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**Launch of Women's Entrepreneurship Partnership in Asia-Pacific by
ESCAP and Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women Programme**

Bangkok, December 13, 2012 – The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Goldman Sachs announced today their collaboration on a regional programme to promote women's economic empowerment through entrepreneurship in Asia-Pacific.

The gap between women and men on economic participation remains wide in Asia-Pacific. There were 65 employed women for every 100 employed men during the period 1991 to 2009.

Women's entrepreneurship is a key strategy for advancing women's economic empowerment. However, in many countries, legislative, institutional, financial and cultural barriers continue to impede women's entrepreneurial efforts.

The public-private partnership will bring together policy makers and the private sector to address key issues and develop policies to promote women's economic empowerment through entrepreneurship in the region. China, India, Indonesia and Malaysia are participating countries in the programme. The outcome of national research and dialogues will be considered at a regional symposium in Beijing in April 2013.

A report on "Creating an Enabling Environment for Women's Economic Empowerment through Entrepreneurship in the Asia-Pacific region" will be released based on the national dialogues and regional symposium. The publication will highlight related barriers, good practices, and concrete policy options, which will be shared with governments, businesses and civil society organizations across the region.

"Enabling women to have greater economic independence is a powerful pathway out of poverty. The programme will strengthen the evidence base to promote an enabling policy and legal environment for women's economic participation, particularly through entrepreneurship," said Nanda Krairiksh, Director of the Social Development Division of ESCAP.

"Women's economic empowerment is critical to growth in this region and around the world," said David C. Ryan, President of Asia Pacific ex-Japan of Goldman Sachs. "We are proud to be a partner with ESCAP in this initiative and hope our experience with *10,000 Women* can provide valuable inputs."

The first National Consultation was held on 13 December 2012 in Indonesia in cooperation with the Ministry for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection. The Consultation identified a set of policy recommendations to facilitate women's access to credit and capital, strengthen financial management and marketing skills, and address discriminatory laws and practices that impede women's efforts to set up and expand businesses.

About ESCAP

Headquartered in Bangkok, United Nations ESCAP is the largest of the UN's five Regional Commissions in terms of its membership, population served and area covered. The only inter-governmental forum covering the entire Asia-Pacific region, ESCAP works to promote sustainable and inclusive economic and social progress.

More information on ESCAP is available at www.unescap.org or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/UNESCAP, on our Twitterfeed www.twitter.com/UNESCAP or on YouTube at www.youtube.com/unescap

About Goldman Sachs

The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. is a leading global investment banking, securities and investment management firm that provides a wide range of financial services to a substantial and diversified client base that includes corporations, financial institutions, governments and high-net-worth individuals. Founded in 1869, the firm is headquartered in New York and maintains offices in all major financial centers around the world.

About *10,000 Women*

The Goldman Sachs *10,000 Women* initiative is a five year campaign to foster greater shared economic growth by providing 10,000 underserved women around the world with a business and management education. The initiative is coordinated in local markets by a network of more than 80 academic and NGO partners. It is funded by Goldman Sachs and the Goldman Sachs Foundation.

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