



REPORT OF THE MEETING OF APPF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

Siem Reap, Cambodia, 14 January 2019

1. The first formal Meeting of APPF Women Parliamentarians convened on Monday, 14 January 2019 from 14:00 to 18:00 in Siem Reap. The meeting was presided over by Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly of Cambodia and President of the 27th Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF).
2. The meeting was chaired by Hon. Khuon Sudary, Second Vice-President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and co-chaired Hon. Olga Epifannova, Vice-Chairman of the State Duma from Russian Federation. The delegates were from Cambodia, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea ROK, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), New Zealand, the Philippines, Russia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Brunei Darussalam (observer country).
3. In the opening remarks, the President of the 27th APPF called for more efforts to realize the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls). He suggested (a) establishing a mechanism on gender equality within the APPF to monitor the implementation of resolutions on women's empowerment and gender equality; (b) creating a task-force to study the impacts of the fourth industrial revolution and its technical changes on women and girls and develop a strategy to enable women to adapt to and effectively utilize new technology, and (c) developing a sustainable and comprehensive education policy and increasing budgetary allocations for the promotion of girls' education in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics).
4. The meeting was also attended by Hon. Dr. Ing Kantha Phavi, Minister of Women's Affairs of Cambodia. In the keynote address, she raised the concern that despite the increasing recognition of the critical role of women in decision-making, women remain largely under-represented in both public and private sectors at the global, regional and national levels. She highlighted that women's participation in decision-making in all sectors is fundamental to having inclusive and effective solutions. In the age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution stronger efforts must also be given to fostering access of females to vocational training and education in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). She also underlined that the participation of women in all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution is critical for achieving sustainable peace. She urged APPF members to work towards strengthening accountability mechanisms for gender equality and women's empowerment.
5. The delegates welcomed the progress report by Vietnam on the implementation of the Resolution on Promoting Gender Equality for Sustainable Development and Shared

Prosperity in the Asia Pacific Region. It highlighted the implementation of Vietnam in various aspects including communications, legislations and in practices; sharing the Vietnam's experiences in which showing the achievements, limitations, difficulties and lesson learned. Besides, the report introduces that gender equality's solutions in Vietnam are on the right track but need more time for substantive socio-economic shifts and initial impacts to take hold. To implement the Resolution more effectively, Vietnam calls upon APPF member states should make periodical reports and share experiences in cooperation and sharing of experiences among APPF's parliaments. In addition, Vietnam suggests some other recommendations such as: raise awareness about gender equality by education and communications; mainstream the commitments into laws; strengthen government's accountability; address gender inequalities in vulnerable groups to ensure that sustainable development towards inclusive growth leaves no one behind.

6. The meeting discussed and elaborated upon three topics, namely (a) Strengthening Asia-Pacific Regional Partnership for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls for Peace and Sustainable Development; (b) Ensuring Equality for all Women and Men to Education, Technical Training and Information Technology for Sustainable Peace and Achieving Sustainable Development Goals, and (c) Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Decision-Making at all Levels.
7. The meeting heard that Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are the bedrock of peace and sustainable and equitable development. The improvement of the lives of women leads to the improvement of the lives of children and families, which are the foundations of socio-economic progress. Women are generators of wealth, accumulators of capital, and leaders in their own right. Societies that offer better socioeconomic opportunities for women tend to grow faster and more equitably.
8. Although there have been some improvements in gender equality in the region, there are certain outstanding issues and challenges. First, the number of female workers in the workforce is still low in comparison to the number of male workers. Second, obstacles remain for women to obtain equal access to education, vocational training, technology and knowledge. Third, Women remain underrepresented in leadership positions. Fourth, support mechanisms for women and girls are limited. Fifth, some policies and programs on gender equality are not holistic or comprehensive.
9. To address these outstanding challenges, the delegates have suggested the following policy recommendations. First, we need to adopt a multifaceted policy-research agenda to bring about gender equality in the workforce, by providing support in skill development and vocational training. Second, we must encourage the role women play as agents of change, particularly by providing better access to knowledge and technology. Third, we need to enable and empower women to take leadership roles in decision-making at all levels. Fourth, we need to strengthen multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation to allow for the construction of better frameworks and institutions, access to greater budgets and funding, as well as sharing best practices and know-how in policy making. Fifth, we need to conduct gender-based analysis by considering the diverse needs of women, men, and others as an assessment tool when building policies, programs, and initiatives.

10. Parliamentarians are urged to work closely to deepen the Asia-Pacific partnership, enhance mutual understanding and trust through frank and open communication, and make parliamentary exchanges constructive for developing state-to-state and people-to-people relations. Parliamentarians are encouraged to strengthen partnerships to empower women and effectively implement gender-equality measures in their respective countries and the region.
11. The Working Group has discussed the draft resolutions and submitted them to the Drafting Committee for further discussion and approval. There were eleven draft resolutions – three sponsored by Cambodia, two sponsored by Indonesia, one sponsored by Russia, one sponsored by Chile, one sponsored by Australia, one sponsored by Malaysia, and two sponsored by Mexico. The eleven draft resolutions have been merged into three draft resolutions and submitted for adoption.
12. We express our gratitude to all delegates for their commitment, support, and intellectual contributions, which together have made APPF Women Parliamentarians Meeting 2019 a great success. We highly appreciate Cambodia for providing excellent arrangements and warm hospitality.
13. We look forward to the next meeting of APPF Women Parliamentarians in Australia in 2020.

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