

Beijing +20 Review Fact Sheet

2015 marks the fourth review of the **Beijing Platform for Action (BPAF)** and the twentieth year of its existence as a major blueprint to advance women's rights.

The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) is a landmark agreement that identifies a range of actions governments, the United Nations and civil society groups should take to advance women's human rights and make gender equality a reality. This was the first time that a UN world conference had identified such practical and measurable actions and had governments commit to carrying them out. After the 1995 Fourth Conference of Women governments and women's groups returned home to their countries to do the hard work of putting in place the actions identified under the BPFA. In 2000 Kofi Anan, the Secretary General of the UN at the time, organised a special sitting for governments to review what they had achieved on the BPFA in the past five years, this meeting was called **Beijing +5**. The document that was produced at this meeting was called **Beijing +5 Outcomes Document** and it found that overall many of the commitments that were made had not been put into place in addition to this **new and emerging issues** such as recognising rape in armed conflict as a war crime were added to the platform.

To date in Australia many of the actions have been implemented, however there is still some way to go. The BPFA document identifies **twelve critical areas** for women these are:

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| A. Women and poverty | E. Women and armed conflict | I. Human rights of women |
| B. Education and training of women | F. Women and the economy | J. Women and the media |
| C. Women and health | G. Women in power and decision-making | K. Women and the environment |
| D. Violence against women | H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women | L. The girl child (discrimination against and violation of the rights of girls) |

In Australia women's groups and civil society have been very active in both the development of the BPFA and all of the 5 yearly reviews. For the 15 year review, over



3,000 Australian women participated in the round tables, caravans and surveys. Once the Australian NGO Report is complete, it joins with the regional reports to send a regional voice to the United Nations for each of these reviews. Civil Society play a key role in the realisation of women's rights and as spaces for civil society interaction at government and international levels are shrinking, the Beijing +20 Review is a key



mechanism to allow women's positions to be heard and to keep civil society's voice in the space.

Is the Beijing +20 Review the same as the CEDAW Shadow Report?

The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** aims to remove discrimination against women in all areas of life. CEDAW is part of international law, is monitored by the CEDAW Committee at the United Nations and Australia reports on its obligations under this law every 4 years. The BPFA is similar to CEDAW in that they are both international agreements made by governments about women's human rights. However, CEDAW is more like a policy document or law which sets out what women's human rights are whereas BPFA sets out in more detail what sorts of actions governments need to take in order to realise women's rights as they are identified in CEDAW and other areas of women's lives.

For further information: go to www.jerainternational.org or Email Jodi Peskett, B20 Project Officer, JERA International on jpeskett@jerainternational.org