

Civil Society Statement on Beijing+25 Review Intergovernmental Meeting

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Bangkok Thailand



Vica Larasati Speaks At Beijing+25 Review Intergovernmental Meeting/Photo:Ya Gan

Thank you, Chair. My name is Vica Larasati.

I speak on behalf of over 300 feminists from 35 countries who attended the Asia and the Pacific Civil Society Forum and the Young Feminists' Forum for the review of 25 years of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Together we represent 250 organizations and networks, including women human rights defenders and grassroots activists.

We are women and young people of diverse identities, of all ages, sexual orientations, gender identities and expression, and sex characteristics. We are women discriminated by caste, class, ethnicity. We are from Dalit, indigenous, tribal, minority communities. We belong to diverse faiths and religions. We are rural women, farmers, documented and undocumented migrant workers, informal economy workers, sex workers, domestic workers, refugees, asylum seekers, stateless women. We are women with disabilities, we are living in institutions. We are single women, women living with HIV, women affected by conflict and internally displaced women.

And we are angry...

The spaces for our engagement on women's human rights are shrinking.

Despite 25 years since Beijing, we are far from reaching gender equality.

Inequalities of wealth, power and resources are immense. Human rights being trumped by corporate rights – our lands and resources are grabbed.

We are alarmed with the pushbacks on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda,

We are appalled with the regression on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

We are enraged with the instrumentalization of our bodies and labour.

We are disturbed by the rise of religious fundamentalisms, macho and militaristic nationalisms.

We are extremely concerned with increased surveillance and targeting of women human rights defenders.

Our region, the largest and most diverse in the world, is currently reeling under the impact of climate crises and intensifying natural disasters.

This is in addition to the onslaught of the last 30 years of neoliberal regimes where trade liberalization has robbed us of our food sovereignty and privatization of services has denied us access to education and health.

We experience everyday misogyny and pandemic proportions of violence within our homes, at work and in public spaces.

Today, we present our vision of development justice and peace that is redistributive in nature and ensures accountability to the peoples.

Today, we come to you with the HOPE that you will ACT on our concrete recommendations.

25 years on...it is time for system change.

Time to:

- Re-focus, prioritise and accelerate actions to remove structural and systemic barriers;
- Invest equitable resources for women's rights and gender equality agenda instead of flowing the resources to militarisation and nuclearisation.
- Strengthen the gender architecture and accountabilities at all levels.
- Involve us as equal partners in agenda-setting and decision-making. Within politics, policy-making and peace processes.
- Uphold sexual and reproductive health and rights including access to safe abortion.
- Fulfill commitments of women peace and security agenda in line with 1325 and subsequent resolutions.
- Recognize the failure of the neoliberal economic policies and the immense damage on women's lives and livelihoods – which needs to be urgently reversed.
- Climate Emergency is real. Governments in Asia and the Pacific must play a leading role in driving the discussions on climate crisis and upholding the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. We need a just and equitable transition

from extractive-profit and fossil fuel based economy to feminist fossil fuel free futures that are human rights-based and led by communities.

We strongly urge Member States to:

1. Ensure the primacy of human rights in trade and investment agreements, through gender, human rights and environmental impact assessments. And remove the Investor State Dispute Settlement mechanisms from all trade and investment agreements and treaties.
2. Support the process for a legally binding treaty on transnational corporations and other business enterprises at the Human Rights Council.
3. Advocate for the creation of a global architecture to prevent tax evasion and avoidance, and to tackle illicit financial flows.
4. Ensure social protection, wage security, freedom from violence and harassment, and right to association of all workers – in the formal and informal economy, including migrant workers, domestic workers and women farmers.
5. Recognise, reduce and redistribute women's unpaid work through state investments in universal social protection, public services and gender-responsive infrastructure.
6. 6. Promote and protect women's ownership, use and control of land, water, seeds, commons, and traditional and indigenous knowledge systems, and ensure food sovereignty.
7. Ensure universal health care for all, including in humanitarian settings.
8. Decriminalise abortion and sex work. Review policies and laws that conflate sex work and human trafficking, since they are not the same.
9. End discriminatory laws and practices that perpetuate violence, legitimize child marriage, criminalize consent in relation to sexual autonomy of young people; and also those that maintain inequalities in inheritance, citizenship, nationality, marriage and its dissolution.
10. Enforce age-appropriate, evidence, and rights-based, and accessible Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) for all, both in and out of schools.
11. Conduct human rights and gender-responsive assessment of the digital economy, technology and innovation and its implications for women.
12. Review and strengthen national frameworks on gender and disability inclusion ensuring representation of women and girls with diverse disabilities
13. Produce and disseminate high quality reliable data, disaggregated by sex and gender below the household-level, and by differential axes of marginalisations, reflective of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and vulnerabilities.

We, the women and young people of Asia and the Pacific are confident that you will take bold steps in translating Beijing commitments and our recommendations into actions that will fundamentally transform our lives. And we trust that you will not let us down.