



# Asia-Pacific Summit of Women Mayors and Councillors

19 to 22 June 2001, Phitsanulok, Thailand



UNIFEM



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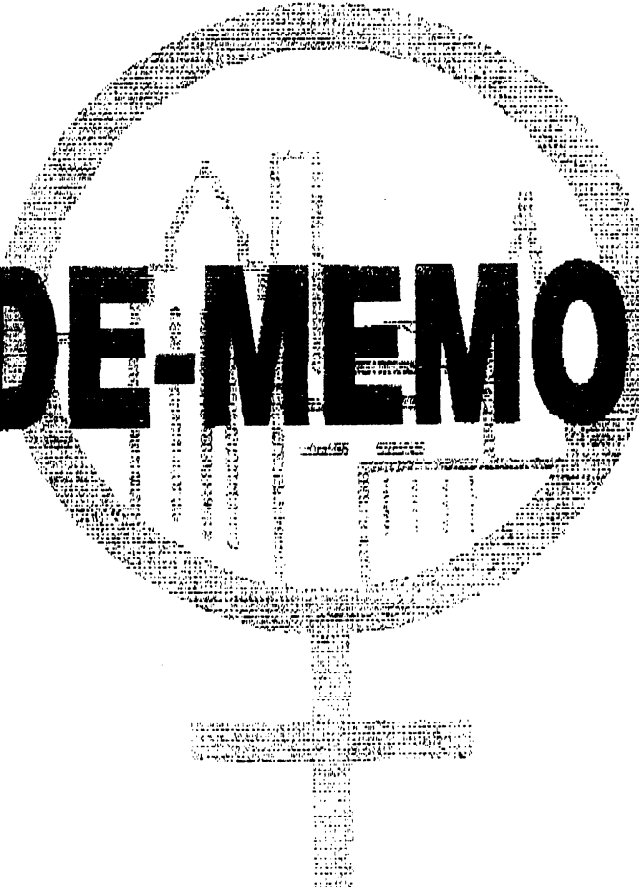
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LOGOTRI



**AIDE-MEMOIRE**

## INTRODUCTION

Local government is the only level of government where women can enter political life with relative ease. The issues at the local level tend to motivate women to enter politics and the comparative costs of mounting an election campaign are low. Local governments are good training grounds for women wishing to reach higher levels of elected or appointed office in government. Furthermore, women in decision-making positions in governments and legislative bodies provide "transformative leadership" by redefining political priorities, placing new items on the agenda and providing new perspectives on mainstream issues.

Some countries of the region have already taken positive measures to promote the participation of women in government and decision-making processes. Nowhere in the region, however, are women equally represented in local government, political parties or urban and rural associations, unless these are women-oriented by nature. Even in countries with good opportunities for women's representation and participation, women have not been able to utilize them effectively. The reasons vary: patriarchal social systems, social and cultural prejudices, financial dependence of women, lack of training opportunities for women, family and child-care responsibilities, the high cost of seeking and holding office and corruption in politics.

Concerted action at the regional level is required to promote the advancement of women in local government. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Network of Local Government Training and Research Institutes in Asia and the Pacific (LOGOTRI), have prepared Reports on the State of Women in Urban Local Governments for 14 countries of Asia and the Pacific. The Government of Japan and the South East Asia Gender Equity Programme of the Canadian International Development Agency (SEAGEP-CIDA) provided funding for the studies. The Summit of Women Mayors and Councilors is convened to discuss issues brought out in these reports and to chart out future regional actions to promote the participation and representation of women in urban local government.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To increase the awareness of the transformative role women play in local government and the challenges and constraints they face while working with and leading local governments.
3. To discuss follow-up regional strategies and actions to promote the participation and representation in local governments.

## STRUCTURE OF THE SUMMIT

The Summit will consist of plenary sessions, sub-regional focus group discussions and various symposia on emerging and critical issues. In the plenary opening session on the morning of the first day a Regional Overview Issue Paper will present opportunities and constraints for the participation and representation of women in urban local government, emphasizing their transformative leadership.

These issues will be discussed in detail during three sub-regional focus group discussions during the afternoon and the morning of the next day. The sub-regions are: South Asia, South East Asia and East Asia and the Pacific. Each sub-regional group is required to report back to the plenary on the afternoon of the second day on three questions: (1) whether the issues outlined in the Regional Overview paper accurately reflect the issues of participation and representation of women in local government in their sub-region, (2) what actions are needed in the country level to promote the participation and representation of women in local government (3) what regional support mechanisms are needed to support actions at the country level.

The third day of the Summit will be devoted to eight half-day symposia on selected issues of concern. Each participant will be able to attend two symposia, one in the morning, one in the afternoon. The symposia will cover two categories of issues: issues on gender and development and issues on urban management and governance. Issues covered include: (1) Access of Women to Information Technologies, (2) Preventing Violence Against Women in Urban Areas, (3) Community-based Income Generation for Poor Women, (4) Gender Budgeting, (5) Gender Considerations in Urban Water Distribution in Slums and Squatter Settlements, (6) Characteristics and Indicators for Good Governance, (7) Integrating Waste-Pickers into the Formal Solid Waste System of Cities and (8) Promoting Regional Cooperation and Exchange of Best Practices Between Cities and Towns.

