1998. The project assisted Government legislators and non-Governmental organizations in their consciousness raising activities on violations of women's human rights, with special emphasis on physical and psychological violence against women. A regional meeting was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh. A publication entitled Human Rights and Legal Status of Women in the Asian and Pacific Region, one of the outcomes of the project, has been widely used as an overview reference material.

## **B. Basic education and literacy (Articles 20 and 21)**

ESCAP's mandate in the field of basic education and literacy is outlined in the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region (1994).

The Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region (JPA) was adopted by the ESCAP Commission in 1988 and updated in 1994. The main premise of human resources development introduced in the JPA highlights the strong correlation between investment in human resources and the resulting improvements in the quality of life. The JPA recognizes education as one of the key elements of investment in human resources that would lead to the virtuous cycle of human resources development. The JPA states that "investment in human resources focuses on the process by which the productive capacity of human resources can be increased by upgrading their quality, particularly in developing countries, it is generally agreed that the most critical process for increasing the productivity of human beings are education and training." In other words, the JPA advocates that the fruits of development activities would lead to the improvement of the quality of life of the general population only when appropriate investment in human resources, especially through education, is made.

The JPA takes a comprehensive view of education, encompassing formal education systems at all levels as well as lifelong education in the form of adult and

continuing education programmes. However, the JPA specifically stresses the importance of a strong basic education by enhancing lifelong adaptability, flexibility, mobility, and serving as sound preparation for training in specific skills. It further points out that basic education generates broad social benefits and provides the poor with access to opportunities. Thus, it is clear that the JPA recognizes the importance of basic education particularly in connection with the overall mandate of ESCAP to tackle poverty issues in the region.

Based on the mandates outlined in the JPA, ESCAP's activities in the field of basic education and literacy focus on provision of services to youth and young adults. There are two main ways ESCAP provides technical and advisory assistance in this area: 1. Technical assistance for capacity-building of institutions and national personnel; and 2. Promotion of "best practices" in HRD.

### **1. Technical Assistance for capacity-building of institutions and national personnel for promotion of literacy for women**

Since 1992, ESCAP has implemented three technical assistance projects for the promotion of literacy among women: "Strengthening the Role of Youth Organizations in the Promotion of Functional Literacy with Special Focus on the South Asian Subregion" (1992-1995); "Promoting HRD for Women through Post-Literacy Programme Development" (1996- 1999); and, "Literacy for Women through Capacity-Building of Local Organizations" (1996 – 1999). Ten countries from three subregions participated in the projects, namely, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. In the implementation of the project activities, ESCAP worked with both governmental agencies (mostly focal points of non-formal education) as well as NGOs working in the field of literacy and non-formal education. The objectives, achievements and lessons learned from the three technical assistance projects can be summarized as follows:

#### *Objectives:*

The major thrusts of ESCAP's literacy programme are the following:

- Empowerment of the learners (women and girls) through improvement in the gender focus in literacy materials as well as in the training of literacy personnel;
- Strengthening of organizational and technical capabilities among public and non-governmental organizations in the planning and management of literacy programmes; and
- Strengthening of intra-country as well as inter-country institutional linkages and collaboration among those who work in the field of literacy, including GO-NGO collaboration.

#### *Achievements:*

The following summarizes the main achievements of the ESCAP literacy programme, which are grouped in accordance with the above three objectives:

