



SWAN's Colombo Declaration: The Roadmap for Sustainable Development for the Women of South Asia

issued in Colombo on 24th August 2013
at **SWAN's Fifth Annual Conference**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) held its Fifth Annual Conference, on the theme "Gender Equity for Peace and Sustainable Development for the Women of South Asia", in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on August 23 and 24, 2013. This Conference, with the participation of women leaders, academics, experts, activists and media representatives from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, was organised in partnership with the Sri Lanka Women's Chamber of Industry and Commerce (WCIC), Colombo, with the support of the South Asia Foundation (SAF India) and Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi.

SWAN recognises the common problems that women of South Asia face, irrespective of their religious beliefs and ethnicities. These include poverty, poor maternal and child health, low educational achievements and illiteracy, violence, social injustice, economic discrimination, lack of ownership or inadequate control over resources, tremendous vulnerability during and after environmental disasters and armed conflicts. Equally, SWAN recognizes that the ongoing and overlapping financial, economic and ecological crises have seriously weakened the capacity of individual governments to overcome these problems.

SWAN agrees that even though the UN's Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets made some contribution to change, the inability of the MDGs to take a holistic approach, or to go beyond the growth-oriented model of development to address issues of inequality, has led to the persistence of these crises, and has failed to address the problems faced by women.

In this context, SWAN emphasizes that gender equality and gender equity, women's rights and women's empowerment are central and fundamentally important, even a prerequisite for bringing in sustainable development through the post-2015 Development Agenda, and should therefore be included as a stand-alone goal, as well as a cross-cutting priority in each SDG (Sustainable Development Goal).

SWAN's VISION, MISSION and STRATEGY

SWAN's **vision** is to achieve sustainable development for South Asia, where women play equal and equitable roles with men in the socio-political, economic, technological and environmental sectors. SWAN believes in gender equality, justice, respect, dignity, and inclusive and democratic governance at the individual, family, community, society, national and regional levels.

SWAN's **mission** is to ensure a sustainable future for all through collective civil society action with women taking the lead in supporting and promoting a new paradigm of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that recognizes the centrality of women's role and women's rights in finalizing the post-2015 Development Agenda. The focus of SWAN's mission is to establish

- a **New Socio-political Order** based on democratic and inclusive governance for a just, equal and equitable society, ensuring peace within and across nations;
- A **New Ecological Order** that respects our planet and is based on sustainable production, consumption, lifestyles and livelihoods; □
- a **New Economic Order** that supports sustainability through social justice and equity, protects the ecological balance and creates economic sufficiency.

SWAN's strategy for bringing in sustainable development for the women of South Asia is based on developing partnerships across South Asia to make policy recommendations, nurture leadership and build capacity for change. SWAN's strategy for implementation is through intervention programmes (IPs) in identified sectors, that create consensus among the women of South Asia on policy recommendations. The (IPs) will be the building blocks towards implementing SWAN's Roadmap for Sustainable Development for the women of South Asia. SWAN works through eight sectoral networks, also called SWANs, dealing with the Environment; Arts and Literature; Women in Peacemaking; Health, Nutrition and Food Sovereignty; Education; Crafts and Textiles; Finance, Livelihoods and Entrepreneurship Development; and Women in Media. These networks will be grouped to work on intervention programmes that will lead to socio-political, economic and ecological sustainability.

The SWAN structure for implementation is outlined in the Roadmap for Sustainable Development for the Women of South Asia.

SWAN's ROADMAP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE WOMEN OF SOUTH ASIA

I. THE NEW SOCIO-POLITICAL ORDER

South Asia is richly endowed with an ancient cultural, spiritual, intellectual and civilizational heritage, combined with a young population that can yield tremendous demographic advantage. Yet, many countries in the region are faced with low human development indices, and deep structural and socio-cultural conflict. SWAN, convinced that patriarchy and the discrimination and non-participation of our women is at the core of this situation, seeks to empower the women of South Asia to enable them to realize their full potential as equal citizens in their respective countries.

SWAN's New Socio-Political Order emphasizes (with corresponding IPs) :

- enhancing women's capacity to lead and to play a constructive role in decision-making and governance at all levels, including increasing women's political participation and grassroots political activism (**IP on 'Democratic and Inclusive Good Governance for Gender Equality and Sustainable Development in South Asia'**);
- strengthening women's role and participation in peacemaking and conflict-resolution processes, finalising the South Asia Women's Peace Charter, and addressing the particular needs of conflict-

affected women and children (**IP on 'Peace and Sustainable Development in South Asia : Strengthening Women's Role in Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution'**);

- a social order that eliminates violence against women (VAW) in all its forms and manifestations, including the trafficking of women and children and the difficulties faced by women in the process of international labour migration. SWAN will focus on changing societal mindsets, and the perception of violence against women as a 'private matter' in the process of implementing legislation and working on improving women's access to justice (**IP on 'Elimination of Violence Against Women in South Asia'**);
- the policy commitment by all South Asian governments to the education of the girl child and to maintaining an appropriate level of state investment in all levels of education, including adult education for women, development of school and college curriculum that mainstreams gender issues, avoids gender stereotyping and provides knowledge on youth sexuality and an educational environment that has appropriate facilities for girls and boys and is free from harassment (**IP on 'Gender and Education in the Context of Sustainable Development Goals for the Women of South Asia'**);
- the preservation of the cultural diversity of the region and the implementation of development strategies that are culturally sensitive, but which do not reinforce patriarchal norms; recognising that the preservation of and promotion of cultural values, one of the four pillars of Gross National Happiness, must be included among the SDGs for the post-2015 Development Agenda (**IP on 'Culture and Sustainable Development for the Women of South Asia'**);
- encouraging electronic and social media to promote women's empowerment, and support women's issues including the elimination of gender based violence; capacity building of mid-career and junior journalists to strengthen support for the centrality and significance of women's role in the process of sustainable development; building opinion among owners and viewers to ensure media content that does not stigmatise, victimize or portray women as sex objects (**IPs on Role of Women in Media in South Asia'**).

II. THE NEW ECOLOGICAL ORDER

SWAN's objective in proposing the New Ecological Order is to ensure the most effective and equitable balance between development, human well-being and environmental sustainability. SWAN emphasizes that unlike the MDG 7 that failed to recognize and address women's issues or to link women's empowerment as an essential criteria for achieving environmental sustainability, the post-2015 Development Agenda must acknowledge women's rights as an essential prerequisite for environmental sustainability. SWAN's New Ecological Order has the following core goals, with corresponding intervention programmes (IPs) :

1. Ensuring food security and food sovereignty within and among the people of South Asia, with particular emphasis on adequate, safe and nutritious food for all women through women-centred, ecologically sustainable production and distribution systems : this will require changing existing intra-family patriarchal systems as well as emerging global structures of corporate control over agriculture through GM crops and patents on seeds. Preserving South Asia's rich biodiversity is the best way to feed its people : approval of any GM crop in one South Asian country will mean approval for South Asia as a whole, since patented GM crops spread easily among neighbouring regions and countries, causing irreversible genetic contamination and destruction of South Asia's biodiversity (**IP on 'Seed and Food Sovereignty for the women South Asia'**);
2. Acknowledging that women are disproportionately affected by climate change; ensuring equitable access to nature and natural resources for all women, including through the conservation and resilience of ecosystems, ecological cycles and functions, and biodiversity; ensuring that women's rights and concerns are central in the search for adaptation and mitigation strategies in solution of the climate change crisis (**IP on 'Climate Change and Gender Equality for the Women of South Asia'**);
3. Ensuring conditions for prevention of disease and maintenance of good health for the women of South Asia, through addressing, in an integrated and holistic manner, the issues of bio-safety, food

and malnutrition, the increase in non-communicable diseases and women's exposure to the widespread and indiscriminate use of hazardous chemicals (**IPs on 'The Food and Malnutrition Crisis Across South Asia' and 'Nutrition, Food and Bio-Safety, and Women's Health in South Asia'**);

4. Ensuring equitable access to energy sources for the women of South Asia in ways that are ecologically sustainable, technically and economically viable : the widespread energy poverty across South Asia is characterised by lack of equal and equitable access to energy, with a disproportionately high impact on women and the poor (**IP on 'Energy and Gender Equality for the Women of South Asia'**);
5. Ensuring adequate and safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) for the women of South Asia, through ecologically sustainable and equitable harvesting and distribution systems and access to efficient and sustainable disposal systems. South Asia has the largest number of people without access to improved drinking water sources and sanitation, and women suffer enormously more than men as a result of inadequate water and sanitation facilities. All national governments should accept the right to water, sanitation and hygiene as a basic human right and ensure that women are not discriminated against in the provision of WASH facilities. (**IP on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) for the Women of South Asia**);
6. Creating awareness about the unsustainable ecological impact of the waste generated through mindless consumption and lifestyle patterns, as well as production practices; and about the use and disposal of materials that contain toxic additives that can affect the health of women and their families; while ensuring safe, affordable solutions for waste management, with the focus on providing livelihood opportunities for women and marginalized sections of society. (**IP on 'Converting Waste into Green Jobs and Social Wealth'**);
7. Strengthening the community response and resilience to natural and man-made disasters, which is critical to reducing conflict and impoverishment when such disasters occur. (**IP on 'Strengthening Resilience and Ecological Sustainability by Integration of Environmental Efforts through Community Response to Natural and Human-induced Disasters'**).

III. THE NEW ECONOMIC ORDER

Despite MDG 3's focus on women's empowerment, the feminisation of poverty remains entrenched across South Asia. Structural gender discrimination is pervasive in the present economic order, particularly in South Asia. Unless specific and targeted efforts are made to change this, the post-2015 Development Agenda will remain as gender-unequal as the present one. Women will lose out, but so will the overall prospects for socio-economic prosperity and environmental sustainability in this region. The link between gender equality and poverty eradication is direct and strong. If gender equality and socio-financial inclusion for women are accepted as major focal points of the New Economic Order in the post-2015 Development Agenda, this will greatly hasten the process of poverty eradication and bring in socio-economic prosperity for all.

Across South Asia, women's work is overwhelmingly in the unorganized, non-formal sectors of the economy, with poorly paid and precarious jobs, and no social protection or contributory benefits of any kind (such as income security and guaranteed minimum living wage, access to essential services and formal employment-related benefits). Unemployment and underemployment create serious financial barriers to women accessing health care and housing, and makes them more dependent on their families. In addition, there is continuing gender disparity in access to education, particularly at secondary and tertiary levels, access to the job-market, and even in accessing clean water and improved sanitation. Women's work is systemically devalued. Recognising the economic value of women's household and reproductive work will increase visibility and recognition of women's contribution to the national economy. South Asian women are increasingly migrating to work in low skilled low waged occupations. Their remittances have become an important source of national income for some countries, but little has been done to reduce the physical, sexual and labour exploitation at the destination country.

SWAN's New Economic Order calls for appropriate SDGs that will ensure :

- Sustainable economies, that move from the focus on mere 'efficiency' (the growth-based economic development model) to the focus on 'sufficiency' based sustainable development paradigms;
- Substantial increases in livelihoods for women, through decent work with good remuneration, and environmentally friendly jobs, including in traditional sectors like crafts and textiles;
- Reduction in the unemployment and underemployment rate for women in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors;
- Reliable, steady and easy access to mainstream financial resources (including microfinance) for the women of South Asia, in order to improve their economic opportunities through ownership and control over economic assets, including land and housing;
- Substantial improvements in the poor health status of the women of South Asia (which reflects gender discrimination right through the life cycle), including through improved rural health services, substantive reduction in maternal and child mortality, and the appropriate use of traditional health systems;
- Elimination of the gender pay gap, the strongest indicator of entrenched discrimination and inequality;
- Substantial increases in upgrading women's skills, including through access to education, professional training and entrepreneurship development;
- Acceptance of the pragmatic and practical Gross National Happiness (GNH) approach, which embraces spiritual well-being, mindfulness and material development;
- Increasing the representation of women in decision-making positions in both the private and public sectors.

In order to create consensus on the appropriate SDGs for the New Economic Order, SWAN has agreed upon Intervention Programmes (IPs) in the following sectors :

(i) The Crafts and Textiles Sector : SWAN's intervention programmes will focus on empowering women in this largely unorganized and principally rural sector of activity, with the expected outcomes of increasing their earning capacity through better remuneration, improved market access, eco-friendly guidance (natural dyes, waste utilization and management), technical, technological and design inputs. This will strengthen their self-confidence, human dignity and economic self-reliance; and provide a strong impetus for conserving indigenous and traditional knowledge of heritage skills; while demonstrating sustainable development through women's work.

(ii) Financial Access for Women's Empowerment, Economic Growth And Sustainable Development in South Asia : SWAN expresses its serious concern that women have little or no visible economic capital, despite being responsible for creating huge social capital. While participation of women in the labour force has increased, there are still significant gender gaps in participation rates, occupational levels and wages. Women continue to assume the largest share of unpaid work. Universal access to mainstream financial services needs to be prioritised among the core areas of development. Poor households almost invariably remain outside the purview of formal finance and women from these poor households are doubly disadvantaged.

Financial inclusion interventions in their design assume a space for women to articulate and reflect on their future plans and actions. These interventions are taking place in the public policy arena where state is leading such interventions. At the same time civil society institutions are also shaping many of these interventions. Several countries have implemented interventions to improve the financial access of poor and marginalised women and their enterprises.

SWAN, through this Intervention Programme, will focus on sharing of innovations in the institutional design and product development for micro enterprises; sharing of interventions for universal financial inclusion and collaboration between various stakeholders; initiatives in the sphere of capacity building among women for participating in the formal finance sphere; and interfacing livelihood interventions and access to financial services.

(iii) Maternal, Reproductive and Women's Health and Gender Concerns

The current economic order promotes the corporatization and privatization of health services, makes health a commodity and health care an enterprise. This has led to the marginalisation of indigenous knowledge and traditional health care systems. SWAN challenges the exploitative nature of this approach to health, and is committed to comprehensive health care that includes all determinants of good health. Through this IP, SWAN will focus on support for health-care policies and programmes that are gender sensitive, culturally appropriate, affordable and accessible, while maintaining quality of care, the dignity of and respect for women, and full distributive justice. Essential and life-saving medicines for maternal, reproductive, women's health, and for non-communicable diseases, should be made available, and the misuse of medical technology for sex determination, assisted reproductive technologies (e.g. commercial surrogacy), and the commercialization of women's sexuality should be eradicated. Through this IP, SWAN aims to build capacity among women to take the lead in prioritizing issues for collective action and policy influence; to address newer threats to women's health; and, by building links with likeminded individuals and organizations across South Asia, to share and exchange knowledge and best practices.

(iv) Secure Livelihoods and Food Sovereignty for Women from the Farm, Forest and Off-Farm Sectors in South Asia : Households in South Asia integrate the opportunities for income, employment and survival at the farm level through a natural process of holistic integration of opportunities around their environment. Commercialization and depletion of natural resources has handed over women's control over resources and production processes to a market-led system dependent on the corporate sector. SWAN seeks a reversal of this process. Through this IP, SWAN will work for an integrated approach and understanding of the farm-forest-livestock and off-farm nexus in order to achieve improved household economy, food security, food sovereignty and secure livelihoods, which will lead to women-centred local and regional economies in South Asia.

