

ASIA PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

Promoting Women's Participation in Politics and the Economy

Sponsored by Mexico and Viet Nam

THE SIXTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASIA PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM,

Acknowledging that through the years, women's role has considerably broadened beyond the family's responsibilities;

Emphasizing that while globalization has presented humankind with unprecedented development opportunities, women are the most affected and marginalized when the gains of globalization are not equally distributed;

Recognizing that empowerment of women is a process which components include equal access to opportunities for using society's resources, freedom from violence, economic independence, participation in all decision making bodies, and freedom of choice in matters relating to their life;

Emphasizing that women nowadays have actively participated in all levels of society, including in politics and the economy, however the goal of empowering women has remained elusive and thus requires concerted efforts to achieve it;

Recognizing that inequality between genders exists in the whole world and it is reflected in limitations in opportunities and women's participation in politics and the economy;

Noting that the Third Objective of the Millennium Development Goals is to promote equality between genders in primary and secondary education by 2005, and at all levels by 2015;

Reaffirming that as shown in the Beijing Platform for Action, education has been considered as a human right which calls for ensuring the rights of women to freedom, religion, social and cultural rights and decision making;

Noting that discrimination is more prevalent in access to education, which is a human right and an essential element to achieving equality, development and peace objectives;

Concerned that in some countries in this region inequality between the genders is so severe that the number of registered girls in primary schools is 26% less than that of boys;

Recognizing that the presence of gender discrimination has evident social and economic costs; causing women and girls who do not have access to education and

services to not be part of the labor force and the development of social capital, affecting economic growth and individual wellbeing;

Equally concerned since based on figures of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Regions (ESCAP), only with the tax restrictions applied to women in their work place, the region is losing between 42 and 47 billion dollars a year, and the inequality between the genders in education represents an annual cost of between 16 and 30 billion dollars;

Stressing that according to the ESCAP, a good share of the discrimination that women are subjected to is due to poor political representation, in spite of the fact that women make up around 52% of the nominal list of voters in most of the countries of the world;

Noting that in order to do away with discrimination and achieve equality between genders it is necessary to incorporate gender based analysis in policy making and public programs;

Urging the APPF meeting to commit itself to implement in each country the parity of women's participation in the labour force as well as in political, economic, and cultural life;

Considering that political participation, representation and leadership of women can be promoted in different contexts, including their participation in social movements, non-government organizations (NGOs), political parties, seats in parliament, local and state government, and social and economic institutions;

Considering that Article 7 of the Convention for the Elimination of all kinds of Discrimination Against Women calls out to all States involved to apply appropriate measures in order to do away with discrimination toward women in public and political life;

Recalling Resolution 1325 (2000) of the Security Council on women, peace and security, which stresses the importance of women's role in conflict prevention and in peace building, and at the same time points out the importance of increasing their role in decision making;

Observing that women's participation in some parliaments is reduced as a result of the weakening of support nets and financial aid for the candidates;

Recognizing that eliminating those differences would be beneficial not only for the people involved but for society as well;

RESOLVES TO:

1. **Share** strategies and build understanding, capacity and cooperation between countries of the APPF to promote women's participation in politics and economics with the ultimate objective of equal opportunity between the sexes in both sectors;

2. **Encourage** APPF member countries to take appropriate and necessary measures to empower women through national policies and resources;
3. **Call upon** APPF member countries to create favourable conditions for greater participation of women in decision-making at all levels of society;
4. **Urge** to provide wider access for women to, among others, education, information and communication;
5. **Commit** to the objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action, where the basis for political empowerment for women is established;
6. **Encourage** the development of a gender-sensitive culture based on equality of rights and opportunities for men and women;
7. **Promote** the diffusion of values such as tolerance, non-discrimination, and equality, so that there will be an integral promotion to the principle of balance between the genders;
8. **Underline** the necessity of implementing educational policies which help to eliminate all kinds of inequality based on differences of sex;
9. **Exhort** parliaments and governments to develop gender-sensitive budgets and policies which promote the prevention and timely attention of women's illnesses;
10. **Call on** parliaments to establish severe sanctions to all those who use gender differences as a means for discrimination, violence, exclusion, and curtailment of women's participation in politics and economics;
11. **Recommend** to all APPF members to finance research centres in the Asia-Pacific region, concerned to develop comparative studies regarding public strategies for the inclusion of women in society;
12. **Recommend** a meeting of women legislators from APPF member countries to exchange ideas and find solutions to the problems faced by women;
13. **Recommend** that APPF member countries implement programmes that address pay equity and work life balance.