- (i) Empowerment of the learners through improvement of gender focus:
  - Developed gender-focused materials and provided training on inclusion of women’s concerns in literacy materials and other activities in literacy courses (e.g. women’s status, income generation activities, health and sanitation, and environment);
  - Provided literacy trainers with specific skills required for project implementation especially focusing on gender sensitization activities and development of core curricula units to address women’s concerns;
  - Developed a publication entitled *Functional Literacy for Women’s Empowerment and HRD*, which contains English translations of literacy text materials developed during the project focusing on gender-awareness raising for practical use by literacy practitioners in the region; and
  - Developed a publication entitled *Handbook for Literacy and Post-literacy for Women’s Empowerment in South Asia*, which contains information on “gender-sensitive” management of literacy programmes.
- (ii) Capacity-building of national/local level organizations:
  - Provided national level as well as local level organizations with planning and management training so they can implement literacy training programmes more effectively;
  - Contributed towards establishment of a new monitoring and evaluation system (this was implemented nation-wide in Bhutan); and
  - Developed a publication, which is a ‘management guide’ for project managers and trainers. The publication, entitled *Handbook on literacy and post-literacy for women’s empowerment in South Asia* was adapted nationally and is being used for capacity building of local NGO and literacy personnel.
- (iii) Strengthening institutional linkages:
  - Established an effective project design that ensures “trickle-down” and “trickle-up” of information, knowledge and skills from the subregional level to the grassroots level. Within each of the participating countries, the “vertical” networking of the national level and the local level organizations has led to effective technical transfer, which has enabled considerable capacity building of local level organizations, including the community-based committees;
  - Cost-effective use of resources by collaborating with other agencies such as UNESCO PROAP, ASPBAE and ACCU. Further, by utilizing

an existing national network of organizations, “trickle-down” of resources as well as technical assistance was ensured, allowing ESCAP to reach end-beneficiaries otherwise extremely difficult to reach; and

- Subregional workshops have provided an effective venue for the organizations from different countries to work together to tackle emerging issues in literacy education.

*Lessons:*

- Close and constructive collaboration among the participating organizations at the national and local levels, including Government-NGO collaboration, was found to be crucial for successful project implementation. Based on such a national level system for the “trickle-down” of knowledge, subregional and regional collaboration can add value.
- A non-formal approach as a supplement to formal education is essential if universal literacy is to be achieved within the foreseeable future, especially in the South Asian subregion.
- Quality of learning materials is crucial to the success of any literacy programme. Maintaining learners’ interest through curricular materials that emphasize direct relevance to their daily lives is a critical factor in combating the problems of motivation and dropout.
- Involvement of community, including community-based organizations, is essential to enhance the sustainability of the programmes.

## **2. Dissemination of best practices in non-formal education**

In addition to provision of direct technical assistance to organizations for promotion of literacy and non-formal education, ESCAP also contributes to the goals of universal access to basic education through promotion of exemplary educational efforts and best practices through the ESCAP HRD Award.

The ESCAP HRD Award was established in 1990. The Award, which is presented annually in recognition of exemplary work in the field of human resources development (HRD), is administered in pursuance of the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region. That Plan provides guidelines for transforming the principles of HRD into practice.

One of the major concerns of the Jakarta Plan of Action is to promote research and training on key HRD issues as a basis for national policy-making. In response to this concern, the ESCAP HRD Award was established as a means of encouraging exemplary research, training and other innovative achievement in the field of HRD. Each year, a number of organizations that work in the field of education, particularly non-formal education, apply for the Award. In order to foster the promotion of exemplary work and encourage the replication process in the region, ESCAP

produces publications containing the case studies of the selected applicants to each year's Award. The work of the following winners of the Award is particularly relevant in relation to basic education and literacy:

### **Selected List of the Winners of the ESCAP HRD Award**

Year	Theme	Centre	Country
<b>1994</b>	<b>Women in Extreme Poverty</b>	<b>Dhaka Ahsania Mission</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy and non-formal education for women</li> </ul>	<b>Bangladesh</b>
<b>1995</b>	<b>Productive Employment for Youth</b>	<b>“Barefoot College”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education and skills training for youth without formal school degrees</li> </ul>	<b>India</b>
<b>1997</b>	<b>Empowering the Urban Poor</b>	<b>Human Development Centre</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic education, health care and community development for the urban poor</li> </ul>	<b>Thailand</b>
<b>1998</b>	<b>Adult Education</b>	<b>Department of Non-Formal Education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major literacy campaign and conducted mobile general equivalency and vocational education to increase the educational opportunities for people living in rural and remote areas</li> </ul>	<b>Thailand</b>

### **C. Children in especially difficult circumstances (Articles 22 through 24)**

ESCAP works to serve the needs of children in especially difficult circumstances in two categories: 1. Sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth; 2. Children and youth with disabilities.