(v) Entrepreneurship Development Among the Women of South Asia : SWAN members are strong in community organizing, community mobilization and building capacity of grassroots women's networks and organization. Utilizing these skills, and in order to unleash the leadership and entrepreneurial potential of South Asian women, SWAN, through this IP, will create modules for capacity building at all levels in the areas of leadership development, effective communication and negotiation skills, planning, management, monitoring human resource development and work-place employer-employee relationships, financial management, institutional management to deal with the traditional skills of managing small and medium enterprises, as well as value chain analysis and value chain management. The second IP, on Developing and Strengthening Sustainable Eco-Tourism Across South Asia, will focus on the tremendous potential of the tourism industry to encourage entrepreneurship among the women of South Asia. This IP will bring together all stakeholders and service providers in a public-private partnership, including nature preserve agencies, craftswomen, and environmental waste management agencies, travel trade and hospitality groups, in the interests of sustainable eco-tourism.

(vi) Gross National Happiness (GNH) and Sustainable Development for the Women of South Asia : The four pillars of GNH, identified as socio-economic growth and development, preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, conservation of the environment, and good governance, encompass the cultural, socio-economic and ecological interests of all South Asian nations. These are the very issues that SWAN has been emphasizing, as being particularly relevant for ensuring gender equality and equity, women's rights and women's empowerment across South Asia. SWAN agrees that the concept of GNH should be factored into the proposed SDGs for the post-2015 Development Agenda. This IP will seek to develop these linkages, and also examine the feasibility of a South Asia Gender Index.

Conclusion : SWAN strongly advocates the inclusion of all members of society, men and boys included, in the striving for sustainable development for the women of South Asia. Sustainable development is common cause for all of us. SWAN's emphasis is on pointing out that this shared objective is

unachievable without the focus on ameliorating the abject condition of women across South Asia. SWAN will work towards inclusive solutions for achieving our objective of sustainable development for the women of South Asia.



SWAN's COLOMBO DECLARATION :
The Roadmap for Sustainable Development for the Women of South Asia

Issued in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 24th August 2013
At SWAN's Fifth Annual Conference

PREAMBLE

We, the women of South Asia, gathered in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on August 23 and 24, 2013, for the Fifth Annual Conference of the South Asia Women's Network (SWAN), dedicated to the theme "Gender Equity for Peace and Sustainable Development for the Women of South Asia", and organised in partnership with the Sri Lanka Women's Chamber of Industry and Commerce (WCIC), Colombo, with the support of the South Asia Foundation (SAF India) and Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi;

We come from nine South Asian countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka; and coordinate our work through eight sectoral networks, also called SWANs, respectively dealing with the Environment; Arts and Literature; Women in Peacemaking; Health, Nutrition and Food Sovereignty; Education; Crafts and Textiles; Finance, Livelihoods and Entrepreneurship Development; and Women in Media;

SWAN recognizes that the women of South Asia have similar problems of grinding poverty, poor levels of achievement in the human development indices, poor maternal and child health, poor literacy rates and high levels of school drop-outs, violence against women in all its forms and manifestations, social injustice and gender inequalities of the worst kind, economic discrimination, including through lack of ownership or inadequate control over resources, tremendous vulnerability during and in the aftermath of environmental disasters and armed conflicts. SWAN further recognizes that these issues pertaining to women are common to all communities, religious beliefs and ethnic groups across South Asia, and have defied solution despite decades of effort by individual governments in SWAN nations.

SWAN recognises that humanity, the world economy and national economies are today suffering the overlapping impact of multiple global crises. The financial and economic crisis has seriously weakened the ability of developing economies to overcome the already grave crises they are facing in agriculture, food security and food sovereignty, malnutrition and related health issues, all of which is further compounded by the major ecological and environmental crisis

overwhelming our planet. While the process of work towards achieving the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the target date of 2015 has made some contribution towards amelioration in specific sectors, the crises persist and the magnitude of problems facing women and other marginalized sections of society has dramatically worsened.

SWAN believes that an important reason for the persisting crises, including the marginalized role of women, is that the MDGs and the corresponding efforts by individual governments are not based on an integrated, holistic approach to and understanding of the development process. The focus has been on achieving independently set sectoral targets, without recognizing the key synergies that exist between various sectors, which makes results and positive outcomes interdependent rather than separate from each other. Furthermore, the MDGs do not address issues of equality and equity within and across sectors. That is why gender equality and equity remain adversely impacted despite progress towards achievement of some of the set MDG targets. It is estimated that women account for two-thirds of the 1.4 billion people currently living in extreme poverty across the world, and make up sixty percent of the 572 million working poor in the world.¹ Furthermore, the MDGs accepted the growth-oriented model of development as the only viable model, without examining the sustainability of the almost exclusive focus on growth, especially if all-important criteria like environmental impact, impact on health and food sovereignty, and gender vulnerabilities are not taken into account. Already in 1987, the Brundtland Commission Report had emphasized that “inequality is the planet's main ‘environmental’ problem; it is also its main ‘development’ problem”, and had stated that sustainable development “requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to fulfill their aspirations for a better life. A world in which poverty is endemic will always be prone to ecological and other catastrophes”.²

SWAN emphasizes that substantive gender equality and equity, women's rights and women's empowerment are central and fundamentally important, even a prerequisite for bringing in sustainable development through the post-2015 Development Agenda. SWAN believes that gender equality and equity is and should be accepted as an important driver of sustainable development. Most evaluations of progress in implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have shown the strong correlation between the advancement of women's empowerment and accelerated development progress. The World Bank has recognised that gender equality is a core development objective in its own right, that it is also smart economics, and that greater gender equality can enhance productivity, improve development outcomes for the next generation, and make institutions more representative.³

SWAN emphasizes that the post-2015 Development Agenda should include the achievement of gender equity and gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment as a stand-alone goal, as well as a cross-cutting priority in each SDG (Sustainable Development Goal). Accountability mechanisms, including gender budgeting, gender audit, and collection of gender-disaggregated data, should be agreed upon so that the content and the process of bringing in comprehensive gender equality can be carefully monitored.

SWAN, convinced about the centrality of women's agency, voice, participation and leadership in the achievement of all the three dimensions of sustainable development (socio-political,

¹ Women's Major Group Position Paper “Gender Equality,, Women's Rights and Women's Priorities are Core to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Post-2015 Development Agenda”, 10th April 2013,

² Ibid, page 17, www.womenrio20.org/issues.php Brundtland Commission Report at conspect.nl/pdf/Our_Common_Future-brundtland_Report_1987.pdf

³ World Bank's “World Development Report 2012 : Gender Equality and Development”

economic and environmental), calls for an integrated approach to women's empowerment and rights. In keeping with its declared vision, mission and strategy, SWAN, through its Colombo Declaration, has formulated the SWAN Roadmap for Sustainable Development for the Women of South Asia in order to undertake programmes and actions for bringing in sustainable and equitable development in South Asia.

SWAN's VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGY

SWAN's Vision :

Swan's vision is to bring in sustainable development for South Asia, where women play equal and equitable roles in the socio-political, economic (including technological), and environmental sectors. SWAN believes in gender equality, justice, respect, and dignity, together with inclusive and democratic governance at the individual, family, community, society, national and regional levels. Substantive gender equality, equity and inclusiveness are the foundations of a sustainable society.

Sustainability for the women of South Asia is the sustainability of our ecosystems, of our economies, of our societies and socio-political systems. Any development that undermines the integrity of ecological processes, that undermines gender equity and equality, that does not provide livelihoods or fulfill the basic needs of our people, threatens peace and sustainable development in our region. The women of South Asia bear the highest burden of climate change, biodiversity erosion and unsustainable forms of urbanization. In all societies, women and children are the most seriously affected by domestic violence, discrimination in access to and control over resources and services, and the negative impact of all conflict situations, whether national, regional or international. Women's rights must be supported, and nationality laws must be brought inline with Article 9 and related commitments accepted under CEDAW (ratified by all South Asian countries) and the relevant Security Council resolutions, especially 1325. The rights based approach should place women at the centre of development and conflict resolution. Their right to sustainable development should be inalienable since this is vital for women's empowerment and for preserving our planet for future generations.

SWAN emphasizes the key role of women as agents of change, central to the process of bringing education, development, peace and prosperity within and across the nations of South Asia. Simultaneously, within families and communities in South Asia, women continue to be the anchor for preserving traditions and best practices in the arts and literature, in crafts and textiles, and in matters concerning health and the environment. Therefore, SWAN has as its central objective the search for pan-South Asian solutions to the socio-political, economic and ecological crises confronting the women of South Asia. SWAN reaffirms its commitment to provide the necessary leadership at the regional and global levels to foster the transition to sustainability. SWAN recognizes the urgent need to develop leadership skills among the women of South Asia in order that they are empowered with the relevant education and conceptual, managerial, and technical skills to lead the movement for sustainable development in this region.

SWAN's Mission :

SWAN's Mission is to ensure a sustainable future for all through collective civil society action with women taking the lead in supporting a new paradigm of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that recognizes the centrality of women's role and women's rights, with equality and equity for women in the post-2015 Development Agenda.

While national policymakers across South Asia have accepted the need to systematically pursue gender equality, there are still enormous lacunae and barriers on critical issues. In spite of several outstanding examples of individual and collective achievements by women across South Asia, women still constitute a large body of underprivileged citizens, surviving within the limits of an environment that is increasingly hostile and rapidly degrading. In South Asia the goals of sustainable development cannot be achieved without the strong and significant focus on removing gender inequality and discrimination.

SWAN agrees that rather than settling for rehashed, generalized MDGs, SWAN will work towards developing a new paradigm of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will recognize the centrality of women's role in every aspect of sustainability and accept the need for a rights based approach in finalizing the post-2015 Development Agenda. Sustainable development must be recognized as the fundamental basis for the post-2015 development framework. Structural changes are needed, together with a new set of SDGs, to overcome poverty and deprivation, inequality and insecurity, and the multiple converging crises of food, fuel, finance and climate change caused by the current development model that is rooted in unsustainable production and consumption patterns, combined with the foisting of inappropriate technologies on developing economies. There should be corporate accountability, redress for damage and independent assessment of risks and damages from new and old technologies and corporate activities.

SWAN's mission is to agree upon and propose innovative initiatives that need to be taken at the grass roots, community and policy levels across South Asia, so as to create sustainable models for the future, bringing in the centrality of women's empowerment as an intrinsic part of this process. The proposed structural changes must recognize and bring on board concepts of sustainable livelihood like Gross National Happiness, inclusive growth and welfare in harmonious balance with the ecological limits of planet Earth. Many such concepts are embedded in the traditions and cultures of South Asia, practiced by indigenous communities for millennia. The post-2015 agenda should build upon, support and enhance the resilience of such traditional practices. In formulating SDGs, regional diversities and needs should be accepted and accommodated within the overarching universal goals.

The focus of SWAN's mission is to bring in :

- **A New Socio-political Order** based on democratic and inclusive governance for a just, equal and equitable society, which alone can ensure peace within and across nations. Decentralizing governance and localizing our economies is central to the new social order of sustainable societies founded on substantive equality and equity for women. Women's creativity, entrepreneurship, capabilities and education should serve as the backbone of sustainable development. Governments should be accountable and answerable to women for crimes committed against them, with appropriate punishment for those responsible. When women are safe, so are nations. When women feel secure, peace is possible. Women should be included at all levels of decision-making and conflict-resolution processes, in order to achieve sustainable development founded on equality, equity, justice, democracy and peace. SWAN will seek to strengthen the political commitment to sustainable development by fostering strategic partnerships for gender equality, encompassing support from relevant institutions, and ensuring sufficient access to financial resources.
- **A New Ecological Order** based on sustainable consumption, lifestyles and livelihood that respect our planet. SWAN does not accept the idea of the Green Economy, which has been

reduced to greenwashing for corporate interests, leading to increasing privatization and commodification of nature. Ecological sustainability includes the sustainability of our water resources, our seeds and biodiversity, our forests and oceans, our soil and land, the stability of our climate, and equitable resource consumption, waste reduction and following zero waste principles which include the livelihoods of waste pickers and other informal sector waste workers and handlers. It also includes women's access to the resources vital to life and livelihoods. SWAN will work towards the adoption of principles that are key to promoting sustainable lifestyles, including the 'Principle of Care', 'Planetary Boundaries Principle', the principles for ensuring social rights which include the 'Dignity Principle' as well as the 'Justice Principle', and the principle of ethics in governance including the 'Precautionary Principle', 'Extended Producer Responsibility', the 'Resilience Principle', and the principle of 'Common but Differentiated Responsibilities'. SWAN will strive for bringing in the use of multidimensional sustainable development indicators, principally Gross National Happiness (GNH), Human Development Index (HDI), and Ecological Footprint (EF) that highlight the inter-linkages between a community's economic, environmental and socio-political development.

A New Economic Order : the emerging alternative to the prevalent economy is an economic system that ensures sustainability through social justice, equality and equity for women, while protecting the ecological balance and creating economic sufficiency. The core idea of sustainable economies must be poverty alleviation, food sovereignty, environmental sustainability through maintaining biodiversity and access to natural resources, and the well-being of all people. The system must allow access to, distribution of and control over resources by women from marginalised communities. SWAN calls for reversing the reduced access to the commons, which has led to loss of access to resources and sustainable livelihoods for women. In South Asia, women are the providers of basic needs, and their work and livelihoods, even though these are predominantly in the unorganized sector and are excluded from being counted in the dominant patriarchal economic structure, form the core of the nation's economy. Women's creativity, expressed through the arts and literature, the crafts and textiles of South Asia, and women's entrepreneurship, must shape the future sustainable economies of South Asia. The New Economic Order should complement the emphasis on the efficient use of resources with the concept of sufficiency achieved through mindfulness, sharing, and local sourcing. Bringing in a sharing and caring society transcends into a holistic approach towards sustainable living.

SWAN's Strategy :

SWAN's strategic approach towards bringing in sustainable development for the women of South Asia is based on developing partnerships across South Asia for policy recommendations (of policies to bring in the 3 new orders, and of resistance to policies that perpetuate inequality, inequity and injustice); of leadership development (nurturing leadership among its members to implement and monitor sustainable development policies and programmes) and capacity building for change at all levels (enhancing capacity to implement programmes that demonstrate and scale-up best practices for sustainable development).

SWAN's strategy for implementation is through Intervention Programmes (IP) in identified sectors, which will combine policy recommendations (defining and planning), leadership development, and capacity building (sharing and learning across South Asia). These (IPs) are not ends in themselves. They are the chosen strategies for creating consensus among the women of South Asia in order to catalyze relevant and positive action. An important objective of

each Intervention Programme is to conceptualize its link with the SDG relevant to the theme of the (IP). These (IPs) are the building blocks towards implementing SWAN's Roadmap for Sustainable Development for the women of South Asia. SWAN's eight sectoral networks (also called SWANs) will group together to coordinate their work towards socio-political sustainability (SWANs on Education; Arts and Literature; Women in Media; Women in Peacemaking); economic sustainability (SWANs on Health, Nutrition and Food Sovereignty; Crafts and Textiles; Finance, Livelihoods and Entrepreneurship Development); and Ecological Sustainability (SWANs on the Environment; and Health, Nutrition and Food Sovereignty).

The SWAN structure for implementation is outlined in the Roadmap for Sustainable Development for the Women of South Asia. The proposed Intervention Programmes (IPs) included in this Roadmap will be implemented over the next three years.

