Advancing and Monitoring Women's Political Participation in the ASEAN Region Project

Reional Synthesis of AMS Country Studies

Findings collected by
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study background in brief[1]

In 1988, ASEAN Foreign Ministers signed the Declaration on the Advancement of Women in ASEAN signaling ASEAN's commitment to involve women in all spheres of life at both national and regional levels. All ASEAN Member Countries (AMS) have also ratified the CEDAW (The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women).[2] The ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) is mandated as ASEAN's monitoring body on key regional priorities in women's issues and concerns. In its current work plan, ACW puts emphasis on gender perspective and analysis and on expanded reach of gender mainstreaming within ASEAN.

There is systematic monitoring of quantitative data related to the MDG for women's participation in politics and public decision making. However, no systematic regional data collection methods are yet established to document and monitor women's contribution to policy development, action plan formulation and implementation. Similarly, there is also no systematically collected information and data to monitor change and progress regarding underlying causes and identified obstacles to women's participation and voice in public decision making. Available data and information do not always provide a sufficiently credible basis for effective strategy development and formulation of strong, evidence-based, and effective advocacy messages to promote women's participation and voice.

Current quantitative monitoring on women's political representation shows that the situation varies widely across the ASEAN member states (AMS). In light of growing regionalism with ASEAN moving towards establishing an ASEAN Community by 2015,[3] existing diversity among the regional partners underscores the need to have a regional-level system to systematically monitor and promote women's participation in politics and public decision making. ACW therefore proposed a project aiming at achieving regional-level regular and systematic monitoring of progress to feed into continuous reassessments of challenges and obstacles to be addressed in future strategies. The proposed project is intended to complement the current regular quantitative monitoring surrounding the MDGs in the AMS.

This report constitutes a synthesis of key findings from eight AMS country studies.[4] The AMS country studies have been conducted to assess and review the actual situation in each AMS and to generate baseline data and information for women's political participation and voice at national and sub-national levels in each AMS. The findings from the country studies, together with good international practices, are expected to provide the evidence base for proposing an ASEAN monitoring framework.

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[1] For detailed background, refer to Sub-project Document '*Advancing and Monitoring women's Political participation in the ASEAN Region*', (Activity ID: DR111_ASEAN, Project ID: 82004, LOA-ROAP-2013-001, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok).

[2] For details, refer to full text of the Convention.

[3] Comprising three pillars: Political-Security, Economic and Socio-Cultural. For details, refer to ASEAN website: www.asean.org

[4] Seven country studies were initiated and conducted in parallel in Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, and Viet Nam. A country study was subsequently conducted separately in Thailand. ACW Singapore and Myanmar provided information in a paper of their own. For individual authors please refer to list of references.

1.2   Women's participation in politics and public decision making - delimitation

The AMS country studies examine four categories of positions/bodies/institutions[5].

> i) elected positions (direct and indirect election – at national and sub-national levels)

> ii) candidates of political parties (not elected)

> iii) appointed decision-making bodies/positions (at national and sub-national levels)

> iv) civil society organizations advocating women's participation in politics and public decision making (at national and sub-national levels as feasible)

The country studies gathered information on barriers and gaps for women in politics and public decision making, i.e. qualitative information to complement the quantitative data and fill information gaps.

1.3   Approach and methodology

The content of country reports, given the common structure and methodology, allowed analysis and assessment of both common issues and of differing obstacles - while ensuring comparability of findings between the countries.

Table 1: Summary of Focus Group Discussions and In-depth Interviews

AMS	Focus Group/Round Table Discussion		Interviews with Key Informants
	#	Participants	
Brunei Darussalam	1	6 participants	2 individual interviews
Cambodia	3	2 participants – district level 3 participants – commune level 3 participants – village level	4 individual interviews
Indonesia	1	6 participants – women's group	10 individual interviews
Lao PDR	--	--	--
Malaysia		--	7 individual interviews
Myanmar	--	--	--
Philippines	1	11 participants – House of Representatives; Senate; Philippine Commission on Women; political parties; Lady Municipal Mayors; labor union; women's groups	--
Thailand	4	8 women leader and women candidates in political parties 5 women in appointed governing/executive positions 9 women activists in politics, leaders of civil society organizations working specifically on promotion of women's leadership in politics and decision making Unknown numbers of participants from civil society organizations advocating women's participation in politics and public decision making (set up in parallel with the Thai CSOs forum: Beijing +20)	--
Singapore	--	--	--
Viet Nam	1	16 participants	--

