

69th Commission Session (25th April – 01st May, 2013) – COW II

Interventions by India on Agenda Item 3(g) – Social Development

E/ESCAP/69/3, section VI	Sub-programme overview: Issues and challenges related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific
E/ESCAP/69/4	Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (resolutions 66/9, 66/11, 67/7, 67/8, 67/9, 68/7)
E/ESCAP/69/11	Report of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Second Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
E/ESCAP/69/12	Report of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012

Mr. Chairperson,

As mandated by the Rio+20 outcome document, We are all committed to promote a safe and healthy living environment for all, particularly children, youth, women and the elderly and disabled.

In this regard, I would first like to convey our compliments to the Social Development Division for extremely well organized events by it that successfully highlighted the challenges related to ageing, disability, HIV/AIDS etc. We would also like to laud the efforts made by ESCAP in implementation of resolutions 66/9, 66/11, 67/7, 67/8, 67/9, and 68/7.

Mr Chair, India has been continuously making efforts to mainstream gender perspective in all its policies and programmes and has been organizing a series of training and capacity building programmes in this area. The Ministry of Women and Child Development, in collaboration with UNDP, UNIFEM and International experts has developed a Gender Budgeting Handbook and Training Manual for ministries and departments of Government of India and the same for the state governments is being prepared.

India ratified the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1993 with two declarations and one reservation which are as follows-

Declarations:

i) " With regard to articles 5 (a) and 16 (1) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Government of the Republic of India declares that it shall abide by and ensure these provisions in conformity with its policy of non-interference in the personal affairs of any Community without its initiative and consent".

ii) "With regard to article 16 (2) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Government of the Republic of India declares that though in principle it fully supports the principle of compulsory registration of marriages, it is not practical in a vast country like India with its variety of customs, religions and level of literacy."

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The Committee's general recommendation 21 on giving equal rights to property accumulated marriage is not practical in a secular country like India with cultural diversities and issues related to marriage, divorce, property and others.

Reservation:

"With regard to Article 29* of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Government of the Republic of India declares that it does not consider itself bound by paragraph 1 of this article."

India is not a signatory to the Optional Protocol* on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Government of India has adopted and continues to adopt various measures, policies, programmes and legal measures for operationalising its commitment towards eliminating discrimination and proactively accelerating the interventions and institutional support systems that aid women and children for their holistic development.

We welcome the launch of the new Asia and Pacific decade for persons with disabilities (2013-2022) and endorse the report of the High Level Inter governmental meeting and Ministerial declaration on the Asia and Pacific decade for persons with disabilities and the Incheon Declaration 'Make the right real'.

India informed the Meeting that a committee had been created to work on the harmonization of domestic legislation with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. India has established the Indian sign language and training centre, with the objective of promoting the Indian sign language and empowerment of persons with hearing impairments. India has also issued guidelines in 2009 to make all government websites accessible in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Significant progress has also been made in developing national legislation and policies to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities during 2003-2012.

India has already expressed its interest in membership of the working group on the Asia-Pacific decade of persons with disabilities.

Mr. Chairperson,

We endorse the Report of the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting on the Second Review and Appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

India is committed to establishing legislative frameworks and provisions covering areas such as employment and social protection of older persons and efforts have been initiated in this direction. Further, we are building provisions for financing and

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fiscal schemes to support programmes for older persons, including microcredit, national savings funds, community-based funds, special subsidies and various tax-based schemes. Progress with regard to strengthening social protection systems, such as income support, social pension and food security schemes have been made. Government of India has, in January 2013, instituted a cash award scheme in 13 different categories to be conferred on senior citizens and institutions rendering services for the elderly persons.

India's commitment to poverty alleviation by extending pension coverage to those living in rural areas has been commended by International Federation of Ageing. We have shared our experiences in implementing schemes in collaboration with civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations, such as the operation of day-care centres for the elderly and would continue to do so. Decentralization was also highlighted as a way to ensure the provision of elderly care and support at the local community level in India. Efforts are being directed towards improving the lives of older persons by promoting the welfare of senior citizens, especially older women, and bringing their concerns into the national development debate.