



Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation

Framework for Integration of Women in APEC

1999

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Produced for
APEC Secretariat
35 Heng Mui Keng Terrace Singapore 119616
Tel: (65) 67756012 Fax: (65) 67756013
Email: info@apec.org Website: www.apec.org

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Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC

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FRAMEWORK FOR THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN APEC

A. INTRODUCTION

What is the Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC?

The *Framework* responds to APEC Leaders' recognition that gender is a cross-cutting theme in APEC. It is a practical and systematic approach to guide APEC in the achievement of the integration of women in the mainstream of APEC processes and activities. The *Framework* is comprised of three inter-related elements, and an Implementation Strategy, which together were identified by the 1998 APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women as essential to reinforce the important role of women in economic development. The inter-related elements are:

- **Gender Analysis** - a methodology for examining the differences in women's and men's lives;
- **Collection and Use of Sex-disaggregated Data** – data classified by sex and presented separately for women and men;
- **Involvement of Women in APEC** – the increased participation of women in APEC fora.

In addition, practical Guides for gender analysis, the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data and the involvement of women in APEC have been developed as tools to complement the *Framework* and assist APEC with its implementation. These are available in print and on the APEC Secretariat website (www.apecsec.org.sg).

What is the mandate for the Framework?

The *Framework* follows up on the recommendation of the 1998 Ministerial Meeting on Women and subsequent APEC Leaders' directive to “*develop a Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC*” as a means of accelerating the progress of integrating women in the mainstream of APEC processes and activities. The *Framework* has been prepared by the SOM Ad Hoc Task Force on the Integration of Women in APEC, established for this purpose. The Joint Ministerial Statement of the 1998 APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women is Appendix 1.

What is the basis for the recommendations from the Ministerial Meeting On Women?

Ministerial recommendations are based on a series of principles contained throughout their Joint Ministerial Statement:

- Gender is a cross cutting theme in APEC;
- APEC activities related to trade and investment liberalization and facilitation (TILF) and economic and technical cooperation (ECOTECH) are closely inter-linked and have major implications for women;
- Women are critical to the achievement of sustainable economic development in the region; and, women's unpaid work constitutes a major contribution to the economy;

- Close linkages exist between the issues and activities of other APEC fora and the issues affecting women in micro, small and medium enterprises, science and technology, human resources development, finance, fisheries, tourism, transportation, telecommunications, and other sectors;
- The specific realities faced by women must be recognized, understood and systematically taken into account in the formulation and implementation of policies, programs (including economic recovery programs), and projects;
- Efforts should be directed to empower and increase the capacity building of women to respond to economic opportunities and challenges, and to eliminate barriers to women's full participation in the economy;
- Greater emphasis should be placed on the engagement of broader sectors of society.

What is meant by “gender”?

Gender refers to the socially determined differences between women and men such as roles, attitudes, behaviors and values, as opposed to *sex* that identifies the biological differences between women and men. Whilst sex is genetically determined, gender roles are learned, vary across cultures and over time, and are thus amenable to change. Gender is a relational term, which includes both women and men.

What is meant by “gender mainstreaming”?

In the APEC context, the *mainstream* refers to the set of dominant ideas, policies, practices, institutions, and organizations in society which determine the allocation of resources and opportunities.

Gender mainstreaming means women and men having equitable access to, and benefit from society's resources, opportunities and rewards, and equal participation in influencing what is valued and in shaping directions and decisions. Therefore, within APEC, gender mainstreaming would incorporate gender perspectives into the goals, structures, priorities, policies, decisions, processes, practices, activities (including projects), and resource allocation as well as participation at all levels.

In addition, special measures or women-specific projects may also be necessary to address gender inequalities and achieve APEC's goals for women and men in the region.

What is the potential impact of the Framework?

Over time, the *Framework* could have far-reaching positive impacts on the social and economic well-being of the region. Its implementation would contribute to the increased effectiveness of APEC policies and activities in the achievement of its vision and goals, for example:

- The identification and elimination of barriers to women's full participation in the economy and the disproportionate impacts of the financial and economic crisis on women, as identified by the 1998 APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women.
- The creation of a leading-edge workforce that fully utilizes the talents of the entire population, male and female;
- The increased capacity of women to respond to economic opportunities offered by trade and investment liberalisation and facilitation, and by economic and technical cooperation;

- The explicit integration of the economic interests of women into strategies for economic recovery and future prosperity;
- Broader understanding and support for APEC, through the increased participation of women.

