ENSURING WOMEN’S EQUAL POLITICAL AND PARLIAMENTARY PARTICIPATION IN ASEAN

OUTCOME DOCUMENT OF
REGIONAL MEETING ON PROMOTING WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN ASEAN

7-8 OCTOBER 2014, JAKARTA, INDONESIA

1. The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) with the support of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, Canada convened a Regional Meeting on Promoting Women’s Leadership and Political Participation in ASEAN on 7 - 8 October 2014 in Jakarta, Indonesia. The meeting included parliamentarians from eight ASEAN States\(^1\), members of AIPA, especially members of Women’s Caucus of the AIPA (WAIPA), representatives of the UN System, CSOs working on political participation of women in electoral processes.

2. The participants discussed the achievements and remaining challenges to women’s equal participation and leadership and shared their experiences with policies, practices and strategies to promote women’s political leadership in ASEAN.

3. The meeting recalled that all member states of ASEAN have ratified Convention on the Elimination on All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and have endorsed the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) and the critical area of women in Power and Decision Making

4. The meeting further recalled WAIPA resolutions on Women Leadership in Southeast Asia (Vientiane, 2014), Strengthening Women Parliamentarians’ Roles in ASEAN Community-Building (Vientiane, 2014), Strengthening Efforts in the Prevention of All Forms of Discrimination and Violence against Women and Children in ASEAN (Vientiane, 2014), Increasing of Women Representation in Politics (Hanoi, 2010), and Women in Power and Decision-Making (Kuala Lumpur, 2007)

5. The participants affirmed the call for a stand-alone goal on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in the Post 2015 Agenda with a specific target on women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making and political, economic and public life.

6. The Meeting acknowledged the good practices in the region such as national women’s parliamentary caucuses, legislative special measures, mentorship programmes and the existence of the Women ASEAN Inter Parliamentary Assembly (WAIPA).

\(^1\) Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam
7. While the situation varies from State to State, the meeting, recognized the continuing challenges in ASEAN in realizing women’s equal participation and leadership in public and parliamentary decision making processes. These include the persistence of restrictive gender roles and stereotypes, women’s disadvantageous financial positions, rigid political party culture, limited access to influential networks for fundraising or building political alliances, cultural bias and discrimination against women as leaders in the public sphere, and limited legislative frameworks.

8. In response to these challenges, the participants noted the importance of the following principles in their role as Parliamentarians:

- Ensuring human rights-based approach to leadership and participation
- Contributing to a culture of transparency and accountability
- Fostering dialogue, partnership and collaboration

9. The meeting made the following recommendations for implementation at the subnational, national and regional levels.

**Subnational/ National**

i. Explore, pursue and prioritize, where appropriate, legislation that facilitates women’s political participation such as special measures, campaign financing and gender responsive budgeting.

ii. Engage political parties and civil society and support their role in promoting informed electoral choices and women’s political participation.

iii. Support mechanisms in parliament i.e. women’s caucus to enhance capacity of women parliamentarians, enabling dialogues across parties.

iv. Support women’s caucuses’ capacity to provide substantive interventions in advancing women’s political leadership within the organizational structure of political parties.

v. All parliamentarians to work together for gender-sensitive parliaments and participate in learning sessions around gender equality

vi. Mentor young women leaders to participate in political decision-making, with a focus on integrity and leadership.

vii. In exercising oversight powers, adopt a holistic approach to empowering women, promoting women for leadership positions in other professions, with attention to women’s health, education, security and access to other services.

**Regional level**

viii. WAIPA [in collaboration with other relevant bodies] to undertake capacity-building to ensure CEDAW-compliant legislative measures.

ix. Foster South-South dialogues, triangular cooperation, partnerships and collaboration on women’s political participation.

x. Conduct a policy-oriented regional research on financing for women’s political participation

xi. Encourage the strengthening of mechanisms for transparency in election and political spending.

xii. Strengthen the women’s caucus of AIPA member parliaments.

**Adopted with consensus on 8th October, 2014**