Seven country-level studies were thereafter conducted in parallel but independently by national consultants who had been selected by the ACW in the respective AMS (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines and Viet Nam). The respective ACW further approved each of the seven final country studies. A country study in Thailand taking a broader scope was commissioned separately, while the ACWs in Myanmar and Singapore provided information papers on "Women's Participation in Political and Public Life in Myanmar" and "Women's Participation in Politics and Appointed Decision-Making Positions in Singapore".

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[5] This was agreed at a planning workshop in Phnom Penh on February 27, 2014. In addition, the workshop gave guidance on the key type of information to be gathered, and a common framework for reporting.

A desk review of available literature was done by all national consultants. Additional information was gathered through focus group/round table discussions and/or in-depth interviews with key informants in most country studies (see Table 1 below).

This synthesis report follows the agreed reporting framework and ***collects key findings*** around agreed topics ***from the 10 country-level studies.*** The synthesis report thus reflects the information as discussed by the national consultants, and approved by the respective ACW, and ***does not in any respect represent additional independent regional research***.

2. WOMEN IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC DECISION MAKING

2.1   Elected positions

2.1.1   Overview of the election system, processes and structures and relevant laws and regulations

An overview (Table 2) of the *elected bodies* at national and sub-national levels in each of the ten AMS illustrates the diversity in election systems across the AMS (Table 2 presents information as available from the country studies). The AMS differ in several dimensions such as the structure of parliament - single/bicameral- sub-national level representation and direct vs. indirect elections.

> ➤ *National level elections*

In Indonesia, Lao PDR, Singapore and Viet Nam the citizens directly elect representatives to a single house at national level. Elections are held every 5 years in each of these countries.

Cambodia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand on the other hand are bicameral, composed of a lower house and an upper house/senate at national level. Elections to the lower house are direct in all four countries, held every 5 years in Cambodia, every 4-5 years in Malaysia, every 4 years in Thailand, and every 3 years in the Philippines.

Elections to the upper house/senate are direct in the Philippines, and synchronized with the general elections to the lower houses. Thailand has a mixture of direct elections and appointments to the senate every 6 years. In Cambodia on the other hand, elections to the upper house/senate are indirect and held every 6 years. The representatives to upper house (Senate) are either appointed or indirectly elected by Commune/Sangkat Councilors. In Malaysia senators are either indirectly elected by the sub-national State Legislative Assembly Members or appointed by the Head of State. Each senator serves a term of maximum 2-3 years, with terms expiring at various dates.

In addition, in three of the AMS (Indonesia, the Philippines and Singapore) the electorate also directly elects their president. In Indonesia the president is elected every 5 years and in the Philippines and Singapore every 6 years.

In one AMS (Brunei Darussalam. which is a monarchy) no legislative elections have taken place since 1962.

> ➤ *Sub-national level elections*

Seven of the AMS have sub-national level directly or indirectly elected bodies (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam).

In Brunei Darussalam, 30 Mukim and 152 Village Consultative Councils (grassroots institutions) under the purview of the Ministry of Home Affairs elect Management Committees every 5 years.

In Cambodia direct general elections to Commune/Sangkat Councils are held every 5 years since 2002. Indirect elections to Province/Capital Councils and Municipality/District/Khan Councils took place for the first time in 2009 and are to be repeated every five years. The Councilors to the newly institutionalized Province/Capital Councils and the Municipality/District/Khan Councils are indirectly elected by the Commune/Sangkat Councilors.

In Indonesia the citizens elect provincial Governor (Head of province) and Bupati (Head of district) every 5 years. Legislative bodies at both provincial and district levels are also elected directly by the citizen every 5 years.

