CSO Statement on Civil Society Voice and Inclusion of Women with Disabilities
Delivered by Tikadevi Dahal

On behalf of the Asia Pacific Beijing +20 CSO Steering Committee and representatives from other CSOs in the Asia Pacific Region

On behalf of the Civil society networks here and on behalf of the Asia Pacific Women With Disabilities United I would like to thank ESCAP, UN Women and the member states present for you inclusion of civil society in this meeting in the past 2 days.

Increasingly we realise the importance of civil society engagement in regional processes and making sure that civil society voices from this region both inform these processes and global processes. We hope that our governments understand and support the inclusion of civil society from their countries in regional and global processes – spaces that would otherwise be dominated by perspectives outside the region.

I want to commend ESCAP for its plan to include accessibility and people with disability in its programme of work. I would like to encourage ESCAP to include a specific focus on Women living with disabilities and also to ensure inter linkages between this work and the Beijing +20 processes.

As you rightly focus on issues of inequality it is critical to remember that women with disabilities are amongst the most likely to live in poverty, to be denied development rights, their right to makes choices over their bodies, to achieve justice and remedies when experiencing gender based violence, to enjoy education, meaningful and decent work, to control resources and to participate in public life.

Government policies that privatize public services, reduce the commons and value economic growth over human rights have a devastating impact on women with disabilities and I encourage all government here instead to adopt the principles of Development Justice as you advance your work through ESCAP as well as national and international levels.