

Asia-Pacific GEM

Quarterly Newsletter on
Gender and Macroeconomic Issues (GEM) in Asia and the Pacific

REGIONAL SEMINAR ON FINANCING FOR ADVANCEMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY

In preparation for the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women and reflecting on the commitments made in the Sustainable Development Goals, and other normative frameworks, an inter-governmental seminar on *transformative financing mechanisms for the achievement of gender equality by the year 2030* was held in Bangkok on 18-19 February 2016.



Photo: UN Women/Niels den Hollander.

Based on the [background paper](#) prepared for the seminar, Asian and Pacific Members States, multi-lateral and bi-lateral partners, practitioners and technical experts explored state-of-art research and analysis, identified good practices and lessons learned and developed independent policy recommendations on financing and investment mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment in the region. The [Seminar Report](#) summarized key points of discussion and provided a summary of recommendations. The Report was made available at the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women held in New York last March.

The seminar was jointly organized by UN-ESCAP, UNDP, and UN Women, in collaboration with members of the UN Regional Coordination Mechanism Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. More information can be found from the [event website](#).

PANEL DISCUSSION: ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY, TRANSFORMING ECONOMIES

At the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women last March, there was a consensus that realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the 17 [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) and 169 targets, reaffirming the General Assembly resolution of 25 September 2015 that the "achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities."

The SDG has put the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women at its centre through a stand-alone goal on gender equality, [Goal 5 "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"](#) and integrating gender equality throughout the other SDGs and targets. Indivisibility of SDG goals and targets, not a cherry-picking goal, will be an efficient strategy to implement and achieve the SDGs.



Panelists (from left): Yoriko Yasukawa, Dr. Chompoonuh K. Perpoonwivat, Dr. Jeannette Gurung, Anjali Sen, Nicholas Rosellini and Roberta Clarke. Photo: UN Women/Niels den Hollander.

The event titled *Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment: Transforming economies, realizing Agenda 2030* attempted to explore a joined-up approach to address and tackle different SDG targets, with focus on three targets that were missing from the Millennium Development Goals that have cross-sectoral impacts and demand cross sectoral and multi-ministerial efforts in **[continued on page 2]**

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PANEL DISCUSSION: ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY, TRANSFORMING ECONOMIES

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partnership with a wide range of civil society organisations.

The three targets are: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls (VAWG) (SDG target 5.2); eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage (5.3); and recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family (5.4). The panel discussed why and what investment in ending VAWG and harmful practices and recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work is the catalyst essential to achieve SDG 5 as well as other SDGs.

Speaking of cross-sectoral linkages, Ms. Anjali Sen of International Planned Parenthood Federation explained how violence against women and girls and child, early and forced marriage were affected by various factors such as social norms, health, poverty, hunger and economic and food crises. For example, pregnancy and child birth is one of the major factors for maternal mortality among girls, and girls are more prone to domestic violence.

Dr. Chompoonuh K. Perpoonwiwat of Srinakharinwirot University in Bangkok spoke about women's multiple work burdens in Thailand, a rapid ageing society; women who work for paid job and are primarily responsible for child care are now expected to provide care to their older parents as well. Female labour force participation rate in Bangkok has a

dip at the age cohort of 35-39 years old, changing the pattern from an inverse U-shaped to M-shaped curve, as a consequence of difficulties in balancing life and work. She called for a policy to reduce women's unpaid work and redistribute care responsibilities; for example promoting men in becoming role model of homemaking.

As for effective multi-sectoral and joined-up responses to end the discrimination against women and girls, Ms. Yoriko Yasukawa of UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Office emphasized the importance of collecting and analyzing the data and evidences to inform the policies. She also called for measuring both direct costs of health care and child care, for example, and indirect costs such as loss of economic activities due to VAWG and harmful practices, as well as publicly funded programmes for women's empowerment and gender equality.