SWAN'S ROADMAP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE WOMEN OF SOUTH ASIA

1.0. THE NEW SOCIO-POLITICAL ORDER

South Asia is richly endowed with ancient cultural, spiritual, intellectual heritage, wisdom and knowledge systems, covering all spheres from mathematics to medicine to philosophy. We are also among the most populous regions of the world, with a primarily young population that can yield tremendous demographic advantage. The nations of South Asia, and the region as a whole, have the capacity and inherent capability of being path-finders and world leaders. Yet, in almost every sphere of endeavor and socio-economic activity, most nations of South Asia are in the lower percentiles of every Human Development index. Nations of South Asia are mired in deep structural and socio-cultural conflict. SWAN is convinced that among the many factors that shackle us and cause our current predicament, marginalization, discrimination, and socio-economic underutilization and non-participation by our women is of central significance and importance. SWAN seeks to empower the women of South Asia to enable them to realize their full potential as equal citizens in their respective countries.

In recent years, the number of conflicts within the borders of states is rising, resulting in stagnation and erosion of development at all socio-economic and political levels, with causes for conflict ranging from socio-economic and intra-regional causes, to religion and sectarianism, gender and ethnicity. Violence results in death, spread of disease, and population displacement, and negatively impacts access to education, health, finance and infrastructure, instantaneously demolishing investment and social capital. While the effect of conflict is felt on many facets of life, it is especially acute on marginalized groups in society. The women of South Asia embody one such group. Women are perpetually at a disadvantage due to their high levels of illiteracy, financial dependency, patterns of immobility, and generally undervalued role in society. Their disadvantaged position stems from the strongly patriarchal evolution of society, combined with religious and cultural contexts in the region evolved over the centuries. Being vulnerable, women are gravely affected by violence and conflict in their region; including but not limited to sexual violence, trauma, domestic abuse and poverty.

Despite the constraints imposed on them by society, the women of South Asia have made enormous contributions within their respective nations and across nations, at the regional and global levels. They have occupied the highest political positions in several countries of South Asia. They have held leadership positions in every important area of socio-economic activity, and they have excelled in almost every field of endeavor, be it government, academia, or

medical, scientific, business and non-governmental organizations. Their contribution has been invaluable for the success of social programmes, be they about community forestry, microfinance, or education. Notwithstanding, the vast majority of women remain trapped as unequal, second-class citizens in their own societies. Individually, a few have been able to shine and outperform competition, but for the most part, as a group representing fifty percent of society, they have been unable to realize even their most basic aspirations.

Women contribute substantially to the informal economy, but since this is the unorganized sector, they do not receive social protection, and are almost invariably underpaid and over worked. At every stage, beginning with access to education and joining the work-force, they suffer from poor self-esteem, and face household barriers, community and social constraints, and in many cases, barriers even in national policy, including those of the political, economic and state structures. Gender Inequality indicators from the UN's Human Development Report for 2011 show most SWAN nations in a very poor light.

SWAN's New Socio-Political Order emphasizes:

- Enhancing women's capacity to lead and to play a constructive role in decision-making and inclusive governance at all levels, including through policy recommendations for restructuring of governance, increasing women's political participation and grassroots political activism;
- Strengthening women's role and participation in peacemaking and conflict-resolution processes, in recognition of the symbiotic link between peace and sustainable development, addressing the particular needs of conflict-affected women and children, and finalizing the South Asia Women's Peace Charter;
- Eliminating violence against women (VAW) in all its forms and manifestations, including the trafficking of women and children and exploitative labour migration processes and practices, through the holistic approach of implementing legislation, improving access to justice, and bringing in mindset changes through the education system to strengthen respect for women;
- Policy commitments by all South Asian governments to the education of the girl child and to maintaining an appropriate level of state investment in all levels of education, including adult education for women, a school curriculum that mainstreams gender issues, avoids gender stereotyping and provides knowledge on youth sexuality, and an environment in all institutions of education that ensure appropriate facilities for girls, free from harassment;
- Preservation of the cultural diversity of the region and the implementation of development strategies that are culturally sensitive, but do not reinforce patriarchal norms; and recognition of the relevance and importance of the concept of Gross National Happiness, first enunciated in the South Asian nation, Bhutan;
- Ensuring that the print, electronic and social media promote women's empowerment and support women's issues including the elimination of gender based violence; capacity building of mid-career and junior women (and male) journalists to strengthen support for the centrality and significance of women's role in sustainable development; and building opinion among owners, viewers and users to ensure that media content does not stigmatise, victimize or portray women as sex objects.

1.1 Democratic & Inclusive Good Governance for Gender Equality and Sustainable Development in South Asia

Challenges and Issues: The political environment of a country is the foremost determinant of whether a nation can forge ahead in a holistic and inclusive manner, with equal voice, opportunities for development, and representation to all. Unless a healthy political atmosphere

is created, there will be a lot of underlying obstacles that prevent motivation and activation in all developing spheres of the country. It is a unique moment in South Asia's history that today there are democratic regimes all across the region. Democracy has been adopted across South Asia as the most acceptable, participatory and representative form of government, which upholds basic human rights, substantive equality for all before the law, and ensures the maximum development of individual human capabilities. However, if democratic principles are not upheld, if the strength of democratic institutions is not sustained, if the principles of transparency and accountability are vitiated, democracy becomes the vicious struggle for power, sidetracking the ideology behind this concept that is so crucial for bringing in sustainable development.

Women's role in the political field has so far been very limited across South Asia. It is important to strengthen the role of women in institutions of democracy at all levels, from the national legislature to local self-government. This is essential for upholding effective implementation of substantive equality and equity, women's rights and women's empowerment in the system and in society.

Intervention Programme: SWAN proposes an Intervention programme (IP) on Democratic and Inclusive Good Governance for Gender Equality and Sustainable Development in South Asia. The outcome of this (IP) will focus on calling for specific actions to increase women's political participation for empowerment.

An important objective of this (IP) is to provide participants with the opportunity and platform to benefit from best practices in order to implement the best socio-economic and political changes that should accompany the democratic process. This (IP) will bring together representatives from the legislature, executive, judiciary, media and civil society, in order to strengthen women's participation at all levels and in all democratic practices, and evolve social audits of systems to ensure their transparent execution and effectiveness.

Outcome: This (IP) will ensure the pro-active public participation of women in all spheres of rural and urban activities in the socio-political, ecological and economic spheres through public auditing, public hearing and information sharing through effective implementation of the Citizen's Charter, which gives primacy to the rights of women to obtain services from public institutions as duty bearers, in a free, fair and efficient manner.

This (IP) will mainstream human and fundamental rights of women across South Asia.

It will also provide impetus for women's civic participation and voter power by encouraging their participation in upcoming elections in a number of South Asian countries, including Nepal.

Furthermore, this (IP) will provide important inputs for finalising the South Asia Women's Peace Charter, that has been a long-standing objective of the South Asia Women's Network (SWAN).

1.2 Peace and Sustainable Development in South Asia : Strengthening Women's Role in Peacemaking and Conflict-resolution

Challenges and Issues : War is no longer an acceptable option for the people of South Asia; neither are war-like situations resulting from violent conflict, terrorism, extremism, fundamentalism, and deprivation because of extreme poverty. Peace and sustainable development are closely interlinked. The people of South Asia have shared heritage, cultures and historical traditions. These commonalities form a strong foundation on which to build

regional cooperation, and are crucial to promoting stability in the region, strengthening security, and promoting peace.

Threats to peace, whether conventional or non-conventional, internal or external, have a disproportionately adverse impact on all marginalized sections of society, particularly on women. SWAN emphasizes the importance of greater awareness about the negative effects of all conflicts, specifically on women, and the equally important need to involve women as primary actors in all peace building initiatives. Women face discrimination and repression during war and conflict situations, such as violence and forced exclusion from education. Women Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees are exposed to risks of rape, human trafficking, and sexual harassment. IDP and refugee women lack access to justice in the absence of the established state jurisprudence and writ. Legal aid is inadequate, and women law enforcement personnel are not available to make legal aid women friendly. Access to education, and health services such as maternal and reproductive health care, are limited or absent. Women without male earning members in war and conflict zones are overburdened with providing for the family amidst prevailing stagnated economic activities.

The UN Security Council Resolutions, 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), and 1890 (2009), highlight women's role as central to the process of reconciliation and peacemaking, both for prevention of conflict, and when conflicts occur, in the process of peace-building and conflict resolution. Women are inherently the anchors of family and community, and a force for tolerance and peace, supporting co-existence across cultures, religions, and ethnicities. As such they can play a key role in re-establishing the fabric of recovering society and therefore, must be involved in the development and implementation of post-conflict strategies in order to ensure inclusion of their perspectives and needs. The UN recognizes that marginalization of women can delay or undermine achievement of durable peace, security and reconciliation, and expresses deep concern about persistent obstacles to women's full involvement in conflict resolution and peace-building, because of violence and intimidation, cultural discrimination and stigmatization, and the rise of extremist or fanatical views on women, as well as socio-economic factors including lack of access to education.

Intervention Programme : In keeping with the South Asian context and UN Security Council Resolutions, women of South Asia must be equal participants in all peace building and conflict resolution mechanisms. SWAN proposes an (IP) on Strengthening Women's Role in Peacemaking and Conflict-resolution. This (IP) will identify mechanisms for guaranteeing proactive participation of women in all peacemaking and conflict resolution interventions, critical for achieving the SDGs and bringing peace to the region. Decisions should be made with women, not for them. This (IP) is aimed at the regional integration of initiatives in South Asian countries, to raise awareness about the negative impact of conflict on women. It aims to build regional integration and consensus among stakeholders on adopting non-violent methods for establishing peace and reconciliation, and supporting the role of women as peace leaders through appropriate capacity-building and representation.

Outcome : This (IP) will finalize the South Asia Women's Peace Charter to recommend the way forward on these critical issues. This charter will highlight key aspects, including the need for gender mainstreaming in post conflict planning, recovery and rehabilitation processes. SWAN urges all nine nations of South Asia to support one another to achieve gender sensitive methods of peace making. Women of South Asia must work together regionally to combat conflict through non-violent means. To help this process, this SWAN (IP) will analyze the

particular needs of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations, the challenges they face, and how to overcome these challenges.

Additional specific outcomes will include :

- Women educated on the nature of peace and avoidance of conflict;
- Parliamentarians informed about the importance of women's representation in peace-making initiatives;
- Role of women emphasized as prime victims of conflict at national and regional levels, and their participation in peace processes supported;
- Inclusive platform provided for peace making through the engagement of women;
- Gender-sensitive, non-violent conflict resolution methods such as dialogue, negotiation, and mediation promoted;
- Tolerance and coexistence across different cultures, religions and ethnicities promoted;
- A regional pool of capacity builders developed, to promote and disseminate conflict resolution, peace building, and leadership skills among South Asian women;
- Women leaders equipped with skills to enter peace talks at national, regional and international levels;
- SWAN nations urged to prepare NAPs for UN Security resolution 1325 with institutional arrangements.

1.3 Elimination of Violence against Women in South Asia

Challenges and Issues: In recent years violence against women (VAW) has drawn attention in South Asian Countries, but the scope and seriousness of this scourge has been underplayed to a large extent. Acts of violence on women and children range from domestic violence, sex selective abortions, marital rape, dowry related violence, rape, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation including trafficking and forced prostitution. Given the vulnerable situation of women and girls in armed conflicts, they become easy targets of attack, mistreatment, and very often, systematic rape. Society needs to understand the causes of VAW and its linkages to other aspects such as health, access to education and resources, position in society and social and economic well-being. Thus, problems of VAW cannot be viewed in isolation : they have social, psycho-social and economic dimensions.

State laws and international agreements are not effective as long as men's and women's belief that violence against women is a 'private' matter which is 'culturally acceptable', is challenged and changed. Mere passage of laws will not be sufficient to eliminate VAW. There is a strong need for policy recommendations through SWAN with its local partners, in order to sensitize society that VAW is not a private matter; rather it is a vital social evil affecting men and women alike. All members of society must work together to ensure the systematic implementation of laws through institutions.

In order to eliminate violence against women, we need to ensure that the prevailing mindset is challenged and changed. It is important to bring about mindset change among men and women, starting with the childhood years. Gender-sensitization and respect for gender equality should be inculcated both within the family and all through the years of education. SWAN will consider specific initiatives to achieve these objectives, including through gender-review of educational curriculum, and public interest campaigns on gender-sensitive family value systems.

Across South Asia, victims of rape/sexual exploitation generally prefer to remain silent due to social customs, fear of the stigma attached, and the weak and slow legal and justice delivery systems. This leaves women scarred with psychological trauma, and forces them into social isolation. Not just the victim, but the whole family is socially isolated. Hence, the social and psychological impact of VAW (in all its forms and manifestations) needs urgent attention. There is need for greater and more open debate in order to ensure strong action against VAW and its socio-psychological/mental impact, including the need for the health sector to respond and address the issue of VAW (rape and domestic violence accounts for 5% of healthy years of life lost in women of reproductive age, WDR).

Trafficking of women and children across South Asia in the emerging context of globalization and conflict is another issue that needs to be addressed by national and international laws and conventions, particularly in the context of the structural adjustment policies of all South Asian countries, which have pushed women into more poverty through lower paid jobs and deep rooted gender discrimination, weak legislation and poor enforcement. It is estimated that each year, tens of thousands of children and lakhs of women are trafficked across South Asian borders, working in brothels or as cheap domestic labour and other low-skilled, low-wage occupations. Honour killings are another cruel and barbaric form of VAW prevalent in some countries of South Asia. Efforts must be made to institutionally and legally ban this practice.

Labour migration can be a source of both economic and social empowerment for women, and several economies of South Asia are reliant on the financial remittances sent back by emigrant labour. However, labour migration should be conducted through transparent and legally accepted mechanisms in the source and recipient countries, in order to safeguard the rights of women, and prevent them from being exposed to physical, sexual and labour exploitation.

Intervention Programme : The SWAN (IP) on the Elimination of Violence against Women in South Asia will consensually agree upon policy recommendations, and measures for leadership development and capacity building to overcome the seriously negative impact of VAW across this region. This (IP) will focus on sensitization of men and women, and will make policy recommendations that will address the state (including education and other relevant ministries), the judiciary and other non-state actors.

VAW substantially reduces the potential for achieving sustainable development within each nation and across the region. The increased rate of VAW reduces women's opportunities and capacity to work outside the home, reduces their mobility and access to information, and their school attendance. Hence, VAW is a major constraint in achieving sustainable development for each nation and for the entire South Asian region.

The Outcome : This (IP) will lead to :

- Strengthening women's access to justice;
- Recognition of women's rights as human rights;
- Creation of regional consultation and coordination mechanisms;
- Creation of women's shelters for victims of VAW or potential victims,
- Identification, condemnation and prosecution of military use of rape as a weapon;
- Prevention and prosecution of perpetrators of human trafficking of women and children and protection of victims;
- Formulation of effective and transparent labour migration policies, that minimize irregular labour migration and prevent exploitation of women by protecting their rights;

- Mindset change among men and women through gender-sensitization of family values and educational curricula.

