

ESCAP Inputs on the Secretary General's report on the "Twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Rights and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms"

Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls

ESCAP promotes the rights of women and girls by working with member States on enacting legislation and adopting progressive measures in line with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As laid out in the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, ESCAP member States recalled that, "...Governments have a duty to guarantee the full enjoyment of all rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights by women working peacefully in a personal or organizational capacity for the promotion and protection of human rights." [para 16]

Specifically, ESCAP has conducted analytical research on women's economic empowerment, including through entrepreneurship, to ensure that women are able to fully exercise their rights to decent work and full and productive employment. In addition, ESCAP is developing an evidence base to advocate for policy interventions and investment to promote women's transformative leadership - with a focus on not just increasing the numbers of women in leadership at all levels of society, but also prioritizing the impact and quality of leadership. Furthermore, ESCAP's technical assistance on gender-responsive budgeting is supporting efforts by member States in not only advancing progress towards SDG 5 on gender equality, but the 2030 Agenda as a whole.

Disability

ESCAP promotes rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities encouraging member States to implement the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, the instrument agreed upon by member States to chart the course for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022. The Strategy aims to accelerate the ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. ESCAP's technical assistance has also enabled the development of rights-based and anti-discrimination legislation on disability in Asia-Pacific countries. Moreover, its capacity-building initiatives have enabled South-South knowledge exchange on accessibility measures, to ensure persons with disabilities have access to information, services and technologies, and opportunities to participate in decision-making processes.

Ageing

ESCAP has been promoting the human rights of older persons, working with member States on enacting legislation that protects their rights, in line with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Specifically, ESCAP conducted analytical research on long-term care and income security for older persons in selected countries of the Asia-Pacific region, thus promoting the

responsibility and duty of each State to promote and protect the human rights of every individual [Article 1]. ESCAP's analytical and normative work also promoted the participation of older persons in the economy and society, including in Government [Article 8]. The Outcome Document of the Third Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing encourages member States "to ensure the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights of older persons and the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against older persons." [paragraph (j)]¹

Migration

ESCAP's work on international migration similarly highlights the responsibilities of States to ensure the human rights and fundamental freedoms of international migrants. ESCAP has organized a number of regional intergovernmental meetings, most recently the regional preparatory meeting for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, to promote dialogue and cooperation between Member States of the Asia-Pacific region to support the realization of the rights of all migrants. Outcomes of these meetings have reaffirmed the importance of the human rights of migrants as a core component of efforts to manage international migration and to ensure that it is safe, orderly and regular.²

HIV

ESCAP has also helped promote sexual and reproductive health and rights and the rights of key populations at higher risk of exposure to HIV in the context of its work in supporting the follow-up and review of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the response to HIV. It has consistently provided a platform for dialogue between human rights defenders and States, and outcomes of meetings such as the 6th Asian and Pacific Population Conference³ and the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on HIV⁴ highlight the need for empowerment of people, especially groups recognised as vulnerable to discrimination, to ensure their effective participation in Government actions to promote their rights.

¹ See http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/AgeingMeetingReport_DEC18.pdf

² See http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/CompactChairSummaryfinal_0.pdf

³ See, for example paragraph 215: "Empower communities to ensure the accountability of Governments in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the recommendations of the present Declaration, as well as the accountability of health and social service providers;"

<http://www.unescapsdd.org/files/documents/Report%20of%20the%20Sixth%20APPC.pdf>

⁴ See http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/HIV_5E.pdf