Related to data and information, Dr. Jeannette Gurung of Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture & Natural Resource Management (WOCAN) spoke about [W+ standard](#), a certification programme of measuring advancement in gender equality and transformational to women's life of investment in agricultural and natural resource management projects. She also mentioned of potential partnership with private sector in SDG implementation as many companies are keen to invest in projects that would lead to sustainable development.

Ms. Roberta Clarke, Regional Director and Representative in Thailand of UN-

Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific said that SDGs is political transformation, transforming fiscal policies among others. Towards SDG implementation, the resources have to be allocated. Gender-responsive budgeting is about transformative financing, taxation and expenditure. If part of disproportionate allocation of budget to military were given to health and education sectors and measures to reduce unpaid care work, our society would be in better place. In order to assist developing countries to mobilize domestic resources, tax leakage must stop, she said.

Ms. Clarke also addressed the needs of having more women in decision-making. She reminded the audiences that setting temporary special measures such as quotas is not only about promotion of women's political participation; it is about equal participation between women and men.

The event was facilitated by Mr. Nicholas Rosellini, UNDP Deputy Regional Director for Asia & the Pacific and Director, Bangkok Regional Hub. The panel discussion was held as a side event of the [Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2016: Regional priorities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific](#) in Bangkok, 5 April 2016.

The event was jointly organized by UNDP, ESCAP, UN Women and UNFPA, as part of UN Regional Coordination Mechanism Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women.

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

The Working Women in an Ageing Society (WWAS) is organizing its first international conference in Fukuoka, Japan, 3-5 June 2016. Ageing society has a major impact on many countries in terms of workforce availability, employment, life work balance, life after retirement, welfare services, pension costs and care of the elderly citizens among others.

With an aim to foster an innovative and sustainable ageing society, the conference will provide a forum to disseminate academic research on active ageing and



Sai Khao Agricultural Community Enterprise's oldest member, 75-year-old Erb Phetorn from Pattani province, Thailand. The Enterprise received support from UNDP Thailand through Japan-UNDP Partnership Fund. ©UNDPThailand/2015/ Angeliqe Reid

women's empowerment, share practical examples of active ageing from various countries and communities, and exchange ideas to promote a better ageing society for all.

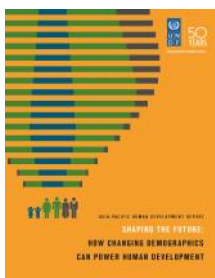
The conference also provides a space for poster presentations by young scholars and practitioners as well as the Public Forum for free admission.

The conference will be conducted in English, with Japanese translation. For more information and registration, please visit the conference website <http://www.ww-as.net/>

[Contributed, with thanks, by Ms. Miyuki Matsuda, WWAS.]

NEW RESOURCES

Shaping the Future: How Changing Demographics Can Power Human Development



Demographic change in Asia and the Pacific is happening at a rate the world has never seen. An explosion in the working age population and a fall in birth rates that took a century in

Europe are happening here in just 30 years.

If countries do not start planning for this demographic change, they will miss out on a unique opportunity to boost growth and investments for the future, says the UNDP in its [latest Regional Human Development Report](#). They also risk a surge in youth frustration, exacerbating instability and conflict.

The report notes that the Asia-Pacific region now has more working-aged people and fewer dependents than at any point in history, providing a springboard for growth. However, the demographic profile varies by country. The report outlines '9 Actions for Sustainable Development,' that can be tailored per country.

For states with a large working-aged population, UNDP is calling for the creation of decent jobs to match the growing workforce, equal employment for women, and ways to turn savings into investments inside the region.

For countries with young populations, there is a need to invest in education and healthcare, smooth transition from school to work and encourage youth participation in public life.

In older countries, government have to design fair, sustainable pension systems, support active ageing and promote appreciation for the value of older citizens.

The region's diversity provides room for south-south cooperation. "With 50 years of expertise and offices in 24 countries in Asia-Pacific, UNDP is ideally placed to help implement the '9 Actions for Sustainable Development'," said Haoliang Xu, UN Assistant Secretary-General and UNDP Director for Asia and the Pacific.

