



Day 1

Opening Remarks



ANOIJ MEHTA

Country Director
Thailand Resident Mission
Southeast Asia Department
ADB

Anouj focuses on Innovative and Green Finance across Southeast Asia. Through SERD innovative finance hub, he manages the ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance facility, including the Green Climate Fund approved "Green Recovery Program," one of the first such in Asia. He also led other initiatives and partnerships aimed at developing sustainable and leveraged finance projects. His focus on green finance since 2015 led to the development of ADB's first Catalyzing Green Finance publication and related ADB projects in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Southeast Asia as well as the launch of the recent "Green Recovery Strategies Post COVID-19" knowledge product. Previously Anouj led a pioneering PPP and sub-sovereign initiative in India from both the ADB and the World Bank. Anouj was an investment banker at JP Morgan Chase prior to joining ADB and has expertise in mergers and acquisitions, project and corporate finance, capital markets, sovereign and non-sovereign infrastructure financing.



Day 1

Remarks from GMS Host Country



SUDA SULONG

Deputy Director-General
Department of Women's Affairs
Ministry of Social Development
and Human Security (Thailand)

Suda Sulong, currently serving as a Deputy Director-General Department of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security since August 2023, has experienced and knowledge about social development. Her extensive career includes roles such as Deputy Director-General, Department of Children and Youth and Director of Information and Communication Technology Center, Office of the Permanent Secretary for Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. Her educational qualifications include a Master of Science Program in Human Resource and Organization Development with honors, the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA) and Bachelor of Social Work (1st Class Honors), King Bhumibol Scholarship, Thammasat University. Additionally, she has completed several training programs focusing on Top Administrator Program, Anti-Human Trafficking Workshop and Social Development Executive Program.



Day 1

Overview of the Gender Equality and Inclusion Forum



SAMANTHA HUNG

Director, Gender Equality
Climate Change and Sustainable Development
Department
ADB

Samantha Hung is the Director of Gender Equality at the Asian Development Bank (ADB) where she provides leadership for advancing gender equality across all aspects of ADB operations and knowledge work. Samantha has many years of experience in gender equality at project, program and policy levels across Asia and the Pacific. Before joining ADB in 2009, she held various gender specialist roles, including for the New Zealand Agency for International Development, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, UNICEF, UK Institute of Development Studies, and Australian Government Office for Women.

Samantha has Honors Law and Bachelor of Commerce degrees from the University of Melbourne, and a Master's in Public Policy (International Development) from RMIT University. She also possesses a postgraduate qualification in human resources management from CIPD, UK.



Day 1

Launch of the GMS Gender Strategy Implementation Plan



ALFREDO PERDIGUERO

Regional Head
Regional Cooperation and Integration
Southeast Asia Department, ADB

Alfredo Perdiguero is the Regional Head of the Regional Cooperation and Integration, Southeast Asia Department of the Asian Development Bank. He has worked in Southeast Asia for the last 20 years and has broad exposure, deep knowledge and extensive work with ADB on regional cooperation and integration issues in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), and the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS). Prior to joining ADB, Mr. Perdiguero was an economist in the European Union Delegation in South Africa. His career spans the private sector, the government and the academe.



Session 1 - Gender Equality, Digitalization, and Innovation in the GMS: How Are Women Shaping the Future of Tech and Innovation in the GMS?



VERONICA MENDIZABAL JOFFRE

Senior Gender and Social Development Specialist, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department
ADB

Veronica is a senior gender and social development specialist at the Asian Development Bank. She leads the gender equality program in Southeast Asia and has previously managed AB's gender equality initiatives in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Mongolia. Veronica is a strong advocate for sustainable development and a believer in the power of diversity to spark innovation. She has designed and led initiatives for addressing and preventing domestic violence in Mongolia, including using new technologies.

Veronica has written extensively on gender-based violence, women in labor markets, gender and sustainable production and consumption, and impacts of systemic crises on vulnerable populations. Veronica holds a master's degree in public policy and management from the University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, and a master's degree in agricultural knowledge system from Wageningen University in the Netherlands.