To whom does it apply?

The implementation of the *Framework* is the responsibility of all APEC fora and of all women and men involved in APEC processes, policies, projects and activities including Leaders, Ministers, Senior Officials, Chairs, Lead Shepherds and the APEC Secretariat.

The *Framework* may also be applied at the individual economy level.

B. ELEMENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK

1. Gender analysis

What is gender analysis?

Gender analysis is an important component of the APEC approach to the integration of women in the mainstream of APEC activities and processes. It is a methodology to:

- Identify and understand the differences in the lives of women and men, and the diversity among women themselves, i.e. in their varied circumstances, responsibilities, social relationships and status within existing economic, social, cultural, environmental, institutional and political structures in any community, or economy.
- Assess how policies, programs or projects may impact differently on women and men, girls and boys;
- Compare how and why women and men are affected differently through the collection and utilization of sex-disaggregated data, both qualitative and quantitative;
- Integrate gender considerations throughout the planning, design, implementation and evaluation processes.

What is the added value of gender analysis?

- More comprehensive knowledge and awareness of the different realities of the lives of women and men.
- Informed decision-making leading to the achievement of the goals of APEC and gender equality.
- Increased effectiveness and improved design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and communication of policies and projects.
- Recognition that different strategies and measures may be necessary to achieve intended results and equitable outcomes for women and men.
- More effective APEC processes and mechanisms for coordinating, implementing and monitoring the *Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC*.

How do you implement gender analysis?

Gender analysis may be applied at the policy or project level. In both cases, the outcomes of the policies or projects can strengthen equal economic opportunities for and participation of both women and men in future growth and prosperity of APEC economies, as well as change gender relations. To assist in the implementation of gender analysis, an *APEC Guide for Gender Analysis* is available.

2. Collection and Use of Sex-Disaggregated Data

What is Sex-Disaggregated Data?

Sex-disaggregated data means any data that is cross-classified by sex, presenting information separately for women and men, girls and boys. Sex disaggregated data is collected on the basis of concepts and methods that take into account women's and men's roles, realities, conditions and situations in all spheres and aspects of society, such as literacy, education levels, business ownership, employment, wage differences, dependants, home and land ownership, loans and credit, debts.

Why Collect Sex-Disaggregated Data?

The lack of sex-disaggregated data hides the actual, as well as the potential contributions of half the population to our economies and may hinder effective policy development. We recommend that APEC identify the gaps in data collection methodologies and processes and take steps to address these gaps in the most cost-effective way. Each member economy is encouraged to build its own sex-disaggregated database in a format comparable to internationally recognised standards, where available."
(APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women, Manila, 1998)

Sex disaggregated data is an essential input into gender analysis and the understanding of the different economic contributions, circumstances and realities of women and men. Sex-disaggregated data can provide information about how much women contribute to all aspects of society and economic activity in both their paid and unpaid capacities. Using sex-disaggregated data can help APEC fora to decide on and carry out activities that are effective, equitable and beneficial for women and men, as well as their economies, and so gain the most benefit from their work.

Sex-disaggregated data can be used to:

- identify the different situation of women and men, including changes over time;
- consider the impact APEC activities will have on both women and men, and track the impact they do have;
- identify and define problems, develop options and choose the option which will be most effective and beneficial for both women and men;
- more fully understand the impact of events such as the regional economic crisis on women, and hence assist in formulating activities in response to the events;
- allocate resources and effort in a more equitable fashion;
- evaluate and monitor results and outcomes by sex.
- show progress or lack thereof of women using indicators and regular data publications.

More equitable results are likely when gender analysis using sex-disaggregated data is carried out. Economies, businesses and people all benefit when the range of women's and men's current and potential input to economic progress is known and used in economic decision making.

How can the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data for APEC Fora be improved?

Member economies and some APEC fora are currently collecting and using some sex-disaggregated data in a range of areas. In addition to the statistics and information collected by individual economies there are many possible sources of data such as international agencies, research or study centres, businesses and non-government agencies.

International initiatives, such as those led by the United Nations and the World Bank are already in place to assist economies to improve their collection of sex specific data standards and best practices for data collection are well document. The *APEC Guide on Collection and Use of Sex-Disaggregated Data* gives information on resources available to assist economies as well as provides sources and examples of sex-disaggregated data that may be useful to support the APEC priorities.

Some work on the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data is already underway in priority areas through a number of APEC fora.