1.4 Gender and Education in the Context of Sustainable Development Goals for the Women of South Asia

Challenges and Issues : The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) underline gender parity in Primary Education as one of the critical objectives to be met by 2015. While significant strides have been made in mobilizing communities to send girls to school, gender equality still remains a challenge both in terms of numbers and in terms of quality of learning. According to a report published by the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) and ASPBAE (Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education) in 2010, “girls have few opportunities to enroll in schools and complete their basic education especially if they live in rural areas and hail from poorest communities of South Asia”. The situation becomes more complex in South Asia where gender issues intersect with challenges presented by ethnicity, class, caste and religion. Besides poverty, the role of women and girls in the struggle for subsistence in marginalized communities, are also contributory factors that deny large sections of girls a meaningful engagement with formal schooling, combined with other ‘push out’ factors such as inadequate availability of female teachers, trained personnel, water and toilet facilities.

Adult literacy has been identified as one of the important programmes under Education for All, which is now almost a lost agenda for both donors and governments. The importance of literacy needs to be reasserted and addressed with urgency across South Asia. A literate mother contributes to the overall well-being of the family in terms of food, nutrition, health and income. Field reports show that in most cases, literacy programmes designed for rural women failed to retain their interest or to meet their basic requirements and needs.

Although remarkable progress has been made in primary school enrollment some challenges remain to this day : gender disparity in primary and secondary education, completion of the primary school cycle, acquiring required competencies, attaining literacy targets and achieving gender balance at the tertiary level and at vocational/ technical education are just some of the challenges that need to be addressed urgently in order to achieve universal primary education for girls. Access to education must go beyond enrollment in primary school to include the whole cycle of education from early years to adulthood. Focus on equality and equity, inclusion and non-discrimination should be enhanced and basic education along with literacy should be adequately financed.

Countries in the South Asian region need to focus on developing their human capital into skilled human resources. A large section of the adult-population, both women and men, remain within the workforce as unskilled workers. The need is to provide them with adequate training and basic education so that they are able to position themselves better within the workforce. It is essential to develop curricula that links learning with vocational skills and prepares the learner for a smooth transition from school to jobs.

The South Asian region has been a witness to innovative initiatives and interventions both on the part of the State and through civil society organizations that have creatively responded to the challenges posed above. These range from ensuring energetic participation from the parent community, to offering fellowships/ stipends to girls and developing bridging programs for them, to curriculum reform, creating peer support groups and drafting inclusive and progressive policies or legislations.

Much of this experience is located in the realm of innovations, only a few of which have been documented and disseminated within the region. Along with this we have witnessed a new phenomenon over the last decade--the process of working in a mission mode in the region by various state agencies and international donors to promote Universalization of Elementary Education and to push for transition to Secondary Education in the region.

Additionally, there have been concerns raised about changing the mindset, raising the consciousness about the people's rights to education and mobilizing community awareness on safe health so as to ensure girls and women's right to protect their bodies. It is necessary to position the agenda of education as a top priority for state funding. In order to achieve these aims we have to prepare our workforce to significantly enhance their human capital in order to enhance their competitiveness within the global market. Initiatives to prioritize education amongst policy and national interventions by both the state and civil society organisations need to be strengthened.

The recommended goals to improve the relationships between gender and education in South Asia are:

- Notwithstanding the importance of elementary education, and keeping in mind the significant role of education in women's empowerment, the policy framework and programme emphasis should be holistic. The exclusive focus on primary education has led to the marginalization of adult literacy and education, ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education), and youth education.
- The State should reverse its withdrawal from the education sector given the negative impact of privatization on women and girls and socially disadvantaged sections in all sectors. The formal education structure should be strengthened and not downsized. Greater resources for Higher Education and Women's Studies should be allocated.
- Adolescents must be recognized as a distinct group with specific requirements and not subsumed within Elementary Education and Adult Literacy. While recognizing the importance of these issues, the policy and programme framework needs to be expanded beyond reproductive and sexual health and population issues to include issues of rights and citizenship. As gender-based barriers become more entrenched in adolescence, there is an urgent need to expand the outreach of upper primary and secondary schools. As has been done with primary schools, such schools must be made more accessible.
- Textbook reform processes with the involvement of academics and practitioners should be undertaken. Gender needs to be looked at not as an add-on but integrated in all subjects and should be an important organizing principle of national and state curricula and textbooks. The insights gained from research on women's studies at present find no reflection in the content of school education. This should be changed and formal linkages established.
- The marginalized in each country should be recognized and identified for special inputs including children with disabilities. The State must create special schemes and

programmes to reach the unreachable population, especially girls and women within such communities, to ensure quality education for all

- Issues of sexuality need to be addressed to provide children with information, enable them to make informed choices, make them aware of the diversity of expressions of sexuality and gender and to equip them to deal with violations. The present material and pedagogy adopted in schools in this regard needs to be revised and made more sensitive with regard to the diversity mentioned above.
- Though sexual harassment is quite widespread in schools (among both students and teachers) this is not covered by the guidelines. Policies for sexual harassment at all levels in educational institutions should be in place.
- At present there are no policy measures in place that address the particular educational needs emerging from different situations of conflict. Specific programmes and policy guidelines to address these concerns should be designed to restore confidence and address feelings of fear and insecurity, particularly keeping in mind the needs of women and girls in such situations.

There is an urgent need to establish dialogue not only amongst various stakeholders for girls and women's education but also among countries to share and learn from each others' experiences. The issues of girls and women's education need to be understood across the region, locating it in the context of nation building and class formation in South Asia. A conceptual framework can be developed through a South Asian level (IP) that can help in understanding the issues of gender and education in post-colonial South Asia. This overall framework can then be expanded to understand country specific realities and initiatives for girls' education. A comparative view will widen the horizons of those engaged with girls' education, building processes of reflection and development of innovative strategies, specific to their context.

Intervention Programme: Through this (IP), SWAN partners will seek to :

- Create a network on gender and education across the region where organizations will work with each other, sharing their experiences, research, approaches and policies to strengthen interventions on girls' education and on gendering education. The objective is also to include women's groups and rights-based organizations to engage with issues of equity in education and bring them into this domain.
- Develop teaching and learning materials that draw on the conceptual work done by feminist academics as critical to enabling those involved in education to integrate gender into their work. Gender in education training, or in manuals, or in primers, or teaching aids concentrates more on explaining gender rather than on focusing on education as a site for the affirmation of existing gendered norms or the creation of new roles and possibilities. In addition to this, gender is isolated from the core content of the subjects being taught, with little relation to curriculum and syllabi.
- Along with this the formal school system is isolated from developments in the non-formal sector. The impact of policies on mainstream education is rarely connected to developments in adult women's education or for that matter to initiatives taken in

women's development programmes. The relationship between the formal, non formal and adult education sectors and how they influence each other has not informed teacher's training or for that matter the inputs given to education activists in the NGO sector.

- In this context, to share research and interventions in order to help groups and individuals to reflect on their own approaches to girls' and women's education in the light of the programmes and policies formulated in specific countries. Women's own experiences of education and the struggles it generated in their lives provide a rich resource that can be tapped to generate dialogue and discussion.

Outcome:

- A community of literate women will emerge as part of the workforce. The process of women's empowerment through education and enterprise will be considerably strengthened;
- Women and girls will be in a better position to take decisions that will improve their quality of life;
- Peoples' mind-set will change in favour of women's empowerment and participation in decision making.

1.5 Culture and Sustainable Development for the Women of South Asia

Challenges and Issues : Culture was left out of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000. This omission must not be repeated with the Sustainable Development Goals. Culture is what we are. Culture represents our identities in this globalized world. Culture survives even in the most difficult times of conflict and natural disasters. It is an important vehicle for bringing in sustainable development to regions such as South Asia, today and in the future. Cultural diversity and creativity are the ultimate renewable resources and the only sure path to freedom and peace.

Culture includes the millenia-old traditional indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in all areas, be it health and medicine; music, literature, dance, theatre and poetry; religion; language; or customary practices associated with birth, marriage and even death. This traditional knowledge contains within it respect for women, and for their honour, dignity, and equal participation in all aspects of social endeavor and development, combined with respect for the environment and ecological sustenance of every region. Women of South Asia continue to be leaders in the preservation and sustenance of traditional knowledge.

Cultural diversity is a reality. It holds the key to releasing creative energies of individuals and groups in society. The strongest bond among the nations of South Asia is the unity of their civilization and religious heritage, within which lie tremendous cultural, linguistic, and pluralistic diversity of each nation, and within each nation, of the different regions and ethnicities. Unity in diversity is the real strength of South Asia. Individually and collectively, the nations of South Asia need better policies to make the most of this reality. Culture should inform national, regional and global strategies for development. Equally, development strategies must be sensitive to cultural specificities of peoples of nations and regions, in order to gain their full support, participation, and ownership. SWAN emphasizes that governments across South Asia should give culture a higher profile in strategies for development.

Cultural action should be emphasized and the nine South Asian countries shall come together for conducting theater workshops and producing classical and folk music and dance programs. This will promote SWAN's goals of sustainable development, peace, and conflict resolution, and also help in changing mindsets with regard to violence against women. It will also help to preserve regional languages that empower women and which are slowly dying out.

In South Asia, culture should become a force for growth, for all nations, for all societies. Cultural and creative industries make up more than 3% of global GDP, and these industries are growing at an annual compound rate of more than 6%. Sustaining traditional knowledge can achieve the twin objectives of preserving culture and enhancing economic activity within the framework of sustainable development.

UNESCO has an innovative "Culture for Development Indicator Suite" to measure the contribution of culture to sustainable development. This was developed within the context of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression, the first legally binding instrument that places culture and development together at its core. However, in the Asia Pacific region, only 12 out of 44 countries have ratified this 2005 Convention.

UNESCO, in its 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage emphasizes the importance of intangible cultural heritage as the mainspring of cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development, the deep-seated interdependence between intangible cultural heritage and tangible natural heritage, and the invaluable role of intangible cultural heritage as a factor in bringing human beings closer together and ensuring exchange and understanding among them. Intangible cultural heritage includes oral traditions and expressions, including language, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship.

SWAN urges national governments across South Asia and UNESCO to recognize and accord high priority to awarding intangible cultural heritage to those traditions of South Asian nations, including arts, crafts and other traditions that involve primarily women, where women predominate. Recognising such expressions of intangible cultural heritage where women predominate would greatly encourage women to continue such activities, thereby preserving and reviving them, which would in turn contribute substantively to her economic well-being and empowerment.

Intervention Programmes :

- (i) Reviving one or more traditional, women-related aspects of intangible cultural heritage in each of the nine SWAN nations, followed by convening an (IP) for discussion, exchange of experiences and demonstration/exhibition of each these valued activities;
- (ii) Documenting Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) for all relevant areas including traditional health and medicines, nutrition and culinary practices, natural resource management, as well as life skills for family and household management;
- (iii) Agreeing on SDGs that accommodate the cultural, socio-economic and ecological interests of all nations and regions, including, in particular, those of South Asia.

Outcome :

- Bringing together policymakers, leading activists, and NGO representatives from across the nine SWAN nations, for experience sharing, policy recommendations and dissemination strategies on the importance of cultural diversity in sustainable development;
- Consensus on SDGs that reflect the cultural, socio-economic and ecological interests of all South Asian nations;
- Sensitize cultural workers on SDGs and on the importance of entrepreneurship and livelihood enhancement as part of their work;
- Recognition, revival and strengthening the use of Indigenous Knowledge Systems through schools, development practices, academic programmes and everyday life;
- Empowerment of women through preservation and revival of intangible cultural heritage practices.

1.6 Role of Women in Media in South Asia

Challenges and Issues : Women's empowerment is key to achieving sustainable economic growth, and for bringing in social development and environmental sustainability. Yet, there is inadequate awareness about the importance of women's empowerment for future prosperity and well-being of the people of South Asia. The media (print, electronic and social media formats) must be encouraged to engage in public participation, and to debate improvements in awareness that can lead to sustainable development and that can be used as the catalyst for change.

Women journalists are sensitive to these issues. They are aware of the plight of women in most South Asian countries. There has been tremendous increase in the number of women journalists over the last two decades, who have shown their proven skills in moulding public opinion on issues. They have used media as an effective tool for socio-economic-political development. Women journalists are no longer restricted to writing on fashion, cookery, art and culture, but are reporting from battlefields, from stock markets, and from Parliaments. Women journalists have excelled in each of these areas, to the extent that very often the 'women writing about women' factor has taken the back-seat.

Nonetheless, key challenges and issues remain, which are :

- Women stories are not highlighted in mainstream media, they are mostly restricted to special pages and programmes;
- News about women most often stigmatize and victimize women, portraying them in the media primarily as sex objects. This is particularly true of the advertising sections of each media format. News about violence committed against women is sensationalized to boost popularity ratings in the electronic and print media;
- Women journalists face risks to their lives and dignity when covering news about "crimes against women", especially when perpetrators are influential people. These journalists also face threats from extremist and religious forces in several countries.

SWAN proposes to take up these issues through networking and awareness programmes. SWAN recognizes the need to create an engagement platform on the subject of substantive equality where both men and women have the opportunity to interact and better understand the importance of gender- sensitization.

The SWAN Media Core Group has nine country representatives. Each core group member will be responsible for choosing and mentoring mid-career journalists from their respective countries who will promote and exchange stories and information, and work as a powerful networking group to be the catalyst for change in South Asia.

Intervention Programmes:

(IP) 1 : This (IP) will sensitize participants (mid-level career journalists, journalism faculty representatives, senior resource persons from the media) on media coverage of issues relevant to bringing in sustainable development for the women of South Asia through the New Socio-Political Order, the New Ecological Order and the New Economic Order, with special focus on the activities of SWAN's eight sectoral networks. The sectoral SWAN network leaders will put forward their views, problems, and suggestions. This (IP) will include :

- Formalising the network among the SWAN member countries to ensure there is ongoing exchange of news, views, and best practices in their respective countries;
- Policy recommendations, leadership development and capacity building, both as regards the role of media in sustainable development, and the role of women in media for bringing about the change they want to catalyze;
- Encouraging the use of platforms such as the SWAN website (www.swaninterface.net), SWAN Facebook and SWAN Twitter.

IP 2 : This (IP) will sensitize commercial advertisers against gender stereotyping and ensure better portrayal of women. Media can help promote awareness for sex education starting from school level. This (IP) will create engagement platforms for men and women, specially advertisers, policy makers, business leaders, media owners on gender equality.

IP 3. SWAN Media Group will explore the possibility of exchange programmes for journalists between SWAN countries, including editors of media houses, thereby inviting and encouraging multilateral collaboration on issues common to all these countries

Outcome: The media (print, electronic and social media) is the strongest tool to create awareness about sustainable development. This is the reason for SWAN's strong emphasis on identifying the ways and means by which media can play an effective role in raising awareness about sustainable development. The role of Women in Media is one of the strongest engines that will bring about change and reform, leading to achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Thus the (IPs) will reach out to women in media in South Asia, sensitizing them and, on their return, mentoring them as they implement these good practices in their work.