Session 1 - Gender Equality, Digitalization, and Innovation in the GMS: How Are Women Shaping the Future of Tech and Innovation in the GMS?



ELEONORE FOURNIER-TOMBS

Head of Anticipatory Action and Innovation
UNU-CPR

During her career, Eleonore Fournier-Tombs has worked as a data scientist throughout the United Nations system and conducted research at the intersection of technology and gender, migration, democracy and health.

In 2012, she was awarded the UN21 Award by Secretary General Ban Ki Moon for her work at UN-OICT on the Rio+20 Conference. She then worked for the Human Development Report Office from 2012 to 2015, where she managed human development data and online communications. Between 2015 and 2018, she obtained her PhD from the university of Geneva, during which she developed a machine learning method to measure the quality of political deliberations online. She was then awarded a post-doctoral fellowship at McGill University, where she worked on using this tool to analyse parliamentary debates in the Canadian territories of Nunavut, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories.

From 2018 to 2020, Eleonore worked as a data scientist at the Centre for Humanitarian Data, OCHA, where she contributed notably to modelling COVID-19 in countries experiencing humanitarian crises. She continued this work in 2020 and 2021 at the World Bank, where she also participated in climate-related policy research in Afghanistan, Morocco, and Jamaica.



Session 1 - Gender Equality, Digitalization, and Innovation in the GMS: How Are Women Shaping the Future of Tech and Innovation in the GMS?



SUCHANA SINTHAVATHAVORN

Vice President
Department of Quality of Life and Security
Development and Promotion,
Digital Economy Promotion Agency(Thailand)

Suchana Sinthavathavorn holds the position of Vice President, Quality of Life and Security Development and Promotion Department at the Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA) where some of the initiatives she leads focuses on digital inclusion for vulnerable groups such as the elderly and people with disabilities.

Her team's mission is to empower these groups by providing essential digital skills. Their efforts aim not only to ensure these groups can navigate digital technology safely and effectively but also to facilitate their reintegration in the workforce and economic empowerment through upskilling, reskilling, and acquiring new digital competencies.



Session 1 - Gender Equality, Digitalization, and Innovation in the GMS: How Are Women Shaping the Future of Tech and Innovation in the GMS?



ATCHARA POOME

Founder
PAC Corporation (Thailand)

Atchara Poomee is the CEO and Founder of PAC Corporation, a leading innovator in energy efficiency solutions for HVAC systems. With over two decades of experience in the industry, Atchara has positioned PAC as a key player in promoting sustainable practices within Thailand's commercial and industrial sectors. Under her leadership, PAC has developed cutting-edge technologies that significantly reduce energy consumption, contributing to both cost savings and environmental sustainability. Atchara's passion for sustainability extends beyond her business. She is a recognized advocate for the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into corporate strategy and has been actively involved in initiatives that empower the new generation to combat climate change. She recently participated in the UNWomen Climate Tech Accelerator, focusing on gender equality and climate technology.

A recipient of multiple awards, including the Creative Leader Award 2024, Atchara is a sought-after speaker and mentor on topics such as green finance, business sustainability, and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance). Her commitment to driving change and fostering innovation in sustainability has made her a prominent figure in Thailand's business community.



Session 1 - Gender Equality, Digitalization, and Innovation in the GMS: How Are Women Shaping the Future of Tech and Innovation in the GMS?



NATALJA RODIONOVA

Managing Director
STEP IT Academy Institute, Cambodia
and
Founder, Sisters of Code

Latvian-born Natalja moved to Cambodia in 2015 to lead IT Academy STEP, specializing in tech education. Observing a significant gender gap in technology, she founded Sisters of Code in 2019, Cambodia's first female coding club. This initiative aims to empower girls with digital skills and increase their representation in tech field, providing free training to hundreds of girls across the Kingdom.