Increasing the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data in other areas could enhance APEC's opportunities to promote economic development. APEC fora can use data in many different forms to analyse situations for women and men. Qualitative data or research studies as well as quantitative statistics can provide useful insights for APEC fora. It would be appropriate for APEC fora to individually and collectively consider what data should be collected as they are developing and reviewing specific projects and policies. Extending disaggregated data to include other factors such as ethnicity and age could further add to APEC's information base. One example of data that could be collected by APEC are the participation rates of men and women in APEC fora and APEC leadership roles. Further examples are provided in the *APEC Guide on the Collection and Use of Sex-Disaggregated Data*.

3. The Involvement of Women in APEC

Why involve women in APEC?

The 1998 APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women recommended the promotion and encouragement of the involvement of women in all APEC fora. Special mention was made of women's involvement in decision-making.

Data on the participation of women and men in APEC fora are incomplete and difficult to access. Most participant lists, for instance, are not sex-disaggregated. However, attendance lists of a number of APEC meetings and activities suggest that women constitute only about a quarter of the participants¹. This is roughly the same magnitude reported by a "stocktaking" of Human Resource Development Working Group (HRDWG) projects and activities.

¹ In July 1999, the Philippines with funding support from Canada, conducted a study of the involvement of women in APEC. Two data sets were analysed: lists of APEC meeting participants and the list of APEC fora chairs and convenors; and responses to an informal survey on women's participation in APEC fora. The tabulated data is available electronically at the APEC Secretariat Website (www.apecsec.org.sg).

In 1998 and 1999, among committee chairs, Lead Shepherds, convenors, and other leaders, the participation rate of women varied between 17-28 percent. These figures provide an approximate reference point for monitoring participation of women in APEC.

How can women be more involved in APEC?

Involvement of women refers to the *participation* of women in APEC fora, activities and projects. Women can participate as decision-makers, Leaders, heads of committees, working groups, or other APEC bodies that formulate and implement policies and programs; as leaders or key members of research teams and conference delegations; and as partners or experts, who are consulted by APEC and member-economies either in individual capacities or as organisations (such as the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) and the Women Leaders' Network (WLN)).

Women's participation in APEC fora could be improved as follows (see *APEC Guide on the Involvement of Women*):

- Encouraging economies and all APEC fora to increase women's presence and participation in activities and projects, especially as decision-makers; and to include more women in their delegations to meetings and other fora, particularly to high level meetings such as Senior Officials, Ministers and Leaders.
- Through analysis of the current involvement of women in APEC and by addressing factors that may constrain women's participation.
- Through the promotion of an environment within APEC and its member-economies that will be conducive to greater women's participation by the implementation of the *Framework*.

C. IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The 1998 Ministerial Meeting on Women made a series of recommendations to accelerate the integration of women in APEC and to “*ensure the implementation of these recommendations and accountability for results*”. The implementation strategy also responds to the APEC Leaders' directive to “determine next steps to integrate women into the mainstream of APEC activities” (APEC Leaders, Vancouver, 1997).

The implementation strategy sets out the essential actions to integrate women into APEC and will assist APEC achieve its goals of continuous and sustainable economic development and further prosperity for women and men in the region. The implementation strategy recognises that change will occur incrementally and over time, and builds on existing APEC processes and mechanisms. The strategy is flexible in that it allows each APEC forum to chart its most effective implementation path including the allocation of resources.

The successful implementation of the *Framework* requires a critical transition period for capacity building in gender analysis, developing awareness of the *Framework*, acquiring knowledge of good examples of gender-integrated policies and projects, and for APEC to gain experience with gender integration. Implementation also requires commitment at all levels of the organisation, APEC-wide management and monitoring of progress, and gender expertise to assist in the process. The strategy therefore anticipates a two-year transition period, subject to yearly progress reviews.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

There is a shared responsibility at all levels of and throughout APEC for the implementation of the *Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC*. Because of its cross-cutting nature, and mandate for coordination and monitoring, the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), has a major responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the *Framework*.