In Malaysia the citizens elect State Legislative Assembly Members every 4-5 years, while Local Government Officials are elected every 3 years in the Philippines (synchronized with national elections).

In Thailand the citizens directly elect representatives to Tambon Administrative Organizations. In Viet Nam representatives at three sub-national levels are elected every 5 years.

Table 2: Overview of Elected Bodies – directly or indirectly elected

AMS	National Level		Sub-National Level	
	Direct Election	Indirect Election	Direct Election	Indirect Election
Brunei Darussalam *- one registered political party* *- no legislative elections since 1962*				***Management Committees of Consultative Councils*** *(every 5 years)* - Mukim (District) and Village levels
Cambodia *- multi-party system* *- vote for party*	***National Assembly*** (Lower House) *(every 5 years)* 123 seats	***Senate*** (Upper House) *(every 6 years)* 61 seats – of which: - 2 appointed by the King - 2 elected by National Assembly - 57 elected by 'functional constituencies' (the Commune/Sangkat Councilors)	***Commune/Sangkat Councils*** *(every 5 years)* -5 to 11 members each (first election in 2002)	***Province/Capital Council*** and ***Municipality/District/Khan Councils*** *(every 5 years)* - Commune/Sangkat councilors elect (first election in 2009)
Indonesia *- multi-party system* *- can vote for either party or individual*	***People's Assembly*** - Parliament members (DPR RI) *(every 5 years)* (560 seats) - Senators (regional representatives) (DPD) *(every 5 years)* (132 seats – 4 senators from each of the 33 provinces) ***President*** *(every 5 years)*		***Provincial DPRD I*** - Legislative body *(every 5 years)* ***District DPRD II*** - Legislative body *(every 5 years)* ***Provincial Governor*** - Head of province *(every 5 years)* ***Bupati*** - Head of district *(every 5 years)*	
Lao PDR *- single-party system*	***National Assembly*** *(every 4-5 years)* (148 seats)		***Village Chiefs***	

Malaysia - *multi-party system* - *vote for individual candidates*	**Parliament** (Lower House) *(every 5 years)* (222 seats)	**Senate** (Upper House) *(serve 2 or 3 years term – expiry at various dates)* (59 senators) - elected by the State Legislative Assemblies - appointed by the Head of State	**State Legislative Assembly Members** *(every 4-5 years)* (576 seats)	
Myanmar - *multi-party system* - *vote for individual candidates*	**House of Representatives (Pyithu Hluttaw)** (Lower House) *(every 5 years)* (330 elected seats) (110 appointed seats) **House of Nationalities (Amyotha Hluttaw)** (Upper House) *(every 5 years)* (168 elected seats) (56 appointed seats)		**Region or State Hluttaws** (one in each of the 14 major administrative regions)	
Philippines - *multi-party system* - *synchronized national and local elections* - *voters can cast two votes for the House of Representatives: one district candidate and a party list group* - *voters cast single vote for Senate and in presidential election*	**House of Representatives** (Lower House) - 20% sectoral representatives of marginalized and underrepresented sectors *(every 3 years for members of parliament* (289 seats) **Senate** (Upper House) *(each senator has a term of 6 years,* *with 12 seats elected every 3 years)* (24 seats) **President** *(every 6 years)*		**Local Government Officials:** - Governor - Vice-Governor - Provincial Board members - Mayor - Vice-Mayor - City and Municipal Councilors - Barangay Chair - Barangay Councilors - Sangguniang Kabataan *(every 3 years)*	

Singapore - multi-party system - vote for individual in Single Member Constituencies - vote for group of individuals in Group Representative Constituencies	**Parliament** - Elected Members (99 seats) - Non-Constituency Members[6] - Nominated Members[7] **President** (every 6 years)			
Thailand - multi-party system	**House of Representatives** (Lower House) (every 4 years) (500 seats) - 375 electoral constituencies - 125 party list **Senate** (Upper House) - directly elected - appointed (every 6 years) (150 seats)		**Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAO)** - two representatives from each administrative village - president	
Viet Nam - single-party system	**National Assembly** (every 5 years) (500 seats)		**People's Councils** - Provincial level - District/Town level - Commune/Ward level (every 5 years)	

> ➢ *Political party and electoral system*

The party systems vary from multi-party (Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) to single-party (Lao PDR and Viet Nam). In Brunei Darussalam there is one registered party but no legislative elections have been held since 1962.