Natalja actively consults various Cambodian ministries and governmental institutions on digital skills development, lifelong learning, and gender equality in tech. As an advocate for innovation in education and female empowerment in tech, Natalja frequently speaks at various Southeast Asian events. She shares insights from real-world program development, particularly drawing from her experience with Sisters of Code, to contribute to discussions on bridging the gender gap in technology education and careers.



Session 1 - Gender Equality, Digitalization, and Innovation in the GMS: How Are Women Shaping the Future of Tech and Innovation in the GMS?



SUPIYA CHAROENSIRIWATH

Director of Assistive Technology and Medical Devices Research Group (A-MED)
National Electronics and Computer Technology Center

Dr. Supiya Charoensiriwath received the 2022 UL Research Institutes-ASEAN-U.S. Science Prize for Women from Thailand, for her work in revolutionizing healthcare through AI and compassion. Her pioneering work in 3D body scanning and dietary recommendations is reshaping lives across ASEAN.

A distinguished graduate of University College London, Dr. Supiya currently serves as the Director of Assistive Technology and Medical Devices Research Group at National Electronics and Computer Technology Center.

Equipped with advance tools and resources, she champions quality of life for everyone and serves as an inspiration for the future generation of women in STEM.



Session 1 - Gender Equality, Digitalization, and Innovation in the GMS: How are women shaping the future of tech and innovation in the GMS?



ROSALIA GITAU

CEO and Founder
BIXIE

Rosalia Gitau, Esq. is a FinTech Executive, Attorney, Author, and Humanitarian. She is the co-founder and CEO of Bixie, an award-winning Financial Technology company for women recognized as a Top FinTech company by The Manila Times, The Manila Bulletin, 1Million Startups, the Financial Alliance for Women, and Women's World Banking.

Rosalia has over 15 years of international law, diplomacy and finance in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas with the United Nations, Alibaba, Shearman & Sterling, LLP, and the governments of the USA, Liberia and Sierra Leone. She is a PEN Award nominee and the co-founder of the Humanitarian Women's Network, the largest global network of women in international affairs.

Rosalia is a Visiting Fellow at Zinc Venture Capital, a United Nations University and Brookings Institution scholar and sits on the Boards of HWN, and the Global Women's Telecom Network. She holds a BA from UCLA, an MSc from the London School of Economics and J.D. from New York University School of Law. Rosalia is a world-record holding mountaineer, marathoner, and sailor, living her best life in Thailand with her husband, daughters and labradors. She hails from the Philippines and Kenya, by way of California.



Session 2 - Women as drivers of innovation in response to climate change in the GMS



SOPHEAK SONG

Deputy Executive Director
Cambodia Development Resource Institute

Dr. Song Sopheak is the Deputy Executive Director in charge of research at CDRI, where he has led policy research projects on innovation and STEM education, workforce development, employer engagement in education and training, and inclusive technological transformation.

His international experience in research career includes fellowships at the Global Career Design Center of Hiroshima University, Japan; at the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne, Australia; and at the Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, Switzerland. Dr Song Sopheak holds a PhD in Educational Science and Humanities from Hiroshima University, Japan.



Session 2 - Women as drivers of innovation in response to climate change in the GMS



CHANICHA CHAMPRASIT

CEO
Fang Thailand

Chanicha Champrasit is the CEO of Fang Thai Factory, a rice straw pulp production company in Lampang, Thailand. She is committed to driving socio-economic and environmental change through her business. Chanicha believes sustainable transformation can be achieved through collaboration between private industries and rural communities.

She holds a degree from the Central School of Speech and Drama in London, where she specialized in gender representation in the media. Alongside her work in sustainable agriculture, Chanicha is also a commercial producer. Guided by her principles, she strives to integrate her values, particularly sustainability and the empowerment of womxn, across both industries and life.