A. *To maximise the effectiveness of APEC policies and activities and enhance the role and contribution of women in economic development, it is recommended that:*

All APEC fora:

- Examine the role and contribution of women, identify barriers to their contribution and take appropriate measures to eliminate these barriers consistent with this *Framework* (for example, building on the analysis undertaken in preparation for the 1998 Ministerial Meeting on Women in the areas of small and medium enterprises, science and technology, and human resource development).
- Encourage the increased involvement and participation of women in projects and activities, especially in decision-making.
- Collect and utilise, as appropriate, sex-disaggregated data in their respective subject areas as well as on the participation of women in meetings, projects and other activities.
- Incorporate the principles and methodology of gender analysis as an on-going part of work plans; and in activities such as project design, implementation, evaluation, and reports, including recommendations, as appropriate.
- Document and share good practices of policies, programs and projects that demonstrate effective gender integration in APEC, and at economy level.

B. *To coordinate, facilitate and monitor progress in the implementation of the Framework, it is recommended that:*

All APEC fora:

- Promote and implement the Framework for the Integration of Women.
- Ensure capacity building through the provision of information sessions on gender analysis (e.g. as initiated by the Human Resources Development Working Group in 1999) and on the application of the *Framework*.

Senior Officials Meeting (SOM):

- Provide direction to all fora to ensure that gender integration is part of their work thereby enhancing the effectiveness of policy decisions.
- Ensure that gender is incorporated as part of the criteria for the development of project proposals and for project approval, as appropriate.
- Take steps to inform Ministers and Leaders of the implications of recommendations and decisions on women and men.

- Encourage research and further studies on matters of priority such as the impact of the financial and economic crisis on women, the gender implications of recovery measures, and on the contribution of women to economic growth and future prosperity in light of the recommendations of the 1998 Ministerial Meeting on Women.
- Monitor and ensure the implementation of the *Framework* across APEC; and strengthen the institutional capacity for the implementation of the *Framework*, including through the formation of a SOM Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Gender Integration. The role of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group would be to provide gender advice and expertise to SOM, and other APEC fora on the implementation of the *Framework*. The Group would complement the responsibility and accountability of individual APEC fora for the implementation of the *Framework*. The critical transition tasks would be to:
 - develop and recommend gender criteria for use, as appropriate, in project proposals, approval and evaluation;
 - develop and recommend formats and processes for annual monitoring by SOM of the progress achieved in the implementation of the *Framework*, and analyse results;
 - assist in the development of information sessions to various APEC fora on the *Framework* and gender analysis;
 - oversee the compilation of best practices on gender integration in APEC fora and economies, which would link the work of various fora and provide a practical source of ideas on gender analysis and mainstreaming;
 - provide recommendations on the next steps in gender integration and the further implementation of the *Framework*

The SOM Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Gender Integration would:

- have members with gender expertise;
- be open to all economies and representatives from other APEC fora;
- operate electronically to the maximum extent possible;
- designate lead economies on a yearly basis.

The mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group would be for a period of two years, subject to review at the end of that period.

APEC Secretariat:

- Disseminate the *Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC*, in both print and electronic formats.
- Coordinate the annual process for Working Groups and other fora to report to SOM, Ministers and Leaders, and prepare the report on progress made in the implementation of the *Framework*, including the collection of data on the participation of women, for subsequent analysis by the SOM Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Gender Integration.
- Expand the APEC website:
 - include a separate section on gender that encompasses all the gender-related activities within APEC including publication of good practices in integration;
 - establish links to other sites as additional sources of information on gender terminology and definitions, gender analysis, gender mainstreaming, gender-responsive indicators and sex-disaggregated data, such as the Women Leaders Network (WLN), the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and others.

APPENDIX

**APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women
October 15-16, 1998, Makati, Philippines
Joint Ministerial Statement**

