



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

**REPORT OF THE HIGH-LEVEL INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING TO
REVIEW REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM
FOR ACTION AND ITS REGIONAL AND GLOBAL OUTCOMES**

Bangkok, 7-10 September 2004

I. Explanation of position by the United States of America

II. Explanation of position by France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and New Zealand, and Observer States Canada and Sweden

Annex II

Explanation of position by the United States of America

- The United States is pleased that ESCAP member States were able to work together to prepare this Meeting's outcome document and Bangkok Communiqué. We are joining consensus on the documents, and wish to give our explanation of position.
- The United States is firmly committed to the empowerment of women and the need to promote women's fullest enjoyment of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. We would like to emphasize the essential need to ensure that all women, as well as men, are provided with the education necessary to realize their full potential.
- The United States wishes to note in joining consensus that it is essential to recognize the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents and other persons legally responsible for adolescents to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the adolescent, appropriate direction and guidance on sexual and reproductive matters, education and other aspects of children's lives for which parents have the primary responsibility.
- The United States strongly supports a balanced approach to the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, such as the ABC Model: Abstinence, Be Faithful, and correctly and consistently use Condoms when appropriate. The ABC approach can target and balance A, B, and C interventions according to the needs of different at-risk populations and the specific circumstances of a particular country confronting the epidemic.
- The United States fully supports the principle of voluntary choice in family planning. We have stated clearly and on many occasions, consistent with the International Conference on Population and Development, that we do not recognize abortion as a method of family planning. The United States does not promote abortion. We understand that the terms "reproductive rights" and "reproductive health services" do not constitute support, endorsement or promotion of abortion or the use of abortifacients. The United States supports the treatment of women who suffer injuries or illnesses caused by legal or illegal abortion, including for example post-abortion care, and does not place such treatment among abortion-related services.
- The United States understands that joining consensus in no way constitutes a reaffirmation of language in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome of the twenty-

third special session of the General Assembly or documents references therein that could be used to suggest the creation of new human rights.

- We also understand that the documents are not intended to and do not create legally binding obligations on States under international law, nor do they indicate a change in the United States' position regarding treaties we have not ratified.
- The United States does not support quotas. The position of the United States is that the best way to guarantee women's involvement in the political process is through legal and policy reforms that end discrimination against women and promote equality of opportunity. A disadvantage of quotas is that among some they promote a perception that a woman gained a decision-making position solely because of gender and regardless of merit.

Annex III

Explanation of position by France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and New Zealand, and Observer States Canada and Sweden

I take the floor on behalf of France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Canada and New Zealand.

Almost 10 years ago, countries around the world, including all countries in the ESCAP region, negotiated and signed the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women. We appreciate that, at this week's ESCAP High-level Meeting, countries took the opportunity to reaffirm the Beijing Platform for Action and showed strong support for other global commitments, particularly the Millennium Declaration, the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The review in New York next year can take from this Meeting the following:

- An absolute reaffirmation of Beijing;
- A commitment to implement the Beijing Platform for Action;
- A renewed resolve to achieve gender equality and the human rights of women.

We were pleased to observe a general consensus that the time had come to transfer words into actions.

We recognize the rights of any person, woman or man, to have control over her or his own life, body and sexuality.

More substantial progress is needed in the following areas:

- Sexual and reproductive health and rights, including information for youth and adolescents;
- The negative impact of HIV and AIDS on women, especially poor and marginalized groups;
- Recognition of women's role in conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building.

We look forward to further concrete progress in New York next year.