

In View of the Review

By Aileen Familara and
Angela Santos-Deldoc

The UN Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) conducted a 10-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) in March 2005 in New York. The review focused on the achievements, the gaps and challenges in the implementation of the BPFA (in 1995) and the "Beijing+5 Political Declaration" taken from the five-year review in June 2000.

Isis International-Manila conducted an interview of some women representatives from women's organisations in the Asia-Pacific region who attended the March 2005 BPFA review. The women were asked about their own (and their organisations') previous Beijing experience, their perspective of the Beijing+10 (B+10) review; and their view of the "Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)" in relation to the B+10 process.

The Women We Interviewed and What They Say About Beijing

- **YEVGENIA KOZYREVA**, representative of Feminist League (Almaty, Kazakhstan), a national organisation established in 1993 working on the promotion of the equality of women and men in all spheres of life: economic, political, social, cultural and within the home.

Beijing Minus 7 Plus 3

by Everjoice J. Win

The first group of women I ran into were wearing green military uniforms. They were all in their late teens, chests out, shoulders back, with the kind of arrogance that only youth can exude. Their young shoulders were weighed down by badges and medals. Is this the new face of the women's movement? This was Beijing+10 but in New York, February 28 to March 11, 2005. We were there to take stock of achievements since the "Fourth World Conference on Women," held in China in 1995. It was certainly not Beijing—the city, its magic, and what I remembered from 1995. For starters, it was freezing cold, and it numbed your brain. Muted, too, was the energy and vibrancy of that memorable conference where over 10,000 women came together to demand "equality, development and peace."

In 1995, the "Beijing Platform for Action," the closing call to arms with its 12 critical areas of concern, became our key reference text. Beijing also developed a deeper meaning in public discourse. "Ah, you are one of those Beijing women? We are now scared of you," men and government bureaucrats would say, with smiles on their faces. Some meant it as a joke. With most, you could smell

the deep worry. Women had arrived. We had become a political entity. So much hope, so much promise.

After Beijing, we celebrated because many governments took seriously women's participation in decision-making processes. On the African continent, South Africa and Rwanda show us that it can be done. Rwanda now has the world's highest number of women in its national legislature. Yes, that Rwanda. There is cause for celebration. The Southern African Development Community came up with a declaration setting a minimum target at 30% by 2005. As one activist commented in 1997, they probably thought 2005 was very far off! Yet millions of women still don't get to choose their own governments. In Saudi Arabia, women were not allowed to vote in their recent elections because of what we were told were "technical hitches." Even though millions of poor women have never seen a computer, let alone have access to a public phone for use in emergencies, the explosion of information and communication technologies has given women's organisations new tools with which to link with one another. Internet and e-mail have brought women closer, cutting down costs of