Preamble

1. We, the Ministers from Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; the People's Republic of China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; the Republic of Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; the Republic of the Philippines; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; and the United States of America; members designate from Peru, Russia, and Vietnam; representatives of the APEC Secretariat; observers from the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, South Pacific Forum, and ASEAN Secretariat responsible for women's concerns related to economics and trade of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) region met in Manila on 15-16 October 1998, to give practical effect to the commitments made by Leaders in 1996, to "put special emphasis on the full participation of women and youth" (Paragraph 18), and, in 1997, when Leaders directed APEC to "take specific steps to reinforce the important role of women in economic development" and hold a Ministerial Meeting on Women "to take stock of the progress to date in involving women in APEC's agenda and to determine next steps to integrate women into the mainstream of APEC activities" (Paragraph 20).
2. The theme of our meeting was "Women in Economic Development and Cooperation in APEC", with the sub-themes: "Women and Small and Medium Enterprises"; "Women and Industrial Science and Technology" and, "Women and Human Resources Development". Throughout our deliberations, we were cognisant of the role that women play in the achievement of the objectives of the Bogor Declaration, the Osaka Action Agenda and the Manila Action Plan. We noted the cross-cutting nature of the issues and the linkages that exist between the sub-themes.
3. In view of the economic and financial crisis in our region, we are concerned with its differential impacts on women and men. While the full social and economic consequences of the crisis have yet to be fully understood, we believe that a disproportionate share of the burden falls on female youth and women, particularly where there have been decreases of expenditures on education, training, health care and social services as well as supply shortages of basic needs such as food and medicines, and a general reduction in employment. We stress that women have a crucial role in the successful planning, design and implementation of economic recovery programs, not only as beneficiaries but also as decision-makers. Additional investments in training, retraining and upskilling women workers can aid in the recovery process.
4. Recognising that progress has been made on the advancement of women and the rapid pace of development in the APEC region, we emphasise the importance of preparing women to fully utilise their potential in order to meet the challenges to the region. We also wish to ensure that all APEC decision making levels take into account the concerns and perspectives of women in APEC in the different fora.
5. We commend APEC for the initiatives already taken to promote the full participation of women in its processes and activities. Throughout our discussions, we built upon the commitments made by Ministers of Finance, Human Resources Development, Small and Medium Enterprises, Science and Technology, Transportation, and, Environment and Sustainable Development, as well as the activities undertaken by APEC Committees and Working Groups. We also commend Officials for their work as they prepared for this APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women and the experts who prepared the technical papers that provided

the basis for a constructive dialogue and led to the formulation of recommendations to APEC Leaders. We believe that the papers contain valuable information and analysis and could serve as useful references in APEC for follow-up work to this Ministerial Meeting.

6. We took note with appreciation of the contribution made by the Women Leaders' Network (WLN) from APEC economies, since 1996, on issues pertaining to women and APEC.

Women in Economic Development and Cooperation in APEC

7. Women are critical to the achievement of sustainable economic development in our region. At this time of economic and financial crisis, it is especially important that women continue to contribute to global growth and recovery. Women now constitute between 32 and 46 percent of the labour force in individual economies. Globally, the increase in women's overall share of the labour force has been particularly marked in export-oriented sectors, where women comprise as much as three-quarters of the workforce. Although women are known to be particularly active in the informal sector, their participation and contribution to the economy through this sector is undoubtedly greater than current estimates. Furthermore, women's unpaid work constitutes a major contribution to the economy.

8. In terms of the impact of women on trade and investment, women's participation in these areas as workers, entrepreneurs, and investors contributes to the achievement of sustained economic growth. However, as a result of gender biases in institutions, women workers and women in business are often less able to take advantage of the economic opportunities that may be created by trade and investment liberalisation. With appropriate policies and programs in place, women's increasing labour force participation and the growth of women's businesses will significantly contribute to the capacity of APEC economies to engage in and benefit from global trade. Regarding the impact of trade on women, increased labour force participation has created in some cases, incentives for investments by public and private sectors in education and training for girls and women. These gains, however, must be balanced against the negative effects of poorly paid jobs, and poor and hazardous working conditions as well as their consequent strain on domestic economies' health and social expenditures.

9. As a result of our deliberations, we conclude that the specific realities faced by women must be recognised, understood and systematically taken into account in the formulation and implementation of policies, programs (including economic recovery programs), and projects. We urge APEC to address the paucity of data and research on the roles and contributions of women. Where trade and investment liberalisation and globalisation may create different effects and opportunities for women and men, we believe that gender impact analysis will lead to an improved understanding of their relative merits, and thus, should be undertaken across all APEC sectors. We acknowledge that analysis of data is being undertaken in various APEC sectors. In this respect, we support further efforts to identify gaps in such data collection and where necessary, suggest improvements.

10. In the context of the current economic and financial crisis affecting many economies in the region, we conclude that greater effort is needed to enhance the contribution of women to their economies and to explicitly integrate women's participation and concerns in economic recovery programs. Measures are also needed to minimise the disproportionate burden of the crisis on women.

11. We are pleased that several of the APEC Working Groups have begun to address gender issues as part of their activities. However, we note that the efforts vary in emphasis and scope from one Working Group to another, and believe that APEC would be greatly strengthened by a more concerted and coordinated approach to integrate women and gender into all its processes

and activities, and engagement of broader sectors of society. We support the view expressed by Ministers at the 1996 Conference on Regional Science and Technology Cooperation, recognising gender as a “cross-cutting concern with implications in other APEC fora”.