Investing in the Care Economy: A gender analysis of employment stimulus in seven OECD countries



A new [study](#) by [Women's Budget Group](#) in the United Kingdom (UK) examined that positive effects of increasing public investment in social infrastructure, specifically social care services

such as care for the elderly, disabled and for pre-school aged children, on employment and economic growth in case of Australia, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and the United States.

The study shows that investment into the care industry of 2% of GDP in seven countries would create over 21 million new jobs including 600,000 jobs in Australia and 3.5 million in Japan. Since most of care work are done by women, as a consequence, the gender gap in employment would be reduced by 21% in Australia and 7% in Japan.

The study also made a similar analysis for investment in physical infrastructure, a male-dominant construction sector. A similar level of investment in the construction sector would also generate new jobs, but approximately only half as many and would increase rather than decrease gender gap in employment.

In terms of contribution to GDP growth, indirect and induced output effect are larger for investment in construction than in the care industry in Australia and Japan. The study argues that it is the labour intensity of the care industry that causes larger employment effects of investment in it not to result in larger output effects than for construction industry. However, this would change if care was more valued and its workers better paid.

The report suggests that the urgent need to solve the care crisis and address gender inequalities makes investment in the social infrastructure a priority.

Authors: Jerome De Henau, Susan Himmelweit, Zofia Lapniewska and Diane Perrons.

Publisher: The International Trade Union Congress, March 2016, 56 pages.

"Development & Equity" Lectures by Drs. Diane Elson and Amit Bhaduri

On 10 March 2016, the [Global Development and Environment Institute](#) at Tufts University in the United States awarded the 2016 [Leontief Prize](#) to Drs. Diane Elson and Amit Bhaduri for their work for advancing the frontiers of economic thought and supporting just and sustainable societies.

This year's award, titled "Development and Equity," recognizes the contributions that the two have made to economic understandings of development, power, gender, and human rights.



Dr. Diane Elson, emeritus professor at the University of Essex, UK

At the award ceremony and lectures, Dr. Elson spoke about her research on development through a gender lens. [Watch](#) or [read](#) Dr. Elson's lecture.



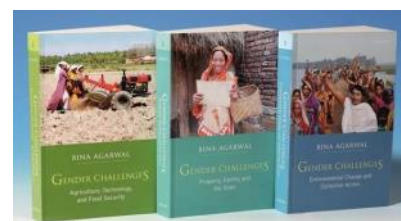
Dr. Amit Bhaduri, emeritus professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India.

Dr. Bhaduri spoke of his work on capturing missing link of power in economics. Economic power is invisible, but effect of the power is visible; that is, inequality, which is

statistically measurable in terms of income, wealth, gender, race etc. [Watch](#) or [read](#) Dr. Bhaduri's lecture.

[Contributed, with thanks, by Ms. Uyanga Gankhuyag, Programme Specialist, UNDP BRH.]

Gender Challenges



This three-volume compendium brings together a selection of Bina Agarwal's path-breaking essays on agriculture, property rights, and the environment, written over the last three decades. Combining diverse disciplines, methodologies and cross-country [\[continued on page 4\]](#)

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comparisons, the essays both challenge and illuminate standard economic assumptions from a gender perspective. The essays provide original insights on a wide range of theoretical, empirical, and policy issues of continuing importance in contemporary debates.

Publisher: Oxford University Press, January 2016, Volumes 1, 2 and 3 (1,496 pages).

[Watch](#) the launch of *Gender Challenges* held in Delhi, India, on 5 January 2016, presented by Dr. Bina Agarwal, Chief Guest Nobel Laureate Dr. Amartya Sen with Vikram Seth, Renana Jhabvala, and Paranjay Guha Thakurta.

