

**UN WOMEN PRESS RELEASE**  
**For immediate release**

**Press contact: Montira Narkvichien, Communications and Outreach Officer, UN Women East and Southeast Asia Regional Office, +66 2 288 1579, [montira.narkvichien\[at\]unwomen.org](mailto:montira.narkvichien[at]unwomen.org)**

Women need to be “at the table” to promote peace and security in the region, says top UN Asia-Pacific official

Regional observance turns spotlight on young women in Asia-Pacific

Bangkok (UN ESCAP Information Services and UN-Women), March 8, 2011 -- Promoting women’s equal access to education, science and technology is essential to giving women a voice “at the table” which is crucial for development and peace and security enhancement in the region, the top United Nations official in Asia and the Pacific said at the centennial commemoration of International Women’s Day.

“Development, peace, security, human potential are truly undermined if women are not part of the equation,” Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), told the Commemoration of 100-year Anniversary of International Women's Day. The event was held at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand and organized by the UN system in the Asian and Pacific region.

The highlight of the event was a series of presentations by young women on this year’s International Women’s Day theme “Equal access to education, training and science and technology: Pathway to decent work for women”.

"We need to make it a priority for women to fully benefit from new technologies and to contribute their innovation potential to society”, said Ms. Nanda Krairiksh, Director of ESCAP’s Social Development Division.

“Education, in itself, is a basic human right. Investing in women and girls also has positive effects on the wellbeing of families, communities and the economy,” stated UN-Women East and Southeast Asia Regional Programme Director, Ms. Moni Pizani.

Five young women and girls from Japan, Myanmar, Thailand and India who are studying and working in Thailand in different sectors of society, spoke of their thoughts and aspirations in relation to this year’s theme.

“Women with disabilities are often described as a group with double burden. But to me it is a group with great potential and strength. All we need is the magic window and encouragement from others,” said Yoshimi Horiuchi in her early 20s, the founder of “Asia Reading Caravan”, a mobile library taking the “joy of reading and learning” to impoverished rural young people across Thailand.

Amy, a young migrant worker from Myanmar, said her dream for the future was for migrant workers to be “treated equally”.

“I think that being a young women in the 21st century is exciting. Our voices are slowly being heard, things are gradually changing and it’s quite a thrilling thought to know that I am a part of it,” said 14-year-old Bangkok school student Disha Subramaniam.

About 200 people, including members of the diplomatic corps, senior Thai government officials, representatives of UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and students from schools and universities in Thailand attended the event.

The 100th anniversary of International Women’s Day was an important milestone in the pursuit of gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Organized by the UN Thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, which brings together some 20 UN agencies, the event had special significance as 2011 also marks the launch of UN-Women, the newest United Nations organization launched as a powerful driver of women’s equality.

- END -