

# Post-Mission Report:

## 82nd UN ESCAP Commission (Bangkok, 2026)

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Date: April 20–24, 2026

Location: United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC), Bangkok, Thailand

Participant: Dr. HyunJu Lee, UN Representative, Zonta International

Theme: 'Leaving No One Behind: Advancing a Society for All Ages in Asia and the Pacific'

### 1. Purpose of the Mission

This mission aimed to observe key regional development agendas within ESCAP and to initiate initial engagement with relevant ESCAP stakeholders, with a view to identifying potential areas of future relevance for Zonta International.

### 2. Key Policy Insights

The Executive Secretary, the Chair (Azerbaijan) and the Prime Minister of Thailand emphasized that Asia-Pacific region is facing interconnected “poly-crises,” requiring resilient and integrated solutions to advance the 2030 Agenda.

A strong convergence emerged among Member States around the following priorities:

- Core Commitment: *“Leaving No One Behind: Advancing a Society for All Ages”*
- Key Challenges: Aging populations, climate change, and economic uncertainty

Thematic Directions in Resolution Adoption:

- Acceleration of SDG implementation
- Addressing widening development gaps
- Digital transformation and inclusion
- Climate action and resilience
- Strengthening regional cooperation and financing mechanisms
- The urgency of transitioning from commitment to implementation

These priorities indicate areas of potential alignment with Zonta International’s focus areas, particularly in gender-inclusive digital transformation and climate resilience.

### 3. Key Group Perspectives

Across Member States and stakeholders, a shared message emerged: achieving the SDGs requires a gradual shift from dialogue to implementation through inclusive and innovative partnerships.

- Developing Countries (South and Southeast Asia, Pacific)
  - Highlighted climate vulnerability and resource constraints, with strong calls for capacity-building and financial support
- Developed and Middle-Income Countries

- Emphasized innovation, digital solutions, and knowledge sharing, positioning partnerships as important delivery mechanisms
- Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
  - Framed climate change as an existential threat, reinforcing urgency in resilience-building
- Major Economies
  - Promoted South-South cooperation and regional leadership in development financing
- Observers and UN Agencies
  - Reinforced the importance of multilateral collaboration and positioned ESCAP as a central regional platform

#### 4. Stakeholder Engagement

In addition to this participation, the Commission was also attended by fellow Zonta representative, including Dr. Narudee Kiengsiri and Pamela Chavali Osathanugrah, reflecting Zonta International’s continued presence within the ESCAP platform.

During the Commission, initial engagements were made with stakeholders across UN bodies, Member States, and civil society, creating preliminary channels for potential future interaction.

Stakeholder	Engagement Summary	Strategic Value
APCTT (ESCAP) <sup>1</sup> Head, Dr. Preeti Soni	Digital inclusion & LAAHA: Follow-up communication channel established	Entry to ESCAP digital agenda
EDD (ESCAP) <sup>1</sup> Director, Dr. Sang Min Nam	ESCAP structure and engagement pathway	Institutional pathway
SDD (ESCAP) <sup>1</sup> , Sharron Mann	Zonta service portfolio	Institutional pathway
Kingdom of Tonga <sup>2</sup> Minister, Fane Fotu Fituafe (APFSD2027 Chair)	Women leadership: Follow-up communication channel established	Potential APFSD 2027 linkage
Macau Delegate <sup>2</sup> , Chimmi	Gender issues: Follow-up communication channel established	Institutional pathway
Republic of Korea(PM) <sup>3</sup> Minister-Counselor, Eun Ju Park	Digital transformation: Follow-up communication channel established	Institutional pathway
Maldives(PM) <sup>3</sup> Deputy Head, Huda Ali Shareef	Climate resilience	Institutional pathway
STEPI Korea <sup>4</sup> , Dr. Eun Joo Kim	AI & gender: Follow-up communication channel established	Research collaboration potential
BPW <sup>5</sup> & Soroptimist <sup>5</sup> (Dr.Narudee & Dr.Don Davis)	NGO coalition: Follow-up communication channel established	Coalition exploration
Women’s General Association of Macau <sup>5</sup>	Large-scale grassroots local network: Follow-up communication channel established	Regional expansion potential

1:ESCAP, 2:member states, 3:permanent missions, 4:government-run research center, 5:NGO

## 5. Opportunity for Zonta International in ESCAP

### 5.1 Entry Point: Positioning within ESCAP

Zonta may be able to position itself as a bridge actor linking global advocacy with regional dialogue, particularly in areas such as:

- Digital inclusion (e.g., LAAHA initiatives)
- Climate resilience (e.g., Climate Empowerment with UNFPA)
- Gender-responsive community engagement

### 5.2 Structural Consideration: AIDM-ESCAP Alignment

Zonta's Asia Inter-District Meeting (AIDM) structure shows a potential alignment with ESCAP's subregional architecture, which may provide a useful reference for future regional engagement, if pursued.

ESCAP Subregions		Zonta Districts
ENEAS	East & North-East Asia	26 (Japan), 32 (Korea), 17 (Hong Kong, Macau, Mongolia), 31 (Taiwan*)
SEA	South-East Asia	17 (Philippines, Thailand), 25 (Malaysia, Singapore)
SSWA	South & South-West Asia	25 (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka)
Pacific	Pacific	16 (New Zealand), 23 (Australia)
NCA	North & Central Asia	None

*\*Taiwan is not an ESCAP member state but included as Zonta District.*

### 5.3 Potential Engagement Area: APFSD (2027)

The interaction with the Kingdom of Tonga may present a potential entry point, given Tonga's role as Chair of APFSD 2027.

Possible areas for exploration could include:

- Engagement through youth leadership initiative (e.g., YWPA)
- Dialogue on women's leadership and participation
- Informal contribution to APFSD-related discussions

### 5.4 Exploratory Areas: Multilateral NGO Collaboration

There may be value in exploring closer coordination with peer organizations such as BPW and Soroptimist, particularly in relation to:

- Knowledge sharing
- Coordinated advocacy
- Increased visibility within regional platforms

## 6. Indicative Pathways for Future Engagement

- Short-Term (0-6 months):
  - Conduct follow-up with selected stakeholders (APCTT, SDD, Tonga, Permanent Missions)
  - Explore opportunities for informal or written contributions aligned with ESCAP priorities
- Emerging Opportunities (Subject to HQ Direction):
  - Assess potential avenues for engagement with APFSD 2027 (e.g. knowledge-sharing, participation in side discussions)
  - Explore possible collaboration with relevant UN divisions and peer NGOs
- Long-Term Considerations (Conditional):
  - Review the feasibility of continued engagement within ESCAP processes
  - Consider gradual expansion of involvement, depending on HQ priorities and available resources

## 7. 83<sup>rd</sup> ESCAP Commission

- Date: April 26-30, 2027
- Location: Shanghai, China
- Occasion: 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ESCAP
- Expected Focus Area: Digital solutions, sustainable bioeconomy, and regional transport connectivity

## Appendix: Photo Documentation



Group Photo at the closing session of the 82nd UN ESCAP Commission



With Dr. Narudee Kiengsiri, Zonta & BPW Regional Coordinator, following an exchange on potential areas of collaboration



With Hon. Fane Fotu Fituafe, Minister of Internal Affairs of Tonga and Chair APFSD 2027, following an discussion on women's leadership.



With a delegate from Macau, following an exchange on regional NGO collaboration.



With Zonta and BPW representatives, following discussions on potential NGO partnerships.



With representatives from BPW and Soroptimist, following an exchange on possible areas of NGO cooperation.