Session 2 - Women as drivers of innovation in response to climate change in the GMS



NGUYEN SY LINH

Head of Department of Climate Change and Global Issues, Institute of Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment (Viet Nam)

Nguyen Sy Linh is currently the Head of Department of Climate Change and Global Issues at the Institute of Strategy, Policy on Natural Resources and Environment (ISPONRE)-a think tank under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) in Viet Nam. Mr. Linh has background in environmental sciences and received a PhD degree in Global, Urban and Social Studies from RMIT University- Australia, and has more than 20 years working on environment sector and more than 10 years inclusively on climate change in Viet Nam. He has been working with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Viet Nam to promote action plan for green business and to support SMEs in better understanding of greenhouse gas emission reduction requirements.

He is an expert in climate action planning for national and sub-national level; having solid experiences in solid waste management, carbon market and carbon footprints studies as well as circular economy. He is also a key member of technical taskforce for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) under the Viet Nam National Plastic Action Partnership (NPAP).



Session 2 - Women as drivers of innovation in response to climate change in the GMS



CATERINA MELONI

Founder
Connecting Founders

Caterina is a gender finance specialist with over 20 years of experience in inclusive finance, women's entrepreneurship, and gender lens investing. She works at the crossroads of finance and gender by demystifying gender lens strategies for businesses and mainstreaming gender risks in investment frameworks. Caterina supports development partners and government bodies in integrating a gender and climate lens across a range of private and public sector programs (finance, infrastructure, agriculture) in a way that is pragmatic, cost-effective, and relevant to local business sectors.

Similarly, she advises private companies and financial institutions in designing and implementing simple yet effective gender & inclusion strategies. Prior to founding Connecting Founders, Caterina worked for leading international development institutions, such as the World Bank and IFC, to design and execute projects in over 35 countries. She holds an M.A. in International Relations and Economics from The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). Caterina is an angel investor and a frequent mentor & speaker at events to support women entrepreneurs and advance gender lens investing in Southeast Asia.



Session 2 - Women as drivers of innovation in response to climate change in the GMS



WEI-SHIUEN NG

United Nations Economic and Social
Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Dr. Wei-Shiuen Ng currently leads the development of low carbon and inclusive transport initiatives at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Prior to joining ESCAP, she was Advisor to the Secretary General on Sustainable Transport and Global Outreach in the International Transport Forum at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Adjunct Professor at the Paris Institute of Political Science, Postdoctoral Scholar at Stanford University, and Associate at the World Resources Institute (WRI).

Wei-Shiuen is a member of the Scientific Committee of the World Conference on Transport Research Society and co-chairs the Special Interest Group on Transport and Climate Change. She currently serves on the United States Transportation Research Board of the National Academies Committee on Transportation in the Developing Countries and Committee on Transportation Demand Management. Wei-Shiuen holds a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of California, Berkeley, a Masters in Environmental Science from Yale University and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Economics and Environmental Management from the University of York.



Session 2 - Women as drivers of innovation in response to climate change in the GMS



AIKO KIKKAWA

Senior Economist
Economic Research and Development
Impact Department
ADB

Aiko Kikkawa covers research portfolio covers population aging and demographic change, international migration and remittances, and economic analyses of development projects. She is the lead author of the Asian Development Policy Report 2024: Aging Well in Asia, and the Asian Economic Integration Report 2019/2020: Demographic Change, Productivity and the Role of Technology. She currently leads ADB's technical assistance project supporting the introduction and implementation of aging and retirement surveys in Asia. Ms. Kikkawa obtained her Ph.D. in Development Economics from the National Graduate Institute of Policy Studies, Japan, and Master's degree from the University of Oxford, UK.



Session 3 - Gender Equality in a changing demographic landscape in the GMS -

Empowering Change: Gender Roles and Opportunities in the Shifting Demographic Landscape



CHIEKO YOKOTA

Gender Specialist
Gender Equality Division, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department
ADB

Chieko Yokota is Gender Specialist at Gender Equality Division of the Asian Development Bank. She provides expertise to advance gender equality and women's empowerment across ADB's projects in Southeast Asia and through knowledge and technical assistance work. Prior to joining ADB, Chieko held various roles, including at the Gender and Economic Inclusion Group of International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Office for Gender Equality and Poverty Reduction at Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), where she deepened her experience in international development across Southeast Asia, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

She holds degrees from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (Bachelor) and University of Birmingham, UK (Master).