12. We recognise that APEC activities related to trade and investment liberalisation and facilitation (TILF) and economic and technical cooperation (ECOTECH) are closely inter-linked in areas such as education and training, labour force participation (in the formal and informal sectors), access to information and technology, and business and credit. We also recognise that these agendas have major implications for women.

Women and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

13. It is well recognised that SMEs have been leading contributors to economic growth in most economies. The growth of micro, small and medium enterprises owned or operated by women has been a worldwide phenomenon over the past years. While in most economies, data on the full extent of women’s participation in SMEs is not available, their contribution across APEC member economies is much larger than commonly perceived and continues to grow rapidly. In industrialised economies, over one-third of new businesses are set up by women and in some cases, women’s businesses are creating employment faster than the domestic average. However, women-owned SMEs face gender-specific barriers that limit their capacity to maximise their contribution to the economic growth and social development of APEC economies.

14. In many APEC economies, women business-owners experience serious difficulty in accessing financial resources, including start-up or venture capital. Examples persist of gender bias in the legal structures and financial institutions of our economies which limit women’s choices to enter into and develop successful businesses. Financial institutions need to remove gender-stereotype prejudices affecting business women and become gender sensitive in lending decisions. Institutional and structural changes in terms of policy reforms and legal framework need to be pursued to provide women equal access to financial resources. Access to financial packages and services targeted towards the large and growing sector of women-operated SMEs has to be available. Access to markets including tourism, information and technology, particularly media and communication technologies, are important factors in determining the success of businesses. On-line marketing and information services for women have to be established to enable them to search for niche markets and do business. The participation of women in domestic and global trade fairs/missions has to be encouraged to build networks for their businesses. Networking to link women entrepreneurs in the formal sector with those in the informal sector is important for business linkages, technology transfer and management upgrading via fostering sister relationship programs. There needs to be a focus on improving the management capacity and capability of women-owned SMEs. Women’s training has to address the urgent need for specialised skills training and acquisition of education to meet the labour requirements of globalisation. Given women’s multiple burdens, assistance needs to be provided to women in SMEs to cope with multiple roles by facilitating family-friendly employment and providing basic support, such as parental leave.

15. We find that as a result of the lack of sex-disaggregated data on women’s contributions to SMEs and to the economy, economies may be missing opportunities to enhance and promote the development of SMEs and economic growth. We note with concern that out of fifteen APEC SME projects since 1994, only two were gender-specific. We encourage APEC to build on the commitment made by APEC Ministers at their Meeting on SMEs in 1997, where they “agreed to promote gender sensitive policies and measures related to the development of SMEs to empower women in technical, managerial, and entrepreneurial fields,” and to take the necessary measures

to remove the barriers faced by women-owned SMEs so that they may develop, expand and thereby increase their contribution to the social and economic growth of the region.

16. We welcome the agreements reached by the 1998 APEC SME Ministers to include micro enterprises and women entrepreneurs as an integral part of the Integrated Plan of Action for SME Development. They also emphasised the importance of eliminating barriers to the full participation of women to individual APEC economies. In this context, they noted the establishment of the Confederation of Women's Business Councils in some APEC economies as a catalyst to facilitate and enhance business networking and partnership among some entrepreneurs. We welcome the reference by SME Ministers to recent statements of APEC Finance Ministers about the impact of the financial crisis. SME Ministers highlighted the need to develop immediate measures to support SMEs and strengthen social safety nets in affected economies. We further recognise the importance and benefits of E-commerce in SMEs and encourage other APEC fora to give special assistance to women in the use of E-commerce in business.

Women and Industrial Science and Technology (IST)

17. In the new global, knowledge-based economy, competitive advantage requires a highly skilled and diversified workforce that will increase productivity and fuel innovation. Economies need the talent of their entire population, male and female, to create a leading-edge workforce. This will be achieved through policies that place greater emphasis on science and technology education and training for skills upgrading and re-skilling. It further implies the full utilisation of women's talent and competence in these fields. We commend APEC Ministers at their Conference on Regional Science and Technology Cooperation, in 1996, for recognising the "importance of removing barriers and promoting the full contribution of women to science and technology as essential elements in meeting APEC's goal of achieving sustainable and equitable development" as well as the need to strengthen "the exchange of scientific and technical men and women across the region".

