

Negotiation Kit for Beijing + 10

Power and Decision-Making

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OVERARCHING CONCERN

Patriarchal attitudes, conservatism, religious fundamentalism, increased use of violence and corruption in the electoral process, continuing masculinity of political system, “top-down” planning and gender insensitivity of public decision makers, have led to the persistence of gender inequality. These remain the major obstacles to women’s equal, sustained and full political participation and representation.

GAINS

- Affirmative action and temporary special measures such as quotas for women in politics have been set. However, sanctions for non-compliance are still virtually non-existent.

GAPS

- Once elected or appointed, women in decision-making positions often lack support to advocate critical issues of concern to women, such as education, health, and employment. .
- Across the Asia-Pacific region women’s representation in power and decision making remains low and in some areas is actually in decline. All decision making institutions, including government and political bodies, have failed to meet quotas for women’s representation or to develop platforms for women’s full participation.

EMERGING ISSUES

- Major deterrents are the rise in fundamentalisms (religious and ethnic) and the use (or threat) of violence. Women are intimidated and are prevented from participating in decision making structures.
- Women within political parties are often portrayed as fiery and aggressive without due reason, and are harshly punished for political mistakes by conservative elements within the electorate and within their party. Internal party processes often force women to ‘play the game’ and discourage them from calling themselves feminists publicly.

RECOMMENDED LANGUAGE

Reference in BPFA

Para G183; Strategic Objective G.1

CEDAW Article 7, General Recommendation CEDAW no. 23

By Government:

- Build a comprehensive data base on potential women,
- Assist and advocate for female candidates and appointees.

By Political Parties:

- Take affirmative action to recruit and train more women in political parties, and include at least 30% women in their governing bodies.

By Civil Society:

- Monitor the procedural structure of decision making bodies to increase women's meaningful participation and advance gender-sensitive issues.
- Enhance the role of mass media in promoting political rights by breaking gender stereotypes about women in politics.

Reference in BPFA

Para G.185; Strategic objective G.1 190i; Strategic objective G.2

By Government and Civil Society:

- Pursue social strategies to develop women's leadership roles from early childhood on with the goal of increasing women's mobility and strengthening their capacity for individual action.
- Strongly commit to addressing issues of gender inequality.
- Ensure that political processes are democratic and that perpetrators of violence are held accountable.
- Ensure that interpretations of religious teachings do not inhibit women's participation in decision making processes.

Reference in BPFA

Strategic Objective G.2; Action 195a

By Government and Civil Society:

- Encourage female politicians and public decision-makers to focus on clean politics, representing women and the minority, and highlight women's issues including family, education, and labor.
- Facilitate women's access to information on how to utilize UN instruments and national documents such as the constitution.
- Undertake programs to facilitate the political participation of women who are marginalized through ethnicity, disability, age, sexuality or other minority status.

Reference in BPFA
BPFA G.182; Strategic Objective G.1

By Government and Political Parties:

- Introduce legislation so that political parties have 50 percent female membership.
- Institute direct election of women rather than just nomination; political parties need to ensure greater internal democratic processes to avoid women being appointed as mere figure-heads.

Thematic Focal Point for Women
in Power and Decision-Making
Indonesian Center for Women in Politics (ICWIP)