Session 3 - Gender Equality in a changing demographic landscape in the GMS -

Empowering Change: Gender Roles and Opportunities in the Shifting Demographic Landscape



ADRIAN MANGAL

Co-founder
FamBear

Adrian is a dedicated parent, oversees IT, customer service, and product development. With over 15 years of experience in government and the private sector, Adrian excels in building and managing high-performing teams in dynamic environments. Previously, as the Director of Product Management for a U.S. government organization, he led cross-functional teams to create innovative product solutions, ultimately doubling revenue from \$11 billion to \$22 billion.

A Bright Futures Scholarship recipient, Adrian holds a Bachelor's degree in Finance from the University of Central Florida and is a U.S. Government Management Leadership Program graduate.



Session 3 - Gender Equality in a changing demographic landscape in the GMS -

Empowering Change: Gender Roles and Opportunities in the Shifting Demographic Landscape



MEREDITH WYSE

Senior Social Development Specialist
(Aging and Care), Sectors Group
Human and Social Development Sector Office
ADB

Meredith Wyse is Senior Social Development Specialist – Aging and Care, Human and Social Development Sector, Sectors Group at the Asian Development Bank. She has nearly 20 years' experience working in the Asia-Pacific region on issues related to adaptations to population aging and older persons working on programs related to social protection, community development, health and care and humanitarian response.

In her role she supports the ADB's technical assistance programs and projects related to the development of long-term care services and systems across a diverse set of Asian and Pacific countries as well as building technical capacity across ADB sectors on adaptation to population aging. She has a BA (Hons) in Middle Eastern History, and Msc in Development Management and is a qualified management accountant.



Session 3 - Gender Equality in a changing demographic landscape in the GMS -

Empowering Change: Gender Roles and Opportunities in the Shifting Demographic Landscape



NINPASEUTH XAYAPHONESY

Director General
Women Development Department
Lao Women's Union (Lao PDR)

Dr. Ninpaseuth Xayaphonesy (PhD) she has been working with Lao Women's Union Since 1995 until now. She is served as the Director General of Department of Women in Development and brings to this role more than 29 years with Lao Women's Union of experience in international relation, gender equality, women health, women economic empowerment and plays role in strategy and laws development relating to women rights and children , She has been working with UN agencies as the National Project director , Oxfam, ADB, Fred Fellow, Global Fund, and NGOs and local NGOs at National level. She serves as project director on Leading team on building up reliance on women and economic empowerment, on the Climate Change and Resilience, Parenting Education Programme and Supervise the project on women eyes cares.

She has experiences as trainer of various subjects such as in parenting program, mining, SDGs, UXO, Reproductive Health, and Research Coordinator on the Domestic Violence Against Women in the Lao PDR, gender in the water and sanitation, gender and energy sector, gender and water and women and trafficking since 2001-2015



Session 3 - Gender Equality in a changing demographic landscape in the GMS -

Empowering Change: Gender Roles and Opportunities in the Shifting Demographic Landscape



THUY BICH TRAN

Country Director
HelpAge International
Vietnam

Thuy Bich Tran has 20 years working in the area of ageing. Thuy is recognized as one of the Healthy Ageing 50 - Leaders transforming the world to be a better place to grow older - a UN Decade of Healthy Ageing initiative.

She is one of the founders of community based comprehensive model in Vietnam, so called Intergenerational Self Help Club (ISHC). Aiming at improving food and income security and promoting healthy and active ageing, ISHC model is proved to be an effective model to promote empowerment of women, especially older women. From an international funded project model, the ISHC has now become the national model.