Voters in the AMS can vote for a party and/or for an individual. In the Philippines, voters, for instance, cast two votes for the election of members of the House of Representatives (Lower House): an individual candidate for district representative and a political party registered under the party-list system. In Indonesia voters can vote for either a party or an individual candidate. In Singapore, voters vote for an individual from a party in Single Member Constituencies and for a group of representatives from a party in Group Representation Constituencies [8]. In Cambodia on the other hand, voters vote for the party whereas in Malaysia voters vote for individual candidates. In Viet Nam and Lao PDR voters cast their votes for individual candidates from the single party.

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[6] Non-Constituency Members of Parliament (NCMPs) are chosen from candidates of a political party or parties not forming the Government. The Singapore Constitution and the Parliamentary Elections Act provide that for the next and subsequent Parliaments, the number of NCMPs shall be 9 less the total number of elected Opposition Members of Parliament in Parliament. The number of NCMPs coming from any one Group Representation Constituency shall be capped at 2, and the number from any Single Member Constituency shall not be more than one. The NCMPs to be declared elected shall be determined from amongst the candidates of the Opposition parties contesting the general election on the basis of the percentage of votes polled by such candidates. Details are spelt out in Section 52 of the Parliamentary Elections Act.

[7] Nominated Members of Parliament (NMPs) are Singapore citizens nominated by a Special Select Committee of Parliament for appointment by the President. NMPs do not stand for election. The Singapore Constitution provides for 9 NMPs. The NMPs serve for a term of two and a half years. They are not connected to any political party and are appointed to ensure a wide representation of community views in Parliament.

[8] The Group Representation Constituencies were established in 1988 to ensure that the minority racial communities will always be represented.

➢ *Legal and policy framework in support of women's participation*

All AMS countries have a comprehensive legal and policy framework to guide elections. In all AMS the Constitution together with supporting legal and policy framework give equal rights to all citizens irrespective of gender to vote and to stand for election as applicable.

However, only one AMS (Indonesia) has specific guidance as to how to promote and ensure women's fair representation. In Indonesia the General Law on Elections since 2003, and reemphasized in 2008, regulates a 30% quota for women. Other regulations also support the affirmative action for women, including the Law on Political Parties. Since 2008, all political parties are instructed to have a minimum of 30% of women in the parties' committee. Furthermore, the 2008 law instructed that at least one of the first three names on the list of legislative candidates must be female.

2.1.2   Women's representation in elected bodies in figures – national and sub-national levels

The summary of women's representation in elected bodies in the ten AMS is found in Table 3. It presents the percentage of women in elected bodies with year of most recent elections in each AMS. It also shows the change/trend of women's representation in the elected bodies as compared to preceding election: **(↑)** increasing share for women; **(→)** share for women has remained same over recent years; and **(↓)** decreasing share for women.

➢ *Level of women's representation*

The most recent elections in the ten AMS with elections have taken place between 2009 and 2014, thus spanning a period of 5 years (Table 3).

The share of women in elected national level bodies range from 2.4% (Myanmar – House of Nationalities) to 27% (Philippines – House of Representatives). At sub-national level the range is equally broad, ranging from 11.3% in Malaysia to 25.2% in Viet Nam (provincial level).

Comparing national to sub-national levels within each AMS, reveals that women's representation at sub-national level is lower than at national level in Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines. In Viet Nam women's sub-national-level representation varies between lower and higher as compared to national level representation (lower at commune/ward level with women holding 21.8% of seats to higher at provincial level where women hold 25.2% of the seats). In Malaysia and Thailand on the other hand, women's representation at sub-national level is stronger than at national level.

➢ *Trend in women's representation in elected bodies*

Table 3 illustrates the change/trend in women's representation in elected bodies (comparing results from most recent elections to results in the preceding elections).