18. As part of APEC's economic goals and activities, we must address the range of factors that discourage female youth and women from pursuing interests in and considering careers in science and technology. We note that in many economies fewer young women than young men obtain formal education, and that of the number who do, an even smaller proportion obtain training in science and technology. Skills gaps, as well as skilled workforce shortages, are already creating major bottlenecks in global and regional economic production and scientific development. Yet, women remain an under-utilised intellectual resource in most parts of the world.

19. We note in particular, women's important role in local knowledge systems and indigenous science and technology. Whether in agriculture, textile, food processing, and many other technologies, women's deep involvement with traditional knowledge systems has been commonly recognised. We believe APEC must make greater efforts to understand and preserve these knowledge systems, including promoting mutually beneficial exchanges between practitioners of modern and traditional technology, and, to support the continuing development of traditional practices and knowledge of indigenous and rural women.

20. Given the importance of science and technology for future sustainable economic development, we are concerned that there is severe under-representation of women in science and technology. We are also concerned by the limited information available at domestic and global levels, on the participation rates of women and men in scientific and technological education and careers, and, on the possible differential impact of technological change on the lives of women and men. In this regard, impact studies particularly on information and

communication technologies should be conducted. We commend the Industrial Science and Technology Working Group (ISTWG) for establishing an Ad Hoc Group on Gender and Science and Technology for a two-year period from 1997 to 1999, to document and share best gender practices, and to design a gender and science and technology web site for information dissemination. In view of the need to complete its work, which has been postponed due to the financial and economic crisis, it is recommended that extension of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group be considered to allow it to complete its workplan, mindful of the current management review process. Furthermore, we suggest that special efforts to improve the recruitment and retention of women in science and technology, be included as part of the proposed APEC Agenda for Science and Technology Industry Cooperation in the 21st Century.

Women and Human Resources Development (HRD)

21. Investments in human resource development enhance economic development and the well-being of our populations. A sound educational base provides a foundation for employment security and lifelong learning. We agree that full participation by female youth and women at all levels of education and training is critical to developing a skilled workforce that can respond to economic change. We conclude that obstacles to women's full access to human resource development strategies that recognise the different realities of women and men must be examined and addressed.

22. We are pleased to note the increased labour force participation of women. But we are concerned with the trend of increased feminisation of low-wage and low-skill employment, jobs frequently accompanied by unsafe and unhealthy conditions with little opportunity for skill development in most economies. Throughout our economies, we see evidence of barriers that prevent women from advancing in their careers. Earnings differentials, and education and occupational segregation between women and men remain persistent forms of economic inequality. In addition, we recognise the need to better understand how women may benefit from and may be disadvantaged by, globalisation and changes in the organisation of production. We also note that the performance of unwaged work falls disproportionately on women and believe that HRD strategies can ease work-family tensions in order to achieve full participation of women.

23. As we come together during this time of financial crisis, we stress the importance of recognising investments in women's and female youth's education and training as sound investments in economic growth and the importance of understanding that as young women acquire more education, there is a corresponding improvement in the general welfare of future generations that is closely linked to economic growth. Therefore, these investments should not be subjected to austerity drives such as reduction of budget allocation.

24. We commend the considerable work of the Human Resources Development Working Group in integrating gender into its work, including through the HRD WG Statement of Medium Term Priorities that emphasises that activities should be undertaken with due consideration of gender implications. The HRD WG agrees to integrate gender-based analysis into the Project Management Guide which could serve as a model for other APEC fora.

Common Themes

25. We note the inter-relationship of barriers to the realisation of women's full economic contributions across the range of our discussions particularly the differential impact of the current economic and financial crisis on women. It is essential that we direct our efforts to:

- Expand economic opportunities in areas where women are traditionally under-represented;
- Empower and increase capacity building of women to respond to economic opportunities and challenges;
- Eliminate barriers to women's full participation in the economy;
- Recognise the economic contributions of women's unpaid work and that APEC economies address, where possible, the constraints created by these responsibilities;
- Increase the availability and quality of sex-disaggregated data, research, and analytical information;
- Ensure the integration of women in the planning, design and implementation of responses to the current economic and financial crisis.

26. We recognise the close linkages that exist between the issues and activities of other APEC fora and the issues affecting women in small and medium enterprises, science and technology, and human resources development. We urge the SOM in their coordinative function to encourage all APEC fora to take into account the range of our conclusions in their respective work.