#### **1. Sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth**

The incidence of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth is on the rise in Asia and demands urgent action. Socio-economic and cultural factors, such as lack of education, family breakdown and poverty, make young people particularly susceptible to sexual exploitation (prostitution, trafficking and pornography). Children and youth are also at risk of sexual abuse (rape and incest), usually by someone whom they know and trust.

Young victims are at high risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS, as well as developing many other physical, psychological and emotional problems. These children and youth are in urgent need of psychosocial and medical services, which are lacking in Asia. Hence, in addition to critical prevention programmes, service provision is crucial to facilitate the recovery of victims and their reintegration into society.

In 1997, for the first time, governments in the Asia-Pacific region joined forces to adopt ESCAP resolution 53/4 to tackle this problem. The resolution called on ESCAP to combat sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth through human resources development initiatives.

In response, the Human Resources Development (HRD) Section of ESCAP's Social Development Division launched a regional programme covering 12 countries in South Asia, the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) and the Philippines, namely: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China (Yunnan Province), Lao People's Democratic Republic, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Viet Nam.

The programme is being implemented at the regional, subregional and national levels, and aims to support victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation through: **Research, Capacity-Building and Awareness Raising.**

**Programme Objectives:**

- To conduct qualitative research to determine the health and social service needs of sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth.
- To strengthen the capacity of health and social service personnel to meet those needs.
- To raise awareness of the plight of these young people within communities and among government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGO), so as to strengthen policies and programmes that support children and youth.

*Research*

ESCAP has conducted research in collaboration with Uppsala University, Sweden, to determine the health and social service needs of sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth and the capacity of health and social service personnel to respond effectively to those needs. Primary research undertaken by ESCAP found that there were few services available for these vulnerable young people, and where services did exist, they focused on physical recovery with little regard to psychosocial care.

In many countries, the research was the first of its kind ever conducted. ESCAP assisted in the training of national personnel in research methodologies, and interviewing techniques, thereby improving their capacity to conduct in-depth qualitative research and analysis. The research findings, which were presented at National HRD Workshops in each country, provide the basis for the design of the capacity-building and awareness raising components of the ESCAP programme.

**a. Capacity-Building of Health & Social Service Providers**

The capacity-building component consists of national training needs assessments (TNA) of health and social service providers, and the development and conduct of training courses at both the subregional and national levels.

The results of the TNAs, along with the country research, formed the basis for the establishment of the "*ESCAP HRD Course on Psychosocial and Medical Services for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth.*"

The Course focuses on:

1. medical health;
2. psychosocial health;
3. substance abuse and its relation to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation; and
4. HIV/AIDS prevention.

Through the Course, a pool of competent health and social service personnel are being trained to provide the psychosocial services required to support young victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, and aid in their reintegration into society. This pool of trained national personnel will then be able to train other health and social service providers in their countries, further expanding the services available in the region.

#### *Awareness Raising*

The incidence of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth tend to remain hidden. Therefore, it is vital that national policy makers, local communities and other members of civil society are made more aware of the extent of the problem and the dangers and hardships young victims face.

To generate awareness among governments, ESCAP has disseminated research findings and produced a film about sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth entitled "No is Not Enough", which has been screened widely in the region. ESCAP has also played an advocacy role with policy makers on preventative and rehabilitative measures to combat this problem.

Aside from national level action, community-based interventions are also essential. ESCAP is supporting community awareness pilot projects to educate communities about the rights of young people, the tricks traffickers use to lure children and youth and about the damaging physical and psychosocial effects of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation and their relationship to substance abuse and HIV/AIDS infection. By making communities more aware of young people's rights and the long-term damaging effects of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, it is hoped that the factors which lead to abuse and exploitation can be overcome.