Table 3: Women's Representation in Elected Bodies

(results (year) from most recent elections for each AMS)

AMS	National Level		Sub-National Level	
	Direct Election	**Indirect Election**	**Direct Election**	**Indirect Election**
Brunei Darussalam				*Management Committees of Consultative Councils* - Include women % (year) trend - unavailable

Cambodia	**National Assembly** (Lower House) **20.32% (2013) (→)**	**Senate** (Upper House) **14.75% (2012) (→)**	**Commune/Sangkat Council** **17.8% (2012) (↑)**	**Province/Capital Council** **13.2% (2014) (↑)** **Municipality/District/Khan Councils** **13.85 (2014) (↑)**
Indonesia	**People's Assembly** **18% (2009) (↑)** - Parliament members (DPR) - Senators as regional representatives (DPD)		**Provincial DPRD** **16% (2009)** (no trend available) **District DPRD** **12% (2009)** (no trend available)	
Lao PDR	**National Assembly** **24.62% (2011) (→)**		**Village Chief** (no figures available)	
Malaysia	**Parliament** (Lower House) **10.4% (2013) (→)**	**Senate** (Upper House) **28.8% (2013) (↑)**	**State Legislative Assembly Members** **11.3% (2013) (↑)**	
Myanmar	**House of Representatives (Pyithu Hluttaw)** (Lower House) **8% elected (2010) (by-elections 2012) 2.7% appointed** **House of Nationalities (Amyotha Hluttaw)** (Upper House) **2.4% elected (2010) (by-elections 2012**		**Region or State Hluttaws** (one in each of the 14 major administrative regions)	
Philippines	**House of Representatives** (Lower House) **27% (2013) (↑)** **Senate** **25% (2013) (↑)**		**Local Government Officials** **(2013)** - Governor 22.5% **(↑)** - Vice-Governor 13.8% **(→)** - Board members 18.4% **(↑)** - Mayor 20.9% **(↑)** - Vice-Mayor 16.7% **(→)** - Councilors 18.9% **(→)**	
Singapore	**Parliament** **25.3% (2013) (↑)**			
Thailand	**House of Representatives** (Lower House) **15.8% (2011) (↑)** **Senate** (Upper House) **16% (2008) (↑)**		**Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAO)** **17% (2014) (↑)**	
Viet Nam	**National Assembly** **24.4% (2011) (↓)**		**People's Councils** **(2011)** - Provincial level 25.17% - District/Town level 24.6% - Commune/Ward 21.7**%** (no trend available)	

Four AMS (Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) show a recent increasing trend in national-level representation of women, while women's representation in the Vietnamese National Assembly decreased in the most recent election. The share of women in national level elected bodies has remained more or less unchanged in two of the AMS (Cambodia and Lao PDR). In Malaysia, women's representation in the Senate has increased while women's share in parliament remains unchanged.

For sub-national level there is a similar difference in trend for women's representation across the AMS. In Cambodia, Malaysia and Thailand women's representation in sub-national level elected bodies have been

strengthened in recent times. The trend for elected local government officials in the Philippines is mixed, with increase for some positions while women's share in other positions remains unchanged. Data over time for Indonesia and Viet Nam was unavailable at the time of the study.

2.1.3   Women's influence and voice in decision making in elected bodies – national and sub-national levels

While the data allow for a numerical picture of trends in women's political participation, there is no systematic information from which analysis can be drawn on the impact of such participation, though correlations are possible.