[Source: IAFFE listserv]

Free download access to Dr. Bina Agarwal's journal articles in Routledge

Dr. Bina Agarwal, Professor of Development Economics and Environment at the University of Manchester, UK, has been appointed officer in the *Ordre du Mérite Agricole* (Order of Agricultural Merit) by France. This prestigious award, established in 1883, is given for outstanding contributions to agriculture in terms of research, innovation or practice.

To celebrate the recognition of Dr. Agarwal's work, Taylor & Francis Group has made her papers published in Routledge free to read until the end of May 2016. Please visit <http://explore.tandfonline.com/page/bes/bina-agarwal-agricultural-merit-papers>

[Source: IAFFE listserv]

Gender and Climate Change Financing: Coming out of the margin



This book discusses the state of global climate change policy and the financing of climate-resilient public infrastructure.

It explains the sources of tensions and conflict between developing and developed countries with regard to global climate protection policies, and highlights the biases and asymmetries that may work against gender equality,

women's empowerment and poverty eradication.

[Gender and Climate Change Financing: Coming out of the margin](#) provides an overview of the scientific, economic and political dynamics underlying global climate protection. It explores the controversial issues that have stalled global climate negotiations and offers a clear explanation of the link between adaptation and mitigation strategies and gender issues. It also maps the full range of public, private, and market-based climate finance instruments and funds.

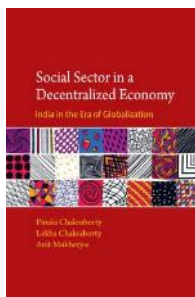
This book will be a useful tool for those engaged with climate change, poverty eradication, gender equality and women's empowerment.

Author: Mariama Williams.

Publisher: Routledge, 2016, 554 pages.

[Contributed, with thanks, by Dr. Mariama Williams, Senior Programme Officer at the South Centre, Geneva, Switzerland.]

Social Sector in a Decentralized Economy: India in the Era of Globalization



The institutions, architecture and the process of decentralization vary widely across countries. These variations have financial as well as redistributive implications when it comes to providing access to basic public services at local levels.

This book is an analytical examination of financing and public services delivery challenges in a decentralized framework. It also provides critical insights into the effectiveness of public expenditure through benefit incidence analysis of education and health care services in India.

The benefits of decentralization always come with conflicts and trade-offs. By unpacking the process of decentralization, the authors identify that 'unfunded mandates' arising from the asymmetry between finances and functions at local levels is a major challenge.

The analysis is carried out by distilling the existing studies in this area and through an empirical investigation of public finance data at different public sector levels in India as well as in some selected developing countries. Using the household survey statistics of consumption expenditure, an analysis of utilization or benefit incidence of public spending on social sectors in India is done, covering education and health sectors.

Authors: Pinaki Chakraborty, Lekha Chakraborty and Anit Mukherjee.

Publisher: Cambridge University Press, March 2016, 221 pages.

[Contributed, with thanks, by Dr. Lekha Chakraborty, Associate Professor at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi, India.]

Demand for Household Sanitation: The case of India



Worldwide, India has the highest number of people defecating in the open, around 600 million. In an attempt to re-

duce number of open defecation, Government of India has a plan to build 110 million toilets across India between 2014 and 2019. Eight million toilets were constructed so far.

A new working paper entitled [Demand for Household Sanitation: The case of India](#) argues that an important aspect for this supply-side initiative to become successful is to create demand for toilets.

In this paper, the authors analysed household demand for toilets. Using Demographic and Health Survey data they created a wealth index and use it to rank household preference for toilets vis-à-vis 20 other different consumer durables. The results suggest among lists of household items that any individual want to have, toilets get a lower preference—ranked 12 out of 21.

As for preference structure for using toilets among residents from 28 states in India, they found the likelihood of households in the North-Eastern states and the Southern state of [\[continued on page 5\]](#)

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Kerala using a toilet facility is much higher than that of a household in Delhi, the study's reference state. The authors argue that many communities or tribes in those states practicing patriarchy may explain the greater prevalence of toilet users. They also found that imparting education and public awareness, especially, among the female cohort is a strong factor leading to toilet usage among households.