## **2. Children and youth with disabilities**

ESCAP's on-going work in the area of persons with disabilities, including children and youth with disabilities, is based on the overall framework provided in the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002). In terms of

addressing the educational needs of children and youth with disabilities, ESCAP conducted the Regional Forum on Education for Children and Youth with Disabilities into the Twenty-First Century in 1999.

ESCAP has been implementing activities to address the needs of persons with disabilities. In the concluding year of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992), ESCAP declared the period 1993-2002 as the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons at a meeting convened by ESCAP in Beijing in December 1992. That meeting formulated and adopted two key Decade documents: The Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region, and the Agenda for Action for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons. The primary focus of Decade action is the expansion of opportunities for the full participation of people with disabilities in society and their equality in the development process. Twelve focus areas for the Decade were identified including education wherein seven targets were outlined, which were subsequently revised in 1999.

ESCAP convened the Meeting to Review the Progress of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons in 1995 to review the progress of the implementation of the Agenda for Action for the Decade. At the Meeting, some critical issues particularly concerning education were identified. These included the fact that, of the 93 million children with disabilities under 15 years of age who live in the Asian and Pacific region, less than five per cent receive any education or training. Among adults who are disabled, illiteracy is a problem of a much greater magnitude. Furthermore, women and girls with disabilities are discriminated against even more than boys and men with disabilities. The Meeting also noted with concern that the lack of information and understanding has created a situation whereby children and adults with disabilities are denied opportunities for formal and non-formal education. Inaccessibility of formal schools, as well as a lack of requisite support services for persons with disabilities to participate in integrated education were identified as critical problems in the region. There is an urgent need to accelerate schooling by providing early intervention services and training on special needs education for teachers in regular schools. At the same time, the number of specialist teachers should be increased proportionately. Lastly, it was noted that there is a serious lack of appropriate assistive devices, teaching materials and support staff.

**D. Alleviation of poverty and revitalization of economic growth (Articles 28 through 32)**

Poverty alleviation is among the main pillars of ESCAP's mandate. In particular, the work of the Social Development Division of ESCAP addresses various aspects of poverty alleviation, which is the overall goal of the work of the Division. In terms of global and regional mandates documents, in addition to the JPA, which has been already introduced in the Manila Declaration on the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region (1994) and the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action on the World Summit for Social Development (1995) provide guidelines for ESCAP's work in this field.

The ESCAP member and associate member countries adopted the Agenda for Action at the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference in Preparation for the World Summit for Social Development held in Manila from 12 to 18 October 1994. In relation to poverty alleviation, the ESCAP member countries agreed on the following targets by 2000 in the Agenda for Action:

- More mothers would survive childbirth as did in 1990
- Half as many people would be illiterate as in 1990
- More children would survive after the age of five as did in 1990
- Four in five children in the region would complete primary school
- The exploitation of children as laborers would be made illegal
- All Asian and Pacific peoples would have full access to primary health care, basic education, safe drinking water and sanitary human waste disposal.

The governments also set themselves successive targets beyond 2000, including those below:

- By 2005, girls in the region would be able to participate on an equal basis in primary and secondary education; and
- By 2015, children born in the region would have a life expectancy at birth of greater than 75 years.

The Agenda for Action provided a major input to the global forum in Copenhagen.

ESCAP's role in the implementation of the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region, as defined under Article 113 of the Agenda for Action, is to provide technical, advisory and other assistance in the planning and implementation of national efforts for the achievement of the Agenda's goals. ESCAP has also assisted the member Governments through follow-up meetings to monitor the status of implementation, and to ensure the commitments of Governments. This included the Fifth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Development (Manila, 5-11 November 1997), where the Manila Declaration on Accelerated Implementation of the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP Region was unanimously adopted.

