

Preface

NINETEEN NINETY-FIVE (1995), September. Around 50,000 women were in Beijing to attend the Fourth International Women's Conference. The official delegates numbered around 17,000 while almost double that number were women activists, feminists and advocates who held a forum parallel to the official one.

The Beijing Women's Conference held 20 years ago produced the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which the United Nations Women declares as the “progressive blueprint ever for advancing women's rights.” (<http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/about>).

The Platform for Action defined 12 critical areas of concern for advancing the status of women and girls:

1. Women and the Environment
2. Women in Power and Decision-making
3. The Girl Child
4. Women and the Economy
5. Women and Poverty
6. Violence against Women
7. Human Rights of Women
8. Education and Training of Women
9. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women
10. Women and Health
11. Women and the Media
12. Women and Armed Conflict

The Beijing Declaration, its clarifications on the rights of women and girls and the recognition of these rights as human rights, is celebrated as a victory of women's organizations and advocates world-wide and their demand for justice, equality and peace.

Twenty years after the Beijing Women's Conference what strides have women made?

As 2015 also marks the end of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the July 2015 MDG report notes that in spite of “significant gains made for many of the MDG targets worldwide...the progress has been un-

even across regions and countries.” In particular it points out that “[g]ender inequality persists in spite of more representation of women in parliament and more girls going to school. Women continue to face discrimination in access to work, economic assets and participation in private and public decision-making.”¹

This is not surprising as the structural roots of inequality and injustice (the uneven distribution of wealth among countries and within countries) and the patriarchal and feudal views on women and gender relations persist to this day.

The 2015 *Review of Women's Studies* assesses the gains Filipino women have made 20 years after the Beijing Declaration, as well as the gaps in the continuing quest for equality, justice and peace.

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¹The United Nations Millennium Development Goals Report. July 6, 2015.