Concurrent to the symposia, the officers of the three sub-regional groups will meet on the third day with the secretariat staff and draft the "Phitsanulok Declaration on Advancement of Women in Local Government." The draft declaration would outline major issues, strategies for addressing the issues and regional support mechanisms needed to tackle the issues.

On the fourth and last day of the Summit, participants will review the contents of the draft declaration and adopt the amended declaration. Table 1 provides a schematic illustration of the structure of the Summit.

**PARTICIPANTS**

A total of 150 to 200 participants from countries of Asia and Pacific including Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam are expected to participate at the Summit. In addition to elected and appointed women in local governments, high-level representatives of national and sub-national governments, political parties, NGOs as well as academics and researchers working on women's empowerment and on urban issues are invited to participate. International donors and specialized UN agencies will also be invited to attend in the Summit.

**Table 1: Schematic illustration of the summit**

	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Afternoon</b>	<b>Evening</b>
<b>June 18, 2001</b>	Arrival of participants	Arrival of participants	Arrival of participants
<b>June 19, 2001</b>	Plenary Session: Opening and keynote paper	Sub-regional Group discussions	Welcome banquet
<b>June 20, 2001</b>	Sub-regional Group discussions	Plenary session: Reporting of sub- regional group discussions	
<b>June 21, 2001</b>	4 issue based symposia	4 issue based symposia	
<b>June 22, 2001</b>	Discussion on the Declaration on Advancement of Women in Local Government	Adoption of the Declaration on Advancement of Women in Local Government	Farewell banquet
<b>June 23, 2001</b>	Departure of participants	Departure of participants	Departure of participants

#### DATES AND VENUE

The Summit will be held at the Amarin Lagoon Resort <[www.amarinlagoon.com](http://www.amarinlagoon.com)>, Phitsanulok, Thailand, from 19 to 22 June 2001. For more information on the city of Phitsanulok please visit its web site <[www.phsmun.go.th](http://www.phsmun.go.th)>

Participants are expected to arrive on 18 June 2001 and depart on 23 June 2001.

#### ORGANIZERS

The Summit is organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) in collaboration with the following agencies and organizations: United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM); the Regional Network of Local Authorities for the Management of Human Settlements (CITYNET); the Asian Development Bank; The Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI) and the Asia-Pacific Gender Equality Network (APGEN) executed by UNOPS and UNDP; and the Network of Local Government Training and Research Institutes in Asia and the Pacific (LOGOTRI). The City of Phitsanulok, Thailand is the host of the Summit

#### WORKING LANGUAGE

The working language of the Summit is English. No facilities for simultaneous interpretation are provided.

#### COSTS OF PARTICIPATION

A special conference package has been arranged with the hotel. The costs of single room accommodation, 3 meals, 2 coffee breaks is US\$ 35 per person per day. There are no fees for participation.

ESCAP has limited amount of sponsorships available to assist participants from developing countries. For selected participants ESCAP will provide costs of most direct and economical round-trip airfare to Phitsanulok and/or costs of accommodation and food for the duration of the Summit. Participants whose travel is sponsored by ESCAP are expected to purchase their own tickets. They will be reimbursed during the Summit, upon submission of the original receipt of purchase of the air ticket. No reimbursement will be made without the original receipt.

#### TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Phitsanulok is 50 minutes by plane from Bangkok. There are several flights daily from Bangkok to Phitsanulok. Participants will be received at the Phitsanulok airport by the staff of the Municipality of Phitsanulok. The Municipality will establish a reception desk for "The Summit of Women Mayors and Councilors" in the arrival hall of the Phitsanulok airport. Participants will be transported to the hotel by mini buses.

Participants are required to obtain appropriate entry visas to Thailand from the nearest Royal Thai embassy or consulate in their countries immediately upon receiving confirmation of their participation. Particulars for both immigration and health requirements may be obtained from the airlines with which participants will travel.

## FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The ESCAP and other organizers of the Summit will not assume responsibility for any other expenditure than those specifically listed in the letter of invitation. They will especially not be responsible for:

1. All expenses in the home country incidental to travel abroad, including expenditure for visa, medical examination, inoculations and other such miscellaneous items and internal travel to and from the airport of arrival and departure in the home country.
2. Salary and related allowances for the participants during the period of the workshop.
3. Cost incurred by participants in respect of travel insurance, accident insurance, medical bills or hospitalization fees in connection with attending the workshop.
4. Compensation in the event of death or disability of participants in connection with attending the workshop.
5. Any loss or damage to personal property of participants while attending the workshop or losses or damages claimed by third parties as a result of any negligence on the part of the participants.
6. Any other expenses of a personal nature.

## FOREIGN EXCHANGE

Participants may bring with them travellers' cheques or bank notes in US Dollars that can be exchanged for Thai Baht at the prevailing bank rates. The current exchange rate, which is subject to change, is approximately US\$ 1 = ThBht 43.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact:

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