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**South Asia Plus Consultation on
“Culture, Women and Human Rights”
2nd-3rd September 2010
Dhulikhel Lodge Resort, Dhulikhel, Nepal**

September 1st 2010 - Arrival in Kathmandu			
5.30 pm onwards	Registration		
Day 1 September 2nd 2010			
Time	Topic	Scope of Discussion	Speakers
08:00am-9:00am	Registration		
09:00am-10:00am	<i>Session 1</i> Inaugural Session	Welcome and opening, followed by an introduction to PLD, the objectives and agenda of the consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome Address: Renu Rajbhandari • Introduction of the Objectives of the Consultation: Madhu Mehra • Introduction of Participants
10:00am – 11:00am	<i>Session 1</i> Context Setting: Understanding the scope of culture, the diversity within cultures, its relationship with women's rights activism	Speakers will discuss the contingent nature of culture, the various influences it embodies, and the how engagements with culture relate to democracy, cultural diversity, and women's rights. The relationship of the theme with the mandates on cultural rights and violence against women will also be discussed (15 mins each)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Asia- Uma Chakravarti • South East Asia Kamala Chandrakirana • Farida Shaheed, UN Independent Expert on Cultural Rights • Rashida Manjoo, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences <p>Chair: Madhu Mehra</p>

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11:00 – 11:15 am	Tea Break		
11.15 -12.00	<p><i>Session 2 continued</i> Relationship with Human Rights</p> <p>Plenary Discussion: 40 mins</p>		
12.00pm – 1.00 pm	<p><i>Session 3</i> Legal Plurality as an opportunity: negotiating women’s rights through mediation in the community</p> <p>Plenary Discussion: 40 mins</p>	<p>The panellists will discuss their strategies and approaches to alternative mediation/ shalish/ jamaat, highlighting the background in which the interventions emerged, the role and extent to which cultural and religious norms are relied upon, the relationship with the formal systems of justice. They will also share the obstacles/ achievements/risks they face at the local level – and their relationship with the local religious leadership (10-15 mins each)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sultana Kamal, (Ain O Shalish Kendra, Dhaka (Bangladesh) TBC) • Sharifa Khannum, STEPS, Tamil Nadu (India) • Seema Khan, Muslim Women’s Society, Kathmandu (Nepal) <p>Chair: V. Geetha</p>
1.00pm – 2.00 pm	Lunch		
2.00pm – 2.45 pm	<p><i>Session 3 continued</i></p> <p>Plenary Discussion</p>		<p>Jarjum Ete, Arunachal Pradesh (India) Hasina Khan, Awaz e Niswan, Mumbai (India) Sri Lanka/ Pakistan (TBC)</p>
2:45 pm– 3.15 pm	<p><i>Session 4</i> Mobilising cultural and religious resources for social justice and gender equality – strategies in relation to media, public education, advocacy</p>	<p>Through examples from their work, panellists will show how religious/ cultural resources are used in advocacy, mobilising, awareness raising (including public education) to contest dominant versions of culture and culturally sanctioned discrimination against women, and counter dominant leadership. Panellists are encouraged to place their work in the context of the re-definition of women’s roles and relationship with their communities. They will highlight approaches, achievements, resistance/ threats, and the responses of the state and non state actors (10 mins each).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rahima, Fahmina (Indonesia) • Lily Thapa, WHR (Nepal) • Zainah Anwar, Sisters in Islam and Musawah (Malaysia) • Zakia, BMMA (India) • Pakistan (TBC) <p>Chair: Kamala Chandrakirana</p>

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3.00pm – 3.15 pm	Tea break		
3.15-5.30 pm	Session 4 continued		
	Plenary Discussion		
Day 2 September 3rd 2010			
09.00am – 11.00 am	<p><i>Session 5</i> Formal System: Opportunities and obstacles in contesting culturally sanctioned gender discrimination and monolithic constructions of culture through law and policy</p> <p>Plenary Discussion: 45 mins</p>	<p>Panellists will discuss legal approaches challenging culturally sanctioned gender discrimination and reflect upon how the political context contributed to the success or failure of the approaches. They will also share, how law and policy frameworks for the protection of cultural diversity has worked against women's equality agenda, individual expression, and minorities, and reflect on ways of expanding the scope of cultural diversity to include differences, debate and dissent through the framework of cultural diversity. Panellists are encouraged to reflect on ways of addressing tensions between individual/ sub group and collective expressions of cultural rights, sharing examples from their context where possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sapna Malla Pradhan, Constituent Assembly member, founder FWLD (Nepal) • Sara Hossain, Barrister (Bangladesh) • Gita Sahgal, Women's rights activist/ Former Head, Gender Unit, Amnesty International (London) • Geeta Ramaseshan, Advocate, Chennai High Court (India) <p>Chair: Sultana Kamal, Ain-O-Shalish (TBC)</p>
11.00am – 11.15 am	Tea Break		
11.15 am– 1.00 pm	<p><i>Session 6</i> Group Work</p>	<p>Group Work: Identifying the role of state and non state actors in respecting, fulfilling and protecting women's leadership within customary and religious spaces, and the next steps</p> <p>Participants will break into smaller groups to discuss role of the state and non state actors in recognising and protecting the diverse engagements within culture, in light of the threats and obstacles experienced in the course of their work. They will reflect upon obligations at the local, national/ policy levels, and at the international level, that protects democratisation processes within cultures, and</p>	<p>Chair: Sara Hossain</p>

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		<p>within that contestations and negotiations within cultural domain.</p> <p>The participants will also consider next steps that will help achieve recognition of state obligation – through alliance building, advocacy, monitoring, and so on</p>	
1.00pm – 2.00pm	Lunch		
2.00pm – 3.30 pm	<p>Presentation of Group Work</p> <p>Plenary discussion and Synthesis</p>	<p>The groups will present their discussions in the plenary on role of the state and the next steps towards recognition of such a role</p>	V. Geetha and Kamala Chandrakirana
3.30pm – 3.45 pm	Tea break		
3.45 pm– 6.00pm	<p><i>Session 7</i> Openings and possibilities within the UN human rights systems</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkages with CEDAW – Pramila Patten • Recommendations on way forward - IECR, SRVAW <p>Chair: Zainah Anwar</p>
	Vote of thanks and Closing - Madhu Mehra		
Saturday 4th September 2010: Departure from Dhulikhel to Kathmandu Airport			