2.0 THE NEW ECOLOGICAL ORDER

SWAN's objective in proposing the New Ecological Order is to ensure the most effective and equitable balance between economic, social and environmental sustainability. Based on a critical review of the failure of MDG 7 to recognize and address key women's issues, and linking women's empowerment as the essential criterion towards achieving environmental sustainability in the region, SWAN emphasizes that the post-2015 Development Agenda must bring in gender equality and equity, women's empowerment and women's rights as central and inalienable factors for achieving environmental sustainability. The following are the **core goals** in defining and evolving the New Ecological Order as part of SWAN's Roadmap:

- Ensuring equitable access to nature and natural resources for all women, including the conservation and resilience of ecosystems, ecological cycles and functions, and biodiversity. This alone can ensure that all women have access to safe and adequate resources to fulfil their basic needs in ways that are ecologically sustainable and culturally appropriate. As the essential first step, women must be empowered to ensure the integrity of natural ecosystems, wildlife populations, and biodiversity for the wellbeing of future generations;
- All women must have opportunities to dignified and safe livelihoods and lifestyles that are ecologically sustainable, culturally sensitive and socio-economically equal and equitable. Service and welfare sectors must be accessible to all women while integrating principles and practices of equality and equity. This is vital for ensuring South Asian women's rightful aspirations for substantive equality and equity, wellbeing, sustainability, prosperity and happiness;
- Ensuring adequate, safe and nutritious food for all women through production and distribution systems that are women-centered and ecologically sustainable, equal and equitable, by changing both the existing intra-family patriarchal system as well as the emerging global patriarchal structures of corporate control over agriculture through GMOs and patents on seeds;
- Ensuring adequate safe water and sanitation for all women, through harvesting and distribution systems that are ecologically sustainable, equal, equitable, with access to sanitization through disposal systems that are efficient and sustainable;
- Ensuring conditions for prevention of disease and maintenance of good health for all women, in ways that are ecologically sustainable, equal and equitable;
- Ensuring equal and equitable access to energy sources for all women in ways that are ecologically sustainable, as much as technically and economically viable;
- Ensuring equal and equitable access to learning and education for all women in ways that enhance ecological sensitivity and knowledge, as much as cultural, technical, technological, socio-economic, and other aspects;
- Ensuring secure, safe and sustainable settlements for all women, on the basis of substantive equality and equity, including adequate and appropriate shelter, sanitation, civic facilities, and public transportation;
- Acknowledging that women are disproportionately affected by climate change.

In order to work towards the stated goals of the New Ecological Order, SWAN will organise a series of (IPs) across the region in partnership with like-minded institutions and civil society organizations, to enable the women of South Asia to agree upon policy recommendations to define priority actions that need to be taken by key stakeholders (including national governments, civil society and the corporate sector), leadership development and capacity building towards realizing these goals. SWAN will seek to develop capacity so that key women leaders of the region can emerge to catalyze identified priority actions in the post-2015 Development Agenda. SWAN will also seek to influence national, regional and global post-2015 agendas to reflect the South Asian women's sustainable development agenda. Key sectors of particular focus in SWAN's New Ecological Order are elaborated below., together with proposed (IPs) :

2.1 Seed and Food Sovereignty for the Women of South Asia:

Challenges and Issues : South Asia is rich in agricultural crops. It is a region where many diverse crops originate. The women in the farming communities preserve, within their homes, the seeds of diverse crops, an informal system of seed-banks that hold the key to

agricultural productivity and prosperity. This will be severely affected if women lose control over seeds and are forced to purchase seeds from private sector companies, almost invariably at high cost, with insufficient guarantees about quality. Poisons in food, the food chain and GM foods carry risks to food safety, public health, and food sovereignty for the women of South Asia.

SWAN emphasizes the concept of food sovereignty as being far more relevant and significant than mere food security. The concept of food security refers only to availability of food, regardless of the type, method or location of production. It is more a technical concept that emphasizes reliance on the global economy based on liberalized agricultural markets. Food sovereignty, on the other hand is a concept that seeks to ensure the rights of people, communities and countries to define their own agricultural labour, fishing, food and land policies that are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances. Food sovereignty includes the right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and food producing resources that have the ability to sustain women and their societies. Food sovereignty represents the primacy of peoples' and community's rights to food and food production, over trade concerns. In contrast to food security (as defined by the FAO) which focuses on food availability, food sovereignty includes the importance of the mode of production of food and its source, highlighting thereby the adverse relationship between cheap food imports and the well-being and sustainability of local farming populations, that rely extensively on traditional and indigenous knowledge systems in their farming practices.

Seventy-five percent of all ecological destruction is related to non-sustainable methods of capital intensive, chemical intensive, fossil fuel intensive agriculture, which is displacing biodiversity, depleting water resources and contributing to greenhouse gas emissions leading to climate instability. Such non-sustainable systems are also contributing to malnutrition, hunger and disease while marginalizing women as producers and consumers.

Intervention Programmes

- 1 Preservation of South Asia's rich bio-diversity is the best way to feed its people. Preserving and practicing agro-ecology is the best means for ensuring food security and food sovereignty within and among the people of South Asia. Approval of any GM crop in one South Asian country will mean approval for South Asia as a whole, because of SAFTA. Patented GM crops will spread to other countries of South Asia, causing irreversible genetic contamination and destruction of South Asia's bio diversity.
- 2 Ways to provide safe and healthy food for the families of South Asia : Farmers, particularly women farmers, must have control over the seeds they grow. Essential seeds for their annual crops must not be owned and sold entirely by private and multi-national companies.

Outcome: The (IPs) on seed and food sovereignty for women of South Asia will evolve programmes for ensuring their food security and food sovereignty, health, nutrition, as well as sustainable livelihoods on the basis of gender equality and equity.

2.2. Climate Change and Gender Equality for the Women of South Asia

Challenges and Issues: At the 1992 Rio Earth Summit (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, UNCED) climate change, desertification and the loss of biodiversity were identified as the greatest challenges to sustainable development. Since then, despite three United Nations conventions--the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)-- the impact has been minimal, and each of these threats remain as a major challenge in achieving a sustainable future. The Rio+20 Summit in 2012 reconfirmed that the challenges identified twenty years ago have become greater. The post-2015 framework and sustainable development goals (SDGs) must address this interrelationship.⁴

The adverse impact of climate change has an important gender dimension. Given women's allocated responsibilities within the home and as small-scale farmers, they are more severely affected by climate change and allied natural disasters (increased and more intense storms and floods, long droughts and forest fires, less reliable seasonal crops due to changing distribution and intensity of rain, melting glaciers, and loss of biodiversity) because of its adverse impact on availability of food, water and energy resources, and on health. Women are also more at risk because of discrimination and poverty, which makes them disproportionately more vulnerable in the first place and less able to recover from natural disasters.

While women are the most likely to suffer disproportionately from climate change, they can also be instrumental in adapting and mitigating the effects of climate change in their communities. SWAN emphasizes that women with agency and social power can minimize the effects of climate change. It is most important that women's increased risks and vulnerabilities as well as their role in resilience building is recognized in climate change related decision-making, such as loss and damage discussions, and discussions on adaptation and mitigation strategies. Women must be included on an equal and equitable basis in all discussion and decision-making processes.

The women of South Asia, facing severe consequences of climate change, want to work together to ensure that women's rights and concerns are central in the search for climate sustainability strategies in solution of the climate crisis. Gender sensitive solutions are essential for the whole gamut of issues impacted by the climate crisis : water access, supply and availability; food security and sovereignty; and alternative, renewable, sustainable and low-cost energy resources.

Intervention Programmes:

1. (IP) will be undertaken to bring Climate Change and Gender Equality and Equity into the mainstream of international concerns and negotiations including forSDGs 2015; Kyoto framework 2015; UNFCCC+, and other international treaties and Conventions;
2. (IP) to develop climate change resilient livelihoods (e.g. climate resilient seeds, and seeds resistant to pest attacks), based on Indigenous Knowledge Systems;
3. (IP) to strengthen women's know-how and capacity in order to face disasters, including their resilience to move from relief to preparedness. Therefore, women should be involved in disaster planning at all levels, beginning with the village level;
4. (IP) on mainstreaming climate change into development concerns of how it links with other SWAN areas i.e collaboration and networking.

⁴ Women's Major Group Position Paper

5. (IP) on access to finance, including through micro financing, to enable the women of South Asia to overcome these challenges.

Outcome

- Relevant national and international policies, rules and regulations streamlined in relation to community response to Climate Change.
- Sustainable livelihoods, including employment, income, food security and food sovereignty enhanced as a result of community resilience and response to Climate Change and Climate Variability;
- Status of women in terms of substantive equality and equity strengthened;
- Relevant climate-change resilient renewable and alternative technologies developed in the farm, forest, livestock, energy and livelihood sectors within SWAN region and networks;
- Appropriate value chain and market models developed in the SWAN region and networks.

2.3 Impact on Women's Health : The Bio-Safety, Food and Malnutrition Crisis in South Asia

Challenges and Issues : The use of hazardous man-made chemicals and the resultant degradation of the environment are emerging as important causes for chronic, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory illnesses and diabetes. NCDs are estimated to cause 36 million deaths annually with 80 percent of these deaths occurring in low and middle-income countries. NCDs cause 60 percent of all deaths worldwide, and are the biggest threat to women's health globally.⁵ The World Health Organisation (WHO) and most national health Ministries in South Asia have not yet acknowledged the importance of addressing environmental factors as key risk factors in causing NCDs. Smog and other forms of air pollution, widely prevalent in most South Asian cities, are considered top-level risks for public health, particularly respiratory and cardiovascular disease. Harmful chemicals are used in products of everyday consumption like food and food packaging, and in everyday articles such as clothes, mobile phones, glue, carpeting, furniture, cosmetics, toys, detergents and other cleaning products. Harmful chemicals are in the air as a result of car fumes, through burning wood, coal or gas, and through the use of airborne sprays for pesticides, perfumes and other products. Hazardous substances are used in industrial chemicals, pesticides, dyes, drinking water disinfectant byproducts, pharmaceuticals, styrene, metals and phytoestrogens. All around us in the water and in the soil there are hormones and endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs).

Women's and children's health is seriously affected by NCDs. Recent studies show that NCDs can often be linked to chemical exposure during the foetal and early years of childhood development. Harmful chemicals are being found in the body tissue and umbilical cords of newborns and in pregnant women. Certain chemicals can disrupt normal signalling pathways or mimic hormone signalling during foetal development. There are around 900 chemicals characterised as EDCs.

⁵ Women's Major Group Position Paper on Creating a Just and Sustainable Future, section on 'Chemicals, Waste and Women's Health'.

In South Asia, women are the main decision-makers for their families' food-intake and living conditions. They also end up, often unknowingly, working with hazardous chemicals, either in the agriculture, crafts and textiles, waste management or domestic work sectors. Women have the right to know about the pollutants in the environment so that they can be consciously involved in decisions to reduce the exposure of women and children (and men) to toxic chemicals. Public information campaigns, particularly through radio and the electronic media, can be important and very useful in this regard.

Information about best practices used in other countries should be obtained and widely communicated across South Asia. A number of countries have already banned phthalates from products and are developing stronger policies to protect their citizens from EDCs. Women should be informed about chemicals that are particularly dangerous during pregnancy, with information about how women can protect themselves. There are moves to bring in a strong mercury treaty (regulating the use and disposal of mercury), and to tackle allied issues through the UN multi-stakeholder "Strategic Approach to international Chemicals Management" (SAICM) process.

In 2002, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, the target of eliminating harmful chemicals in consumer products by 2020 had been agreed upon. Progress towards this goal has, however, been very limited. The problem of harmful and hazardous chemicals is increasing instead of decreasing, particularly in developing countries and emerging economies.

While women are the primary victims of the food and malnutrition crisis, they also hold the solution. Their knowledge, expertise, skills and wisdom related to food-nutrition can be the source for empowering women, while simultaneously addressing the food and nutrition crisis, as well as the health problems arising from this crisis.

SWAN supports that the SDGs for the post-2015 development agenda should include the overall target of bringing about the elimination, by 2030, of hazardous man-made chemicals from harming public health and entering into the environment.

Intervention Programmes

- 1. The Food and Malnutrition crisis** is among the most significant crisis in South Asia. Women of this region are its worst victims. The high maternal mortality rate in the region is a cause of deep concern. When women are malnourished, it starts a vicious intergenerational cycle of worsening malnutrition for children. Fifty percent of South Asia's children are malnourished, stunted and wasted. Malnourished mothers give birth to low birth-weight babies, resulting in high neonatal, infant and child mortality due to vulnerability to infection. The high levels of malnutrition in the region are the result of policies that ignore ecological limits of the earth, and the food and nutritional rights of women. Obsession with chemical-pesticide based industrial farming and genetic engineering are driven more by corporate profits than human needs for food and nutrition.
- 2. Nutrition, Food and Bio-safety and Women's Health in South Asia.** Poisons in our food-chain and in genetically modified foods carry risks to food safety. In addition, the push by MNCs (Multinational Corporations) to aggressively promote junk-food and processed food has created newer health problems, the hazards of

which need to be acknowledged and addressed. It is crucial to circumvent these hazards through this (IP).

Outcome : These (IPs) will seek to :

- Build leadership and capacity of a new generation of women leaders to address the food & nutrition crisis by spreading understanding of all issues related to security of food and nutrition: the threats, the challenges and possible solutions;
- Build understanding about health hazards related to chemicals and poisons in food;
- Build understanding and awareness on health hazards related to chemicals in certain industrial utility products of everyday use;
- Dissemination to generate awareness about alternatives that are possible in food production, food processing and food consumption, including through reviving of knowledge and practices;
- Information campaigns to create awareness about the adverse effects of hazardous man-made chemicals;
- Achieve zero harmful chemicals in consumer products and the elimination of EDCs, POPs, heavy metals, and other suspected toxic chemicals by 2030;
- Invest in prevention of breast cancer and other NCDs related to hazardous chemicals, and in eliminating harmful chemicals from the workplace, consumer products, and the environment;
- Set national targets to move towards organic agriculture, with hundred percent organic agriculture by 2030;
- Holding producers responsible for their products through the Extended Producer Principle and the Precautionary Principle. Ensuring that no new chemicals are introduced in the market as part of any product without comprehensive tests and evidence of safety on human health and the environment, available in the public domain.

2.4 Energy and Gender Equality for the Women of South Asia

Challenges and Issues: South Asia is the home to about half the world's poor, struggling to meet basic human needs on a daily basis. In the South Asian region this accounts for about 700 million people, which is more than half the population of the region. Percentage of people in South Asia without access to electricity and modern fuels for cooking is second only to Sub-Saharan Africa.⁶Widespread energy poverty across the South Asian region is characterized by lack of equal and equitable access to energy, with the disproportionately high impact on women and the poor living without basic access to energy.

Absolute poverty or the inability to meet a number of the basic needs specified in the MDGs can be linked to not having access to energy, leading to the conclusion that any future goals for poverty reduction would depend on the poor having minimum access to energy. Discussions on the post-2015 Development Agenda have begun. Energy is already a potential new goal within the SDGs, with a high possibility of it eventually ending up as a new and separate post-2015

⁶Poor People's Energy Outlook Practical Action 2010

Sustainable Development Goal. The targets under this proposed energy goal are the same as the targets agreed for the UN campaign, launched at the beginning of 2012, on SE4All (Sustainable Energy For All) by 2030 : access to energy for all, double the renewable energy (RE) contribution to the energy mix and double the energy efficiency (EE).