In addition, ESCAP, through its Human Resources Development Programme, provides training on poverty alleviation for policy makers and programme managers based in Asia and the Pacific. ESCAP has developed the "ESCAP HRD Course for Poverty Alleviation", which was launched in 1999. The Course was developed as part of ESCAP's work to promote capacity-building of national institutions and personnel in the public, private and NGO sectors to plan and promote HRD services (education and skills development, employment and health) for the poor.

Eleven Modules have been developed which relate to social development and poverty alleviation. The first 3 modules, comprising the Core Curriculum, are designed for senior-level policy makers, while the remaining 8 modules, focusing on poverty alleviation techniques, are targeted at programme/project managers. ESCAP intends to offer the Course at national, subregional as well as at regional levels, in responding to the requests of institutions in the region.

**II. Degree of cooperation and collaboration of ESCAP with other relevant UN agencies and organs, as well as other international institutions to ensure the achievement of the goals and objectives of the national plans envisaged in the WSC Declaration and Plan of Action**

**and**

**III. Participation of ESCAP in mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the WSC Plan of Action**

The following discusses ESCAP's collaboration with other UN bodies and agencies in each of the four areas of ESCAP's work relevant to the WSC Plan of Action. ESCAP takes part in various regional groups as identified below to monitor and coordinate activities in each respective field, which include the areas identified in the WSC Plan of Action.

**A. Role of women, maternal health and family planning (Articles 15 through 17)**

Since 1995, ESCAP served as the convenor of the Regional Interagency Committee for Asia and the Pacific Sub-committee on the Advancement of Women, liaising with United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and NGOs on activities relating to the status of women in the region. While the main objective of the Subcommittee meeting was to share information on ongoing and planned activities of the member agencies in line with the regional Jakarta Plan of Action on the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific and Beijing Platform for Action, each year the meeting had a special agenda to highlight emerging issues in the region. Since 2000, a new mechanisms has been formed to focus on collaborative activities, as a follow up to enable participating United Nations and other related agencies and organizations to promote the empowerment of women and gender equality through (1) exchanging information on ongoing and planned activities, aiming to minimize duplication, (2) coordinating and complementing activities, and (3) formulating and implementing collaborative activities specifically to follow up on the regional Jakarta Plan of Action (1994), Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1999), and the global review of the Beijing Platform for Action at the Special Session of the General Assembly (2000).

## **B. Basic education and literacy (Articles 20 and 21)**

ESCAP played an active role in the Regional Technical Advisory Group (RTAG) on Education for All (EFA), which was a group of UN bodies and agencies formed with the leadership of UNESCO for the purpose of the Asia-Pacific EFA Assessment 2000, Bangkok, January 2000. This was a regional preparatory meeting, which led to the global assessment of the EFA results of the past decade in Dakar, April 2000. The RTAG has been recently reformulated into the Sub-regional EFA Forum (SRF) and Thematic Working Group on EFA with a new set of TOR for implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action and expansion of the membership. ESCAP will continue to take part in this coordination body for implementation and monitoring of EFA goals.

## **C. Children in especially difficult circumstances (Articles 22 through 24)**

*Children and drugs:* ESCAP has joint forces with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) to combat drug abuse among young victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, through the project “*Integrating substance abuse prevention, treatment and rehabilitation into actions against sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth in the Greater Mekong Subregion*” Together, they heighten community awareness and provide training for health and service providers working in this field. ESCAP will also be collaborating with UNDCP in the “Third Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting in Human Resources Development for Youth”, to be held 4 to 8 June 2001 in Bangkok. The theme for the Meeting is “Integrated approaches to youth health, focusing on sexual and reproductive health and prevention of substance abuse and HIV/AIDS”. ESCAP and UNDCP are, in addition, co-operating in the development of a website for youth on the issue of drugs.

