North East Regional Recommendations:

The North East Network, (NEN), in collaboration with UNIFEM organized a North East Regional Consultation on the Tenth Five Year Plan on November 23, 2001, at Pinewood Hotel, Shillong, Meghalaya. This was a part of UNIFEM and the UN Inter-Agencies’ effort to incorporate regional concerns of women to the Planning Commission in the Tenth Five Year Plan. Women, representing different organizations of the north east states participated in the discussions and contributed their inputs to the meeting.

Just as it was during the Ninth Five Year Plan Consultation held in Umiam in 1997, the main needs expressed collectively by participants in this Consultation was to learn tools of advocacy, lobbying and beginning a dialogue with state agencies. These they felt, are the most critical factors linked to India’s globalizing process. The participants not only made several recommendations but also worked out strategies that could be adopted to meet their needs. These are mentioned below of which the points are being mentioned sectorally. State-specific recommendations have been highlighted where necessary.

Participants of this Consultation see promotion of local food for markets outside as a strategy. Recommendations therefore include setting up of procurement agencies of local products, storage facilities and market outlets. The stress was on the need for improving marketing infrastructure to attract international and domestic buyers and acquiring necessary skills in marketing. The north east has a large segment of street vendors. A recommendation was made, particularly from Mizoram, to provide space from women vendors in the markets. Legal safeguards are vital for those entering the market, keeping in view India’s globalizing process.

Recommendations:

**Poverty alleviation:**

- The need for setting up procurement agencies of local products for upgrading the market
- Making Credit facilities with minimum security and gender balanced credit facilities.
- Yarn bank and seed bank should be mobilised through SHGs, CBOs, NGOs, etc.
- Special incentives for women’s participation in economic activities
- Making scholarships available for girls/women for vocational training.
- The Need for vocational centres to upgrade skills of the unemployed.

**Violence:**

- Domestic violence to be addressed to a wider audience of civil society
• Education curricula to address the issue of violence at school level from class VIII and above

• Need for relevant training for addressing different types of violence, skills on conflict resolution and trauma management and documentation on violence

• Services on issues of legal aid cells to be enhanced

• Short stay home for domestic violence victims at district level

• Ensure social security system and its application

• Review of customary law, involvement of women in decision making

• Sensitization of lawyers, police and teachers for dealing with issues of violence

• Documentation of domestic violence Strengthening of family counselling

Introduction of IEC materials in local languages on domestic violence and sexual abuse

• Revocation of Armed Forces Special Power Act of 1958

Health and HIV/AIDS:
• Introduction of HIV/AIDS to the education curricula with relevant IEC materials

• Provide more Health Care Facilities, more counselling services, monitor health facilities, adequate supply of medicines at PHCs, strengthening of existing rural and urban health centres

• Need for awareness building about HIV/AIDS/STDs was stressed. Introduce interventions for general population besides the so called high risk groups

• Introduce women friendly services in rural areas besides urban centre

• Promotion of indigenous health practitioners

• Provision of ARV; monitoring of OI/STD treatment

• Rehabilitation and care for AIDS orphans

• Creation of toilet and drinking water facility in the schools

• Promotion of indigenous health practitioners

Trafficking:
• Start homes for rescued girls
• Poverty and the issue of violence against women to be addressed
• Rehabilitation and counselling services for trafficked women is most needed
• Employment agency for domestic workers; organise them
• Provide other Income avenues and employment opportunities
Youth and Adolescence:
- Life-skills education should be introduced for the youth and adolescents
- IEC materials and text books suitably adapted to the region
- Teachers need to be trained on adolescent health
- Formulate action plan on women’s empowerment on state levels
- Counselling facilities for the youth and adolescent groups for educational needs
- To provide them mental and psychological support to youth living in insurgency situations.
- Youth welfare centres for guidance and counselling should be set up from block to district level
- Meaningful exposure visits for the youth to other regions of India
- Market oriented vocational training
- Set up Youth friendly health care services, introduction of adolescent health education.
- Focus on recreational facilities to mobilise youth (sports etc)
- Survey on youth sexual health
- Separate the youth resource/affairs and sports department
- Youth Schemes like NSS should be implemented in the states. States to allocate money for these schemes to ensure constructive and creative ways to steer youth away from disruptive action. Inclusion of the youth in policy planning policy and decision making

Policy:
- Modification of schemes, guidelines to be State specific
- State, cultural specific and need based policies required
- National action plan for empowerment of women at state level
- Implementing the right to information through radio, posters etc
- Ensure social security system and application
- Removal of the RAP or Restricted Area Permit in some states of the Region.

Other recommendations in the Consultation was towards the revival of marketing linkages in transport; uninterrupted power supply; trade agreement between Manipur and Myanmar;

It is worth mentioning that focal points of groups were formed in this Consultation. The idea is to make links in the respective states to facilitate information to civil society on critical issues as the above. These groups along with NEN would act as a network.