The e-discussion in South Asia (www.sa-energy.net) was launched in July 2013 to generate discussions and recommendations on prioritizing energy access over the targets for RE and EE, with the special focus on prioritizing and addressing women's energy needs in South Asia. The inputs from across South Asia through the e-discussion were summarized and further discussed at the Round Table on "Energy for All in South Asia : What's at Stake for Women in the Post-2015 Agenda", organized by Practical Action, Janathaksan and SWAN with representatives from across the region. This was conducted on 22nd August 2013 as a pre-conference event of SWAN's Fifth Annual Conference in Colombo.

The Roundtable agreed on the following principles for energy access for the women of South Asia:

- Energy access and affordability for all women is a matter of their right
- Women's role as custodians of energy needs to be recognized
- Women's inclusion in all energy determinations
- Sustainability must be the guiding principle of all energy policy.

Intervention Programmes :

Based on the above principles, it is agreed to convene an (IP) to finalise policy recommendations, and undertake leadership development and capacity building activities to :

1. Mandate women's inclusion in energy policy, strategy, programme determinations and implementation as producers, users, managers, and custodians of resources;
2. Have decentralized energy planning in order to understand regional variation in demand, resources and priority setting. Women's agency in the decentralized energy production systems should be part of the design. Decentralization of energy needs that:
 - Local governments are given the mandate to develop and build provincial energy planning and implementation capacity;
 - Gender disaggregated end use data be developed;
 - Resource-mapping be done;
 - Technology and skills are brought in to bridge demand and supply gaps;
 - Education and awareness are created on sustainability, effective use, RE access, policy development and implementation
 - Credit for SMEs and financing for improved access by women be brought in.
3. Promote energy efficiency with incentives for technology and awareness;
4. Ensure that the poor are not penalized for using inefficient technologies;
5. Incentivise energy services via economic instruments;
6. Remove disincentives/distortions;
7. Identify incentives for clean energy, for example cleaner stoves/bicycles/hybrid cars;
8. Develop the life cycle model: look at the entire system – economic, social, and environmental aspect; waste management; context-based and appropriate technology;

9. Account for the full cost of energy: studies on redirecting subsidies/public money, the need for better mapping of energy needs and requirements.
10. Bring in education about energy: women as agents advocating right to energy and sustainability.

Outcome

- Mainstream gender into energy projects;
- Create a conducive policy and practice environment promoting adequate access to sustainable forms of energy for the poor of South Asia, so that they can meet their basic needs through efficient and sustainable energy sources. This includes advocacy with regional, national and global agencies to ensure an equitable policy framework for fair disbursement and judicious consumption;
- Dissemination of information among rural women on equity, energy resources and options, including through demonstrating the use of renewable energy (RE) options (centralized and decentralized) to meet the diverse energy needs of the poor;
- Demonstrate the better use of local resources, in order that the poor have more control over generating RE that meets their needs. The programme aims to specifically benefit poor women who are totally dependent on biomass for their energy needs and burdened with collecting (reduce the time factor), cooking (improved health, reduced smoke), lighting/space heating (efficiency improvements and time saving);
- Ensuring that access to finance is liberalised and capacity building resources are improved in order to encourage more women to become energy entrepreneurs;
- Engage with SE4ALL (Sustainable Energy For All) projects and programmes.

2.5 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) for the Women of South Asia

Challenges and Issues : In 2010 the UN General Assembly recognized the human right to water and sanitation. This was reconfirmed in the Rio+20 outcome document. CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) stipulates specific rights of rural women to water and sanitation. The MDGs aim at halving the number of people without access to water and sanitation. Even though the water MDG has been achieved (albeit with serious questions remaining about the quality and affordability of the water) there are still 780 million people, the majority in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, without access to improved drinking water sources. The sanitation MDG is still far from achievement, with more than 2.5 billion people worldwide who remain without access to improved sanitation. South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa once again predominate in the regional distribution of people without access to improved sanitation. Although the number of people resorting to open defecation in Southern Asia has decreased by 110 million people since 1990, it is still practiced by 41% of the region's population, representing 692 million people.⁷

Mortality and morbidity resulting from unsafe water and inadequate sanitation remain unacceptably high. Those who do not have access to safe drinking water and to improved sanitation are the most deprived among people living in poverty, the majority of whom are

⁷www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/sanitation.shtml

women. The number of people in rural areas using an unimproved water source in 2010 was still five times greater than in urban areas.⁸ In these rural areas, women are disproportionately affected, due largely to existing traditional gender roles, with women and girls being overwhelmingly responsible for collecting water.

One of the most significant divides between women and men, especially in developing countries, is found in the sanitation and hygiene sector.⁹ Access to adequate sanitation is a principal prerequisite for personal security, privacy and human dignity. Women suffer enormously more than men as a result of inadequate sanitation facilities :

- women suffer greater risks of abuse and violence, and face serious difficulties when defecating and urinating in the open is their only option. Where sanitation facilities exist, the lack of privacy (no doors, no locks) in the facilities is a greater burden for women. Even in urban areas, women and girls face innumerable security risks and allied dangers when they are forced to use common toilets or public facilities open to both men and women;
- women face serious health hazards in the absence of sanitary facilities. Women prefer to wait until dark to go to the toilet or to the open spaces. As a result they try to drink as little as possible during the day, and as a result suffer associated health problems such as urinary tract infection, chronic constipation, other gastric disorders, including diarrhea and helminth infections, as well serious ailments associated with inadequate menstrual hygiene management resulting from lack of WASH facilities;
- young children and the elderly are at the greatest risk of falling ill. The absence of adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities not only increases the causes and frequency of disease, it also increases women's workload, as in most cases women are the main caretakers of sick family members;
- Inadequate WASH facilities are an important factor inhibiting regular school attendance by adolescent girls, which very soon translates into high dropout rates among girls in the last few years of primary school and certainly in secondary school;
- Women face reduced opportunity to be active in public life, to travel and to work when there is no ready access to sanitation.

In short, without adequate WASH facilities, women's dignity, safety and health are at stake. The UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation has postulated 10 criteria – five normative and five crosscutting – with which to measure if this human right is being respected. The five normative criteria are availability, accessibility, quality/ safety, affordability, and acceptability of the WASH facilities being provided. The five cross-cutting criteria are non-discrimination, participation, accountability, impact, and sustainability of the WASH facilities.

Intervention Programme :

SWAN supports these criteria which, together with a specific focus on women in rural areas, should form the basis for the WASH SDGs in the post-2015 Development Agenda. Based on these criteria, the SWAN (IP) will evolve policy recommendations, and programmes for leadership development and capacity building for achieving the following targets as part of the SDG for WASH :

- Drinking water for all;

⁸ Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation 2012 Update. UNICEF, WHO. March 2012.

⁹ Women's Major Group Position paper, April 2013, section on "Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Gender Targets for the Post-2015 Development Agenda"

- Sanitation for all, including safe menstrual hygiene, and zero gender violence;
- All human excreta and waste water should be safely managed including storage, transportation and treatment before being disposed off;
- Priority in all WASH-related activities for women living in poverty in rural and slum areas;
- WASH facilities and hygiene education in all schools;
- Women's leadership in WASH-related activities (planning, decision-making, implementation and monitoring) should be encouraged and facilitated at all levels, including local self-government;
- The focus in WASH-related programmes and projects should be on affordable, local solutions, incorporating traditional knowledge. Sustainable innovative technologies should be encouraged. Large private and public sector corporations should take up such projects under CSR (corporate social responsibility).

Outcome

Integrated and effective WASH policies and programmes can increase food production (through fertilisers as a by-product), provide treated, re-usable waste water for agriculture, provide material for renewable energy generation, and above all, create many jobs for rural and urban youth.

2.6 Waste Management

Challenges and Issues : Our environment and ecology are being ravaged by mindless consumption, while leaving thousands of marginal women deeply deprived. From bauxite mining for aluminium to cracking naphtha for products like polymers, which result in plastics, the planet is being dug out, pilfered and made sterile. The mined aluminium reaches middle class South Asian homes as aluminum foil, discarded after being used as a wrap. The plastic litters our waterways and drains as plastic bags, resulting in disease and death of bio-diversity in oceans. Many plastics and other new materials contain toxic additives that outgas during their usage.

Even the computers and cell phones we use end up as e-waste, their rare earth metals and other components frequently polluting the planet during their life-cycles. All these require mining, a devastating activity that uproots sustainable practices, causes severe pollution, takes away from the commons the poor depend upon and makes women and children even more vulnerable, as sustainable economies are fractured.

There are further implications of un-sustainable consumption. The small fractions of gold in e-waste is extracted using cyanide, and the copper is extracted in acid baths, operated by women. Not only does this harm the women directly, and pollute the commons, it also severely impacts the health and development of fetuses and children. This too, adds to the burden of women as caregivers and can even marginalize them further within their households. There is a considerable spike in the amount of electronic waste or e-waste across South Asia. It is important that the disposal and recycling of e-waste should be done in a manner that is non-toxic and safeguards both the environment and livelihoods.

Many such practices have a global resonance, as large corporates, based in South Asia or elsewhere, subvert democratic governance to own resources and the commons. Such practices take away from several sustainable livelihoods, such as farming with local seeds that are best

suited to the ecology, and growing food without pesticides. The impacts are already visible through cancer clusters in several regions across South Asia. Cooking with smoky stoves (*chuhlas*) forces women to inhale poison that is killing us. In cities, air pollution further exacerbates this misery.

There are several problems related to solid waste across South Asia. Poor disposal is the norm, resulting in contaminated water and health concerns. Given that over 50% of solid waste in the region is organic, it rots and generates methane, a potent greenhouse gas. In addition, poor municipal management, misuse of funds and lack of infrastructure result in undesirable practices, such as burning waste, which releases the deadly chemicals, dioxins and furans. Waste also blocks drains, resulting in sewage backflows in a region that is already infrastructure-challenged.

On the other hand, several initiatives across South Asia show that the solutions to these problems lie not in expensive imported technologies or the privatization of waste handling, but in using local resources-*human resources*. In Delhi, organizing wastepickers to collect waste in New Delhi has resulted in greater recycling, cleaner streets and jobs for the poor. In Pune (India) a similar project has resulted in savings for the municipality. In Dhaka, an initiative to compost wet waste resulted in significant greenhouse gas reduction and even carbon credits.

Intervention Programmes

Converting Waste into Green Jobs and Social Wealth will have the following (IP) components:

- Addressing key issues on Why is South Asia different from the rest of the world with respect to waste and waste management leading to an unsanitary environment?
- Key issues and concerns regarding waste management and how they are being handled and what are the means by which they can be converted into livelihood opportunities?
- Waste and livelihoods : providing solutions to the planet based on best practices from South Asia and around the world.

Outcome

Additional jobs and well being created for the women of South Asia through effective waste management programmes.

2.7 Strengthening Resilience and Ecological Sustainability by Integration of Environmental Efforts through Community Response to Natural and Human Induced Disasters.

Challenges and Issues

The South Asian Region is home to most of the natural and human activity induced disasters such as earthquakes, landslides, droughts, floods, pests, diseases, fires, environmental conflicts and riots. Women suffer the most in both natural and human-activity induced disasters. Ecological and environmental regional orders are the result of long years of experience, optimization and adjustments. SWANs across South Asia need to work in tandem with village women and their institutions such as SHGs (Self-Help Groups) and CBOs (Community Based Organisations) in order to enhance their quality of life and build resilience in response to natural disasters, which often lead to socio-political conflicts. Collective community response and

resilience to natural and man-made disasters are critical in order to reduce conflict and poverty, and thus promote peace, leading to sustainable development.

Intervention Programme :

Improved understanding and sharing of the know-how and show-how developed in the SWAN region related to community response and resilience to natural and man-made disasters.

Outcome

The sharing of know-how on managing natural and man-made disasters can lead to a robust system of women-to-women groups contributing towards peace, development and conflict resolution, including preventing climate instability and environmental refugees in the South Asian region.

3.0 THE NEW ECONOMIC ORDER

The transformation to the New Economic Order will be attempted by SWAN through a series of well designed and executed thematic Intervention Programmes (IPs) which will lead to concrete action on relevant issues. Experience has demonstrated that despite MDG 3's focus on women's empowerment, gender inequality and inequity persist, particularly in South Asia. The feminisation of poverty remains entrenched across this region. The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report, 2011, pointed out that worldwide seven out of ten people living below the poverty line (US \$ 1.25 per day) are women; and seven out of ten people dying from starvation are also women.¹⁰

Worldwide, fewer women are employed than men (47.6% and 75.3% respectively).¹¹ Across South Asia, women's work is overwhelmingly in the unorganized, non-formal sectors of the economy, with poorly paid and precarious jobs, with no social protection or contributory benefits of any kind (such as income security and guaranteed minimum living wage, access to essential services and formal employment-related benefits). Across the board, unemployment and underemployment affect women's income security throughout life. As a result, women face serious financial barriers in accessing health care, and housing, and they are more dependent on their families. In addition, there is continuing gender disparity in access to primary, secondary and tertiary education, and in accessing clean water and improved sanitation.¹²

Structural gender discrimination is pervasive in the present economic order, particularly in South Asia. Therefore, unless specific and targeted efforts are made to change this, the post-2015 Development Agenda will remain as gender-unequal as the present one. Women will lose out, but so will the overall prospects for socio-economic prosperity and environmental sustainability in this region. The link between gender equality and poverty eradication is direct and strong. If gender equality and socio-financial inclusion for women are accepted as major focal points of the New Economic Order in the post-2015 Development Agenda, this will greatly hasten the process of poverty eradication and bring in socio-economic prosperity for all.

SWAN supports the ILO-WHO Social Protection Floor Initiative, with a special focus on gender equality. National social protection floors, which should be introduced in all South Asian

¹⁰ Women's Major Group Position Paper, op cit, , section on "Gender, Poverty, and the need for a Social Protection Floor".

¹¹ UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report 2012

¹² Ibid, and Human Development Report Summary, 2011, Introduction

countries by 2030, should be need-based and rights-based. They should be designed as part of comprehensive social security systems, thereby avoiding the safety net approach based on temporary and sectoral relief programs targeting food security or guaranteed employment.

Decent work and a living wage for the women of South Asia is still a distant goal. Women across South Asia toil ceaselessly, whether within the confines of the family, in agriculture, in the crafts and textiles sector, as factory-workers, as domestic labour and even as heavy-duty labourers on roads, buildings and other infrastructure projects. In numerical terms, only a miniscule percentage of women across South Asia succeed in obtaining a good education that entitles them to decent work and a good living wage. For the vast majority of women workers the rights assured by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights remains an unfulfilled promise : “Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring...an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection” (Article 23(3)). MDG 1, in 2008, added ILO’s Decent Work Agenda under target 1(b) as the achievement of “full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people”. ILO’s Decent Work Agenda has four strategic objectives (with gender equality as a cross-cutting objective), namely creating jobs (through investment, entrepreneurship, skills development, job creation and sustainable livelihoods), guaranteeing rights at work (through workers’ representation and participation), extending social protection, and promoting social dialogue (between workers and employers).