Authors: Anurag Banerjee, Nilanjan Banik and Ashvika Dalmia.

Publisher: Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT) Working Paper No. 154/2016, 30 pages.

[Contributed, with thanks, by Dr. Nilanjan Banik, Associate Professor at Mahindra École Centrale, India.]

Three Feminist Economics Research Notes on India

[Feminist Economics Research Notes](#) (FERNs) provides a one-page, nontechnical summary of an article from the journal [Feminist Economics](#). FERNs series will provide succinct, evidence-based support to activists and policymakers seeking to advance feminist goals. Faculty can use them in undergraduate teaching across the curriculum to supplement classroom material.

[Excess Female Infant Mortality and Gender Gap in Infant Care in Bihar, India](#) by

Sanjukta Chaudhuri found the estimated average 23% excess female infant deaths in the east-central state of Bihar, which is considered to be India's most gender disparate state with high poverty rate, when compared to other states of India. That would translate to almost 50,000 female infant deaths being excess annually. Chaudhuri also argues that improving vaccination coverage for female infants, particularly, Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccination, can potentially reduce a substantial proportion of excess female infant deaths in Bihar.

[Creating Opportunities for Women in the Renewable Energy Sector: Findings from India](#) by Bipasha Baruah identified some opportunities and constraints low income women in India face in accessing technologies and employment in the renewable energy sector. Baruah's analysis of two initiatives by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) shows that women can gain optimal traction from green initiatives only within the context of wider socially progressive pro-women policies.

[Spousal Violence and Women's Employment in India](#) by Haimanti Bhattacharya shows that controlling for other socioeconomic correlates of women's employment, married women who have experienced spousal violence (ever or in the past 12 months) are more likely to be employed than women who did not ex-

perience spousal violence (ever or in the past 12 months). They are also more likely to work for cash and work all year. Further analysis, however, reveals that women who experienced spousal violence are significantly less likely to have a say on the money they earn. The evidence indicates the need for caution in viewing employment as a financial empowerment tool for women, as in some contexts it may be an avenue of financial exploitation, Bhattacharya argues.

Gender Data Portal by World Bank

The [World Bank Group](#) relaunched its popular [Gender Data Portal](#), comprising current and historical data on topics ranging from health and education to jobs, assets, and political participation, broken down by sex. The portal allows users to explore tools for data visualization and assess the availability of indicators at the country level.

The Bank Group also launched its [Little Data Book on Gender 2016](#), which presents sex-disaggregated data for more than 200 economies in an easy country-by-country reference on demography, education, health, labor force, political participation and the Millennium Development Goals.

[Contributed, with thanks, by Ms. Koh Miyaoi, Asia and the Pacific Gender Team Leader, UNDP BRH.]

About Us:

UNDP is the UN's global development network, an organization advocating for change and sharing knowledge, experience and resources worldwide to help people build a better life.

UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific Bangkok Regional Hub (BRH) serves 36 countries in Asia and the Pacific. A main priority of the BRH is to provide [UNDP Country Offices](#) in the region with easy access to knowledge through high quality advisory services based on global applied research and UNDP lessons learnt. The second priority is to build partnerships and promote regional capacity building initiatives, which allow UNDP, governments and other development partners to identify, create and share knowledge relevant to solving urgent development challenges.

Asia-Pacific GEM, a quarterly newsletter, aims to bring news related to gender and macroeconomic issues in the region to government officials, development agencies, civil society, and academia. **The next newsletter will be released in July 2016.** Please send any relevant news items you would like to share – announcements about upcoming events, calls for papers, conferences, workshops, training programmes, new publications and research papers on gender and macroeconomics, and association news – to the newsletter [editor](#) at UNDP BRH by **30 June 2016**. The newsletter will be distributed electronically and posted on the [UNDP BRH website](#).

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