*Children and HIV/AIDS:* ESCAP is collaborating with UNAIDS in efforts to prevent HIV among youth. UNAIDS has also provided financial and technical support for the HIV/AIDS related component of the project “*Strengthening national HRD capabilities through training of social service and health personnel to combat sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth in the Greater Mekong Sub region.*” ESCAP will also be collaborating with UNAIDS in the above-mentioned “Third Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting in Human Resources Development for Youth”.

*Trafficking of women and children:* ESCAP is collaborating with UNDP in the area of trafficking of women and children through the Inter-Agency Working Group on Trafficking of Women and Children chaired by UNDP.

## **D. Alleviation of poverty and revitalization of economic growth (Articles 28 through 32).**

ESCAP has organized regional review meetings in Manila in 1997 and in Bangkok in 1999 in follow-up to the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, in cooperation with other United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs. ESCAP has also played a

facilitator role for governments, United Nation's bodies and specialized agencies, NGOs and other segments of civil society, to establish and strengthen partnerships and undertake collaborative action toward the achievement of common objectives related to poverty eradication.

**IV. Participation of ESCAP in the preparation of a consolidated analysis of the plans and actions undertaken by countries and the international community, in support of the child related development goals for the 1990s**

**A. Role of women, maternal health and family planning (Articles 15 through 17)**

ESCAP convened the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, held at Bangkok from 26 to 29 October 1999, which reviewed the progress made and the obstacles encountered in implementing the 12 critical areas of the Platform, one of which were issues related to the girl-child.

**B. Basic education and literacy (Articles 20 and 21)**

As discussed above, ESCAP played an active role in the Regional Technical Advisory Group (RTAG) on Education for All (EFA), which assisted in the organization of the Asia-Pacific EFA Assessment 2000, Bangkok, January 2000. The Asia-Pacific EFA Assessment 2000 was held to assess the achievements of the countries in Asia and the Pacific during the 1990s towards the EFA goals.

**C. Children in especially difficult circumstances (Articles 22 through 24)**

Seven education targets, together with targets for other areas of the Agenda for Action have been formulated and adopted by the Meeting to Review the Progress of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, held in Bangkok from 26-30 June 1995. These were subsequently endorsed at the 56<sup>th</sup> session of the ESCAP Commission in April 1996. These targets were further revised in the "Report of the Regional Forum on Education for Children and Youth with Disabilities into the Twenty-first Century", Bangkok 15-19 November 1999.

**D. Periodic review of the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action and reporting to the General Assembly through ECOSOC**

All ESCAP activities under its approved work programme are reported to ECOSOC.

**PART II. OTHER ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WSC PLAN OF ACTION**

Not applicable.

### **PART III. CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION**

#### **IX. ESCAP's views on the emerging trends, issues and challenges that affect the needs and rights of children and women**

- As the world's economy becomes increasingly globalized and economies are being reformed and restructured, economic empowerment of women is becoming particularly important. The feminization of migration presents challenges for human rights protection. Women workers are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation largely because of the lack of commitment by countries of origin and destination to protect their interests. Those problems are compounded for illegal women workers and those who were trafficked. The trafficking in women and girls for prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation is particularly serious in several subregions of the Asian and Pacific region.
- Gender and age disaggregation of data needs to be established as a norm in order to obtain a fuller and better-defined picture of the situation and the specific vulnerabilities of girls (and boys). While data on children are often disaggregated by gender, this is not a uniform practice in all sectors of inquiry and action, notably child labour, children in need of special protection including children with disabilities, and emerging high priority areas such as HIV/AIDS. Age disaggregation of data on women is less common and limited primarily to sectors such as education. Almost no age disaggregated information is available in areas such as gender-based violence. When used, age categories are usually non-standard; however, they should be rationalized within the life cycle format.
- Most of the effort and progress concerning universalization of basic education during the past decade has taken the form of increased enrolment of children in formal schooling. Many young people in the region today are left without being given a "second chance" to receive the most basic levels of education and many of them live the rest of their lives in the darkness of illiteracy. It is also a sad reality to note that, in some cases, young people are intentionally deprived of the opportunities to receive higher education due to political reasons.
- Educational needs of young people in Asia and the Pacific are increasingly diverse and are not appropriately met by the existing school curriculum. The emerging learning needs of youth include areas of essential life skills such as inter-personal skills, personal development, social awareness and technological skills. The effective learning process to acquire these skills could take place not only through traditional sources such as schools and families but also through new sources including peer learning and media.