MDG target 1(b) is far from being achieved. The focus on growth as the most important criteria of development has led to the phenomenon of ‘jobless growth’ in many nations across South Asia. This is among the strongest indicators that ‘trickle down economics’ or the ‘trickle down theory of development’ has not worked. Certainly it has not benefitted the women of South Asia. Under MDG 1 (eradication of extreme poverty and hunger), the proportion of people living on less than US \$ 1.25 a day in Southern Asia has halved from 61% in 1990 to 30% in 2010 (UNDP figures). Yet, this figure (of 30%) still represents almost one third of the population, seventy percent of whom (the hungry and the poor) are women. And this meagre figure of US dollars 1.25 per day is a sad indicator that there is no target measuring whether employees are being offered a dignified, living wage. While wealth has increased exponentially in most countries of South Asia, there has been no corresponding increase in wages or decrease in unemployment.

Even MDG Goal 3 on gender equality, which has as one of its target indicators the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, does not measure the availability of decent work, appropriate wages or good working conditions, and what is much worse, it excludes the vast majority of women workers employed in agriculture across South Asia, which has the highest gender pay gap in the world.¹³ The ‘gender pay gap’ is an indicator of entrenched discrimination and inequality. Industries in the unorganised and organised sectors employ large numbers of women, who are amongst the lowest paid, most insecure and most exploited. It is estimated that nearly two-thirds of women work in ‘vulnerable employment’, lacking basic security, benefits and good working conditions.¹⁴ This situation has arisen because of the systemic devaluing of women’s work, blindness to women’s work as care-givers and entrenched assumptions about women’s dependency on men. Recognizing the economic value of women’s household and reproductive work will increase visibility and recognition of women’s contribution to the national economy.

¹³ The Women’s Major Group Position Paper, section on “End the Gender Pay Gap : Living Wage and Decent Work for Women”

¹⁴ Ibid

In finalizing sustainable development goals, SWAN emphasizes the close link between decent work, a good living wage and environmentally friendly jobs, since the human and environmental sustainability of employment move in tandem with each other. The SDGs for the New Economic Order should include substantial increases in decent and green jobs for women, with reduction in the unemployment rate of women and in the gender pay gap, substantial upgrading in women's skills, including through professional training and retraining, and substantial increase of women in decision-making positions in companies, both in the private and public sectors.

SWAN's New Economic Order seeks to ensure appropriate SDGs that replace the growth based economic development model with sustainable economies; that move from the focus on mere "efficiency" to the focus on "sufficiency" based sustainable development paradigms; that evolve a common vision for an equality and equity based national and regional governance systems by reinforcing the principle of subsidiarity; that bring about substantial changes in the current unsustainable consumption and production patterns by adopting sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods; that create wellbeing and happiness for all and promote mindfulness.

3.1 The Crafts and Textiles Sector

Challenges and Issues

Across South Asia there is a strong tradition of home-based work, especially in rural areas, which have brought before the world the most exquisite craftsmanship and woven textiles. Enterprises have used this tradition to develop a class of flexible and invisible contractual labour force that is largely female, with varying levels of skills, working almost entirely in the unorganized sector.

Traditional gender role expectations and patriarchal attitudes in South Asia bind women to their family responsibilities. This inhibits the confidence, independence and mobility of women. Thus, women end up with poor access to information, credit, technology and markets, which prevents them from starting a business. Traditionally, in the arts, crafts and textile sectors across South Asia, the designer and the practitioner was one and the same person. As the economy evolved, this traditional crafts or textiles person was forced to look at design separately, especially as part of the search for newer markets, including overseas markets. The designer, in many cases doubling up as the middleman or supplier to overseas markets, started retaining most of the value of the goods produced. And the traditional artisan, now left only with the laborious process of execution, was forced into the position of a labourer in the supply chain, impoverished because of the lack of a living wage or any other any social security benefit (access to health services, education for the children, housing, and so on) despite being the actual practitioner of the skill.

South Asia has the maximum number of women who live in rural areas and work in this unorganized crafts and textile sector. They are disempowered and it is difficult to foresee any immediate change coming into their lives unless interventions are made in the areas of work they are involved in. Several affirmative measures by way of programmes and schemes need to be initiated to bring women into the mainstream of development, by providing them meaningful remuneration, and by empowering them so that they are motivated to preserve and pass on to the next generation the skills that they have acquired from their forefathers and foremothers.

Some of the interventions for the women in the region should include encouraging women's entrepreneurship, introducing design schools for the traditional artisans (where they are given the knowledge of the market), and encouraging craftspersons to reach their end customer directly through a better understanding of the value chain. Technological interventions should be encouraged, for example better looms could be made available or small technological innovations for specific crafts could be made. In addition, a model for women's financial inclusion is needed in order to guarantee a head-start in bringing about a change in the status of women in South Asia.

The globalized world has moved to free markets and free trade. Any company can move to any part of the world in search of the cheapest raw resources and cheapest labour. For these companies, there is no fair-trade. Women, representing 50 percent of the world's population, have been placed in a position where "free" means free labour at home, in the fields, in the forests, with no value given to the output of their skills.

Crafts and textile making offers women the opportunity to express themselves, as they are the natural inheritors and perpetuators of traditional wisdom, skill, and culture. They express through their skills an identity, which individuals, communities, ethnic groups, races, and even countries seek and hold dear for their very existence.

We need to recognize and accept the importance that Mahatma Gandhi gave to *Khadi* and village industries, directly and indirectly connecting these to peace and non-violence – which ultimately are the basic factors for sustainable development.

Conclusions of SWAN's Crafts, Textiles and Livelihoods workshop in Colombo (20-22 August 2013) : The SWAN on Crafts and Textiles held a three day workshop which included the subject of livelihoods. The Workshop conducted focused discussions on the crafts sector as a livelihood option for South Asian women. It assessed the changing economic order and global markets. It studied the value chain of craft products as they are being produced. It concluded that the problems to be tackled are:

- Lack of Government support;
- Lack of access to regular and affordable raw materials;
- Disappearing markets due to various factors,
- Limited training and capacity building,
- Lack of financial assistance,
- Technological obsolescence.

The workshop also recognized the need to coordinate activities with other sectors, such as health and education, for better delivery of products and services. The need for finance and suitable forms of credit ranges from micro finance to women's banks, or banks with special departments to support women's projects that will support their economic development and empowerment. The participating countries acknowledged the need to improve the quality of products to match international standards and also to focus on local and domestic markets as a priority. In this, the selection of niche markets, equality in the work-place and sustainable marketing practices should be followed.

Intervention Programmes:

1. Mapping the crafts skills of women across the region with the purpose of increasing knowledge and awareness of the existing talents and income generating potential of

women in each of our countries. This will require research and documentation leading to focused programmes for their development. This will be done by each country nationally.

2. Programme on creating a specific range of prototypes and organizations of production of items suiting the tourism sector. The emphasis would be on the use of locally available raw material and designs that reflect the identity of the region, and highlight the producer groups to route the production in its parent country. A part of this exercise would be to create immediate linkages with the user institutions with the support of the local tourism boards.*¹⁵
3. Capacity building for the making of handmade paper using principles of recycling and reuse. Local agricultural waste, textile waste and other kinds of waste materials will be used. Natural dyeing processes will be strongly encouraged as environment friendly colourants.
4. Creation and development of a range of specific prototypes of crafts and textiles from each country to reflect the mission of SWAN and to encourage purchasing of well designed high quality but simple crafts and textiles that have been produced under principles of sustainable development. A website will be developed which will showcase these skills and traditions with their related local and special stories to reflect the identities of the producers and create increased awareness and preferences for these crafts.

Outcomes :

- Increased earning capacity for craftswomen;
- Increased confidence in understanding economic self reliance and the meaning of human dignity;
- Including more women in the productivity process and thereby increasing earnings through their creative skills;
- Conserving indigenous knowledge of heritage skills;
- Demonstrating sustainable development through women's work.

3.2 Financial Access for Women's Empowerment, Economic Growth And Sustainable Development in South Asia

Challenges and Issues : Across South Asia, the neo-liberal economic model has stressed millions of households in rural, tribal and urban South Asia. This has multiplied the already existing gap between the rich and the poor. Its manifestation in terms of marginalization and violence against weaker sections especially women and children has deepened in all spheres of life.

Governments, while committed to the liberalization growth model, try addressing the stressed population by developing welfare schemes under the public policy agenda. This formulation assumes that the poor are supplicating for support and allowances. Their basic need entitlements are ignored at the same time as their indigenous capacities and entrepreneurial exertions are undermined.

¹⁵ This (IP) should have a coordinated relationship with similar activities planned under Entrepreneurship Development (The Eco-Tourism Sector)

SWAN expresses its serious concern that women have little or no visible economic capital, despite being responsible for creating huge social capital. There has to be a multi pronged strategy to deal with diverse factors affecting them negatively. Their access to mainstream financial resources to meet their life cycle needs would be an important step forward in their journey towards empowerment.

The condition of women have been captured by the UN Millennium Project's "Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals". This Report observes that women have little ownership rights over assets. "Yet, ownership and control over assets such as land and housing provide economic security, incentives for taking economic risks which lead to growth, and important economic returns including income" (page 87). "To improve women's economic opportunities, governments need to guarantee women effective and independent property ownership and access to security rights, especially land and housing, both in law and in practice" (page 88). Women's right to own and accumulate assets is enhanced by their access to financial tools, such as microfinance, for housing renovation and development. Furthermore, property rights can impact women's ability to leverage their assets through credit and invest in opportunities to grow their wealth.

The review of the MDGs registers that while participation of women in the labour force has increased, there are still significant gender gaps in participation rates, occupational levels and wages. Paid employment for women has expanded slowly and women continue to assume the largest share of unpaid work. Close to two thirds of all employed women in developing countries work as contributing family workers or as workers on their own account, typically in forms of employment that are extremely vulnerable and lack job security and benefits. Women's share of waged non-agricultural employment has increased in the last decade but only marginally, and women have generally failed to get decent jobs. In the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia, for example, the share of females in total employment is below 30 per cent.¹⁶

The review has suggested a number of critical interventions, including stepping up efforts for an inclusive financial system. Universal access to mainstream financial services may need to be prioritised among the core areas of development, finance being the pivotal component for the family's movement out of poverty, whether through capital formation, raising potential levels of production, or other non-farm economic activities, or enhanced savings, people friendly insurance services for life, health, assets, and enterprises; pension services for old age, and affordable and safe remittance services for migrating family members. Poor households almost invariably remain outside the purview of formal finance and women from these poor households face double jeopardy.

Financial inclusion interventions in their design assume a space for women to articulate and reflect on their future plans and actions. These interventions are taking place in the public policy arena where the state is leading such interventions. At the same time civil society institutions are also shaping many of these interventions. Several countries have implemented interventions to improve the financial access of poor and marginalised women and their enterprises. South Asia has been the laboratory for many path breaking developmental innovations, and now, poor households, especially their women, do require empathetic policy and institutional frameworks for unleashing their potential.

¹⁶ Report of the Secretary General, United Nations, General Assembly, 64th Session, 12 February 2010 (Ref World Bank , Global Monitoring Report 2009, annex, monitoring the MDGs : selected indicators)

SWAN, through its program on Financial Access for Women's Empowerment, Economic Growth And Sustainable Development, seeks to discuss these critical issues in order to concretize their recommendations on SDGs for the women of South Asia in this sector.

Intervention Programmes

The (IP) for Financial Access for Women's Empowerment, Economic Growth And Sustainable Development would focus on :

- Creating platforms for sharing interventions in the sphere of regulatory and supervisory frameworks;
- Sharing innovations in the institutional design and product development for micro enterprises;
- Sharing interventions for universal financial inclusion and collaboration between various stakeholders;
- Sectoral initiatives for client protection practices and responsible finance;
- Initiatives in the sphere of capacity building of the community for participating in the formal financesphere;
- Interfacing livelihood interventions and access to financial services.

Outcome

- Policy making bodies and regulatory bodies would ensure the required investments in financial infrastructure, including investments, in creating the necessary financial capability among the new entrants to the mainstream financial sector;
- Creating multiple channels with required regulatory oversight to achieve real time financial inclusion for women.

3.3. Maternal, Reproductive and Women's Health and Gender Concerns in South Asia

Challenges and Issues : The current economic order promotes the corporatization and privatization of health services, makes health a commodity and health care an enterprise. It leads to the marginalisation of indigenous knowledge and traditional health care systems. SWAN challenges the exploitative nature of this approach to health. SWAN is committed to comprehensive health care that includes all determinants of good health. We consider that all policies need to promote and protect public health, and that health policy and programmes should be gender sensitive, culturally appropriate, affordable, accessible, while maintaining quality of care and the dignity and respect for women.

Adequate budgetary allocations for providing comprehensive health care should be ensured and distributive justice in health care achieved. Essential and life-saving medicines for maternal and reproductive women's health, and for non-communicable diseases, should be made available. The present challenges of intellectual property rights (under TRIPS and TRIPS+ agendas) are a threat for the issues of access and affordability of essential medicines. The marginalisation of indigenous knowledge and traditional systems of medicine and biodiversity are a major concern to SWAN as women are the conservers of traditional knowledge.

Misuse of medical technology for sex determination, assisted reproductive technologies (e.g. commercial surrogacy), and the commercialization of women's sexuality leads to increased exploitation of women.

The poor health status of women in South Asia reflects existing gender discrimination right through the life cycle. High maternal and infant mortality, inverse sex ratio, and increasing violence against women in all its forms and manifestations are serious cause for concern. The HDI Report on Gender from the Mahbub ul Huq Centre of Pakistan shows gender discrimination as being the highest in South Asia, as compared with any other region in the world.

There is an urgent need to improve maternal and reproductive health care, and also address the health concerns of women. There is a need to address the determinants of women's health and work for ensuring comprehensive health care. These include access to essential medicines and to health-care services for reducing and preventing maternal mortality.

SWAN supports the appropriate use of traditional health systems, as incorporated in the Alma Ata Charter, including human resources training for traditional birth attendants in order to improve their skills and provide support to the mother and the new born.

There is the strong requirement for increasing health budget allocations for women's health across the region, especially in order to strengthen public health services and provide universal health care with the inclusion of the vulnerable and the usually socially excluded, such as widows, elderly, disabled and the minorities.

Medical care prices are spiralling. There is increasing privatization of medical care at a time when increasing health challenges and threats, through communicable diseases, vector and water borne diseases, sexually transmitted diseases, malnutrition-related and other non-communicable diseases (mental health, cancers, asthma, diabetes, hyper tension). Over and above this are the totally neglected areas of women's occupational health hazards and women's maternal reproductive and health care needs, which remain ignored and inadequately addressed.

Intervention Programmes :

The SWAN (IPs) on Maternal, Reproductive and Women's Health and Gender Concerns in South Asia are:

1. Leadership development to highlight women's maternal, reproductive and health needs;
2. Building capacity of women to prioritize issues to be addressed for collective action, in terms of policy, policy recommendations and implementation;
3. Addressing newer threats to women's health;
4. Building linkages with likeminded individuals and organizations working for women's maternal, reproductive and health rights across South Asia;
5. Sharing and exchanging knowledge about best practices across South Asia on all important health-related issues for women, including preventive measures, such as against the use of drugs and spread of HIV Aids.

Outcome

1. Substantive reduction of maternal and child mortality;
2. Improved health status of women in South Asia;
3. Improved access to rural health services in South Asia.