Recommendations:

27. We are pleased to report that important steps have been taken in “integrating women into the mainstream of APEC processes and activities”. We strongly urge APEC to build on these initial efforts and to this end, the following recommendations are submitted to Leaders and are addressed to APEC as a whole.

We seek the endorsement of APEC Leaders to:

- Recognise gender as a cross-cutting theme in APEC.** The successful integration of women into the mainstream of APEC processes and activities under TILF and ECOTECH, requires a comprehensive, horizontal and gender-sensitive approach to all APEC planning and programming, as well as the implementation, by sector, of women-specific activities and projects. Moreover, greater emphasis should be placed on the sharing of experiences among APEC economies, and the engagement of broader sectors of society. The current SOM review of the APEC management process and subsequent implementation may provide a timely opportunity for the identification of the institutional measures to integrate gender as a cross-cutting theme in APEC.
- Place a high priority on the collection of sex-disaggregated data.** The lack of sex-disaggregated data hides the actual, as well as the potential, contributions of half the population to our economies and may hinder effective policy development. We recommend that APEC identify the gaps in data collection methodologies and processing and take steps to address these gaps in the most cost-effective way. Each member economy is encouraged to build its own sex-disaggregated database in a format comparable to internationally-recognised standards, where available.
- Implement gender impact analysis of policy, program and project proposals as an integral component of APEC decisions, processes and activities, including planning, priority setting, resource allocation, design, implementation and evaluation.** We believe that APEC must examine its current practices in this regard, and develop methodologies and tools (or adapt those currently available in other fora), that will meet the needs of APEC and provide the best results.

- d) **Place a high priority on the development of further studies on the impact of the financial and economic crisis on women and the development of strategies to minimise any disproportionate effects on them; and to explicitly integrate the economic interests of women into regional and domestic strategies for economic recovery and future prosperity.**
- e) **Accelerate the progress of integrating women in the mainstream of APEC processes and activities.** We recommend the development of a “*Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC*”. We believe that this *Framework* will maximise the effectiveness of APEC policies and activities, strengthen horizontal linkages across APEC, and promote a common understanding of how the goals of gender integration can be achieved.

The *Framework* would include: the development of guidelines for gender analysis; improvements to the collection and utilisation of sex-disaggregated data; approaches to the involvement of women; and an implementation plan for the *Framework*, including options for a process to review the progress of integrating women in APEC in future years, taking note, among others, of the suggestions from the technical papers of this Ministerial Meeting.

The *Framework* would be developed within one year by an Ad Hoc Task Force on the Integration of Women in APEC under an existing APEC mechanism to be determined by SOM. This Task Force will be resourced by individual economies, would communicate electronically and by other means, and will be disbanded following the completion of the *Framework*.

- f) **Promote and encourage the involvement of women in all APEC fora.** We believe that APEC should review its approach to all APEC planning and programming, encouraging all APEC fora to increase the involvement of women, especially in decision-making. This should include APEC-related fora such as the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC). We also recommend greater application of gender perspective and expertise in APEC work.
- g) **Ensure the implementation of these recommendations and accountability for results.** This Ministerial Meeting on Women has no precedent in APEC. We believe that the momentum gained at this Meeting in addressing the role and contribution of women in economic development and cooperation in APEC must be carried forward. However, the scope and complexity of the issues facing women and APEC economies on the eve of the 21st century will require a longer-term perspective, sustained commitment, better coordination, equitable access to resources and accountability for results. We therefore believe that, within an existing APEC mechanism, it is essential that a process to ensure the progress of integrating women in APEC be an inherent part of the *Framework*. And since APEC activities occur within the context of economic policies determined by officials of the various APEC economies, we encourage more women to participate in the decision-making structures of these economies.

28. In summary, we wish to emphasise to Leaders women’s critical role in economic development and cooperation in APEC, and the importance of building on APEC’s initial efforts to integrate women in the mainstream of its processes and activities. To accelerate progress toward this goal, we recommend the development, in consultation with other APEC fora, of a *Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC*, over the course of the next year, by an Ad Hoc Task Force on the Integration of Women in APEC under an existing APEC mechanism to be determined by SOM.

Closing Remarks

29. We were honoured by the presence of His Excellency Joseph Ejercito Estrada, President of the Republic of the Philippines. We wish to express our most sincere appreciation to President Estrada and the Philippines for their warm hospitality, and thank all those involved in ensuring that this Meeting was a resounding success.