#### **X. The initiatives and actions that could be considered for the future**

The following consolidates the recommendations for future action with respect to each of the four areas.

**A. Role of women, maternal health and family planning (Articles 15 through 17)**

- Universal awareness by all persons, women and men, girls and boys, of all human rights -- civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, including the right to development -- and the fundamental freedoms of women and children, including the girl-child, should be promoted through comprehensive gender-sensitive human rights education and legal literacy programmes.
- Comprehensive human rights-based strategies should be developed and implemented to tackle trafficking in humans, especially women and children, for the purposes of slavery or slavery-like practices, forced labour or services by addressing prevention, protection and redress for trafficked persons and prosecution of traffickers in accordance with the law.
- Efforts, including ongoing efforts, on bilateral, subregional, regional and international agreements and treaties to combat all forms of trafficking in women and girls should be promoted. Provision of comprehensive assistance to victims of violence and trafficking should be promoted.
- Full recognition of the girl child's rights as a child, which should not be overshadowed by casting the girl child as tomorrow's woman, should be ensured and measures to ensure girls' development at different stages of life, including, importantly, early childhood and adolescence should be promoted.
- Basic education for girls should be achieved as soon as possible to ensure that the benefits of education accrue, in a sustainable way, to girls.
- Greater gender parity at higher levels of education in response to the uneven and limited access of girls to higher levels of education should be fostered, where necessary.
- Gender-sensitive education should be emphasized and promoted in the school system at all levels and in life-long learning programmes. Gender-sensitivity training should be provided to all stakeholders who are involved in policy, planning and implementing such policies and programmes.

**B. Basic education and literacy (Articles 20 and 21)**

- Focus on implementation of the Jakarta Plan of Action on Human Resources Development in the ESCAP Region as well as the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY) in addressing the issue of access to educational opportunities for youth, especially those who fall under disadvantaged sub-groups of youth, namely, girls and young women, migrants, refugees, displaced persons, street children, indigenous youth minorities, young people in rural areas and young people with disabilities;

- Reflect the principles of democracy and equity and thus prepare the youth to live as global citizens in a knowledge, information and value-based world; and
- Reexamine the relevance of content and quality of education, as well as diversity of educational opportunities. In order to ensure the relevance, youth participation needs to be promoted in order to ensure that education provides the knowledge that is indeed needed by youth themselves and provide those knowledge through appropriate medium. The roles and status of non-formal education and non-state actors (including NGOs, youth organizations, the private sector and media) in the provision of education should be recognized and enhanced in order to expand the quantity and types of educational opportunities to facilitate the goal of EFA, especially for out-of-school youth.

**C. Children in especially difficult circumstances (Articles 22 through 24)**

- Increase the enrolment of children and youth with disabilities to close the gap between their current level of enrolment and the net enrolment rate of non-disabled children in each respective country or area in the ESCAP region, in both formal and non-formal education systems;
- Include girls, boys, women and men with disabilities in all policies, plans and programmes to ensure Education for All, with adequate financial allocations and appropriate technical assistance;
- Introduce and expand early intervention programmes for children with disabilities, with provision for the active involvement of their families and communities, in both rural and urban areas. Also, promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular preschools;
- Strengthen pre- and in-service teacher preparation programmes to ensure effective teaching of children with diverse capabilities, including those with disabilities; and
- Promote the adaptation of teaching approaches and materials to facilitate effective educational outcomes for children with disabilities.