3.4 . Secure Livelihoods for Women and Food Sovereignty from the Farm,Forest and Off-Farm Sectors in South Asia

Challenges and Issues : Households across South Asia, and women in particular, augment the opportunities for income, employment and survival at the farm household level through a natural process of holistic integration of natural resources around their environment. Women are the key decision-makers, implementers and contributors to the process of this important household economy. It is critical that SWAN enhance women's well being and improved life situations through an integrated approach and understanding of farm-forest-livestock and off-farm nexus. The integrated approach to natural resources management and household coping strategy will lead to improved homestead economy, which in the aggregate will lead to improved economic development in the region. The threat to food security and food sovereignty is further aggravated because of rising food prices, speculation and climate change, which is intensifying drought, floods and cyclones. The existing agrarian crisis is reflected in high levels of farmers' suicides, diversion from food-production to non-food crops, export-oriented crops, and speculation in food prices. This has led to loss of knowledge about traditional practices that are nutrition and health promotive, affordable, culturally appropriate and holistic.

Intervention Programme : This (IP) will share common collaborative approaches of SWAN members and case studies of what works and what does not and why? This will be accomplished through well-documented case studies from the region as lessons identified/learnt in order to enhance the sharing and learning from each other especially the women resource groups for common property, community forestry, farmer managed irrigation systems and renewable energy based on best practices in the SWAN countries in order to improve the household economy, food security and secure livelihoods.

Outcome : Secure livelihoods and enhanced food security and food sovereignty for the family and strengthened national and regional economies benefitting the women of South Asia.

3.5 Entrepreneurship Development among the Women of South Asia

Challenges and Issues : There are a number of constraints that hold back the leadership and entrepreneurial potential of the women of South Asia, from the grassroots to the national level. Some of the common constraints are related to both internal (lack of self-confidence, lack of marketable skills, and education) and external barriers (lack of access to information and communication opportunities to tap skills and resources, lack of networking and liaison, inability to deal with the external world on equal terms with men including the skills required to tap financial, material, market, human and institutional capital).

The South Asian region is home to some of the most stunning, rare and unique touristic sites. There is tremendous potential for the tourism industry to encourage entrepreneurship among the women of South Asia. In recent times, the adverse impact of climate change and environmental degradation has had negative effects on the tourism economy all over the region: This affects the rural women and households severely in terms of income and livelihood opportunities, as options from services such as lodge management, home stay programmes, arts and crafts, portering, food supply, goods for tourists, trekking guide are all affected.

Rural unemployment also increases during periods of economic downturn, leading to all round depression in socio-economic well being of the household and the national economy. Even banks, travel agencies, hotels and service industries are badly affected. On the other hand, a

functioning eco-tourism industry has the benefit of increased employment and income, improved environment and bio-diversity, increased livelihoods and the preservation, promotion and growth of the green sector such as community and agro-forestry and increased income for the national parks and forest reserve areas in South Asia.

Intervention Programmes :

1. Developing Leadership and Women Entrepreneurs across South Asia :

SWAN members are strong in community organizing, community mobilization and building capacity of grassroots women's networks and organization. Utilizing these good qualities, SWAN networks and members in each country will enhance leadership development and entrepreneurship of women at all levels. These will be in the area of leadership development, effective communication, effective negotiation, planning, management, monitoring human resource development and management, work place employer and employee relationships, financial management, institutional management to dealing with the traditional skills of managing small and medium enterprises as well as value chain analysis and value chain management. This will be accomplished through a series of well designed modular courses, study visit programmes and internship placements ranging from a few days to a few months, in order to unleash the leadership and entrepreneurial potential of South Asian women.

2. Developing and Strengthening Sustainable Eco-Tourism Across South Asia :

South Asian nations will strengthen eco-tourism through improved planning, implementation, working with the government for policy improvements, working with the tourism promotion sector, travel agencies, banks, lodge and hotel management, national parks and wild life reserves, NGOs and community groups to develop a robust eco-tourism sector in each country.

SWAN will also work with various specialized agencies in the government, private and non-government sector to upgrade the vocational and practical skills of crafts people, lodge owners, managers, tour guides, and other service providers in this sector to strengthen eco-tourism service to the tourists.

This (IP) will bring together these stakeholders in order to create environmental awareness, work with schools for conservation awareness and education, work with community groups for setting up conservation camps, collaborate with travel trade agencies, hotels, lodges and chamber of commerce to ensure strengthened eco-tourism.

This (IP) will work with the forest, national parks, nature preserve agencies to ensure good practices in tree plantation, bio-diversity conservation, environmental education and resilience to climate change, soil and forest degradation and improved bird and animal welfare activities. It will also have programmes to improve environmental sanitation and waste management in the trekking trail routes and nature preserves and nature parks.

Outcome : SWAN's effort and initiatives in Leadership and Entrepreneurship Promotion will develop a critical mass of women leaders and entrepreneurs through the South Asian Region leading to their empowerment and the improved economy of the nation and the region.

3.6 Gross National Happiness (GNH) and Sustainable Development for the Women of South Asia

Challenges and Issues : The concept of GNH was first put forward by the Fourth King of Bhutan, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck. The four pillars of Gross National Happiness, identified as socio-economic growth and development, preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, conservation of the environment, and good governance, encompass the cultural, socio-economic and ecological interests of all South Asian nations.

Happiness of the individual 'self' is possible only through serving others. Thus, the belief in GNH can foster generous acts of compassion and service as a way of life even in this fast-paced consumer world. We are living in a culture and times where ancient values of compassion and contentment are giving way to increased consumerism and instant gratification of the "I, me, myself" world. All marketing ploys are geared to exploit our human frailties of giving in to vanity, into flattering our egos and into deluding ourselves that products can give us happiness. In this rush, we forget that to achieve true happiness and contentment, we have to look inside and curb our greed, our vanity and our egos. We have to learn to live in harmony with our natural surroundings and accept the fact that all humans, and other species, have as much a right to be on this planet as you and I.

Bhutan's bold declaration of GNH caught the attention of academics, journalists and politicians across the world because of the growing realization of the diminishing rate of returns on economic gains. Many in developed and developing countries understand that increased wealth alone is insufficient to bring about human "wellness", and there is a growing body of studies focusing on the importance of ethics, confirming that the human spirit needs more than just material wealth.

The GNH framework renders linear thought processes largely invalid and promotes a more holistic comprehension. Given the interdependencies of our livelihoods and our environment, GNH represents the "middle path", recognizing that the focus on economic development and growth cannot be sustained without factoring in cultural, spiritual as well as environmental aspects.

Intervention Programme : SWAN recognizes the value of the pragmatic and practical GNH approach, which embraces both spiritual well-being and material development. These (the four pillars of GNH) are the very issues that SWAN has been emphasizing as being particularly relevant for ensuring gender equality and equity, women's rights and women's empowerment across South Asia. SWAN agrees that the concept of GNH should be factored into the proposed SDGs for the post-2015 Development Agenda. All gender-related issues should be factored into the four 'pillars' of GNH, and through this, the possibility of evolving the South Asia Gender Index should be studied. SWAN accepts that bringing in policy recommendations, leadership development and capacity building to achieve these goals would go far in achieving sustainable development for the women of South Asia.

Outcome :

- Establishing the close connectivity between the principles of GNH and bringing in sustainable development for the women of South Asia;
- Examining the feasibility of a South Asia Gender Index.

CONCLUSION

SWAN represents a shared aspiration. The success of SWAN's future work will depend on close coordination and interaction among SWAN Convener, Coordinators, (IP) organisers and

delegates, combined with sustained efforts to inform, convince and involve women Parliamentarians and activists from each SWAN nation in the achievement of our objectives.

SWAN recognizes that, in South Asia, issues of gender equality and gender equity are often ignored or downgraded in importance as being of interest only to women, combined with mounting resentment against women and organizations that seek to challenge the status quo. SWAN strongly supports the inclusion of gender sensitive and non-patriarchal members of society, men and boys included, in the mission for gender equality and sustainable development in South Asia. SWAN invites their active participation in its (IPs) striving for sustainable development for the women of South Asia. Sustainable development is the common cause for all of us. SWAN's emphasis is on pointing out that this shared objective is unachievable without the focus on ameliorating the abject condition of women across South Asia. SWAN will work towards inclusive solutions for achieving our objective of sustainable development for the women of South Asia.

SWAN's Sixth Annual Conference will be held in Thimphu, Bhutan, in the second half of 2014.

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46. Ms Abida Malik, Senior Vice President, Behbud Association of Pakistan, Rawalpindi
47. Ms Hina Lotia, General Manager, LEAD Pakistan, Islamabad
48. Ms Madiha Kazi, Textile Designer, Thardeep Rural Development Programme, Karachi
49. Ms Ambareen Imran, Director Asasah, Lahore
50. Ms Mome Saleem, Research Coordinator, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad

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51. Dr. Ms Saroshi Dubash, Group Director of Abans, and President, Sri Lanka Women's Chamber of Industry and Commerce (WCIC)
52. Ms. Mano Alles, Company Director, Co-Chairperson, Conference Committee for SWAN's Fifth Annual Conference, Colombo
53. Ms. Renuka Fernando, Deputy Director, Ladies' College Department of Vocational Studies, Co-Chairperson, Conference Committee for SWAN's Fifth Annual Conference, Colombo
54. Ms. Rohini Nanayakkara, Chairperson of the Lanka ORIX Leasing Company (LOLC), Colombo
55. Justice Shiranee Tilakawardane, Justice of the Supreme Court, Colombo
56. Ms. Vidyani Hettigoda, Company Director, Siddhalepa Group of Companies, Immediate Past President, WCIC, Colombo

57. Dr. Vishaka Hidellage, Country Director, Practical Action Sri Lanka, Colombo
58. Mr. Uchita De Zoysa, Chairman of Global Sustainability Solutions (GLOSS), Executive Director of Centre for Environment and Development (CED), Colombo
59. Ms. Nishani Dissanayake, Foreign News Editor, Lakkima, and Editor, "Samudura", Colombo

Annex I

SWAN Network Institutions and Individuals Responsible for the Implementation of the Intervention Programmes (IPs)

SN	Theme	Persons & Organizations
01	Democratic & Inclusive Good Governance for Gender Equality and Sustainable Development in South Asia	Ms. Indira Shrestha and Mr Deepak, Tamang, Shtrii Shakti and SEARCH-Nepal, Kathmandu, Nepal
02	Peace and Sustainable Development in South Asia : Strengthening Women's Role in Peacemaking and Conflict-resolution	Ms. Mome Saleem, SDPI (Sustainable Development Policy Institute), Islamabad, Pakistan.
03	Elimination of Violence Against Women in South Asia	Dr. Sabiha Hussain, Associate Professor, K.R. Narayanan Center for Dalit and Minority Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi, India
04	Gender and Education in the Context of Sustainable Development Goals for the Women of South Asia	Ms. Tasneem Athar, Dy. Director, CAMPAIGN for Popular Education (CAMPE), Dhaka, Bangladesh. Ms. Archana Dwivedi, Director, NIRANTAR, Center for Education and Gender, New Delhi, India Ms. Bhavana Gadre, Management Coordinator, TARA (Technology and Action for Rural Advancement), Development Alternatives Group, New Delhi, India
05	Culture and Sustainable Development for the Women of South Asia	IP 1. Ms. Bibi Russell, Fashion for Development, Bibi Productions, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Professor Veena Sikri, Convener SWAN, Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi, India IP 2. Professor Veena Sikri, Convener SWAN, Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi, India Dr. Sabiha Hussain, Associate Professor, K.R. Narayanan Center for Dalit and Minority Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi, India Mr. Deepak D. Tamang/Indira Shrestha, SEARCH-Nepal and Shtrii Shakti (S2), Kathmandu, Nepal.
06	Role of Women in Media in South	IP 1. Ms. Nandini Sahai, Media Information and

	Asia	Communications Center of India (MICCI), Goa, & Director, International Centre, Goa. IP 2. WCIC, Colombo, Sri Lanka
07	Seed and Food Sovereignty for the Women of South Asia	Dr. Vandana Shiva, Director, Navadanya (Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology), New Delhi, India Ms. Farida Akhtar, Executive Director, UBINIG, Policy Research for Development Alternatives, Dhaka, Bangladesh
08	Climate Change and Gender Equality for the Women of South Asia	Ms. Hina Lotia, General Manager, LEAD Pakistan, Islamabad.
09	Impact on Women's Health in South Asia : The Food and Malnutrition Crisis	Dr. Mira Shiva, Director, Initiatives for Health, Equity and Society, New Delhi, India
10	Nutrition, Food and Bio-Safety and Women's Health in South Asia	Dr. Mira Shiva, Director, Initiatives for Health, Equity and Society, New Delhi, India. Prof. Afsana Kaosar, Director, Health, Nutrition and Population, BRAC, Bangladesh.
11	Energy and Gender Equality for the Women of South Asia	Dr. Vishaka Hidellage, Director, Janathaksan, Colombo, Sri Lanka.
12	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) for the Women of South Asia : Gender targets in the post-2015 development agenda	Dr. Abdul Sattar Yoosuf, Executive Director, International Center for Environment, Development and Operational Research, Male, Maldives.
13	Converting Waste into Green Jobs and Social Wealth	Bharati Chaturvedi, Director, Chintan Environmental Research and Action Group, New Delhi, India
14	Strengthening Resilience and Ecological Sustainability by Integration of Environmental Efforts through Community Response to Natural and Human Induced Disasters.	Deepak Tamang, Director SEARCH-Nepal, Kathmandu
15	Hand Made Paper including Natural Dyes	Suraiya Chowdhury, Director of Design, Prokritee, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
16	Mapping the Crafts Skills of the Women of South Asia	Done Nationally by each SWAN nation, coordinated by Ms. Jaya Jaitly, Founder President, Dastkari Haat Samiti, New Delhi.
17	Crafts and Textile Goods for Tourism Sector (to be coordinated with the IP on Eco-Tourism)	Ms. Wangmo Choden, Tarayana, Bhutan
18	E-Branding and E-Marketing of SWAN Crafts and Textile Products	Madihi Kazi, Textile Designer, Thardeep Rural Development Programme, Karachi, Pakistan. Ambareen Imran, Meri Awaz, Lahore, Pakistan.

19	Financial Access for Women's Empowerment, Economic Growth And Sustainable Development in South Asia	Achla Savyasachi, Vice President, Sa-Dhan, New Delhi, India.
21	Maternal, Reproductive and Women's Health and Gender Concerns in South Asia	Dr. Mira Shiva, Director, Initiatives for Health, Equity and Society, New Delhi, India. Prof. Afsana Kaosar, Director, Health, Nutrition and Population, BRAC, Bangladesh WCIC, Colombo, Sri Lanka.
22	Secure Livelihoods for Women and Food Sovereignty from the Farm, Forest and Off-Farm Sectors in South Asia	Deepak Tamang, Director SEARCH-Nepal
23	Developing Leadership and Women Entrepreneurs across South Asia.	Rokia Afzal Rahman, President, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Dhaka, Bangladesh. WCIC, Colombo, Sri Lanka.
24	Eco-Tourism for Empowering the Women of South Asia (Developing and Strengthening Sustainable Eco-Tourism across South Asia)	Mr. Yankila Sherpa, President, T-HELP & Snow Leopard Trek, Nepal. Chimme Pem, Bhutan Tourism Board, Thimpu, Bhutan.
25	Gross National Happiness (GNH) and Sustainable Development for the Women of South Asia	Ms Chime Paden, Secretary General, Tarayana Foundation, Thimphu