However the country reports do speak to entry points for strengthening women's influence in elected bodies. In *Brunei Darussalam* women are active in the local level consultative councils, especially in economic activities. The *Cambodian* study points to the importance of the chairs of technical commissions to ensure that gender equality issues are covered in the agenda setting and during debate sessions (two out of ten technical commissions in each of the Senate and the National Assembly are chaired by women). The Vice-President of the National Election Committee is also a woman, which has increased attention to the gender equality dimensions of law and policy consideration. At the sub-national level the women and children representatives and committees are seen as structural entry points for women to advance gender-responsive actions. The *Indonesian* study specifically points to the importance of the setting of up of a Women Parliamentary Caucus as an entry point for enhancing women's influence. Formal mechanisms from village level to national level for consultations between government bodies and NGOs are also highlighted as vital entry points. The study from *Lao PDR* notes that since the establishment of the Women Parliamentarian Caucus in the National Assembly many laws that directly relate to benefits of women have been approved. At the same time it is however noted that despite hard work the Caucus' participation in decision making remains low. The *Vietnamese study* highlights that being a full-time member of a National Assembly Committee or Council provides the opportunity to influence decisions in specific sectors. While there has been a small increase in women's representation as members in the Committees, female National Assembly deputies remain strongly under-represented (only 17.5% of full-time Committee members are women). A large proportion of women-elected deputies may therefore not have a strong decision-making role in the National Assembly.

Entry points for ways to monitor women's influence and views at both parliament and state levels are proposed in the *Malaysian* study:

1) A consistent monitoring and gathering information through quantitative data

2) A consistent observation of women elected and appointed members agenda that get through the national and state debates and be implemented, especially on women and development.

3) A consistent observation on attendance and participation of women members elected or appointed at the national and state levels.

4) Identifying women agendas that voiced out by female appointed or elected members at the national and state levels.

5) Identifying the legislative history with regards to women and development

Entry points for who can monitor the influence and voice of women in decision-making in a systematic,

organized manner are proposed in the *Philippine* study: 1) respective Committees on Women and Gender Equality of the House of Representatives and the Senate; 2) the Commission on Elections; 3) the Philippine Commission on Women; 4) university-based Women Studies Institutions; 5) private think tanks; or 6) non-governmental organizations particularly women's groups.

2.2   Political party candidates

2.2.1   Overview of political parties, party policies and guiding laws, regulations

➢ *Number of parties standing for election*

Two AMS are single party states. The Lao People's Revolutionary Party is the single party in Lao PDR and state actions are taken in line with resolutions of the Party Congress held every five years. In Viet Nam the supremacy of the Communist Party is guaranteed in the Constitution.

In the six multi-party AMS the number of parties standing for election varies from 7 to 42. In Cambodia 8 parties stood for election in 2013 of which 2 parties won all National Assembly seats. The majority party has been in majority since the first national elections in 1993. At sub-national level, 10 parties stood for election in 2012.

In Indonesia 10 parties stood for election to parliament in 2009 (the party lists for the 2014 general elections shows an increase to 12 parties). In Malaysia 13 parties stood for election in 2009. In campaigning however, there are two competing alliances that stand for the election, with each alliance consisting of several political parties.

For the 2013 National Elections in the Philippines, the Commission on Elections has classified the 7 major political parties into one dominant majority, a dominant minority of two parties in one alliance, and 4 other major parties. The political parties are generally personality rather than issue-based and are usually mobilized only during elections highlighting their function as campaign machinery rather than as organizations offering the electorate policy choices on specific issues. A party list system has been put in place to ideally represent the marginalized sectors of society (20% sectoral representatives in the House of Representatives, see Table 2). Recent trends however show that traditional politicians put up sectoral parties to field their relatives and other supporters.

In Singapore 7 parties contested in the general election in 2011. In Thailand no less than 73 parties are active and registered under the Election Commission as of January 2014. However, only 42 parties contested in the 2011 general elections.

➢ *Legislation to regulate or guide political party's appointment/selection of candidates*

Indonesia is the only AMS with legislative regulations to guide political party's appointment of candidates. All political parties are since 2008 instructed to have 30% women in the parties' committees and at least one of the first three names on the list of legislative candidates must be female (see 2.1.1 on election law). This has had a positive effect for female candidates as all parties regardless of their ideological preference have been made to put women candidates on their lists.

However, people can vote for a party or for an individual, which leads to competition not only among political parties but also among individuals within the parties - whoever in a party gets the biggest vote wins the seat.

The possibility to vote for individuals has tended to discourage the struggle for more women participation and is considered an obstacle for female candidates running for parliament, and has been counterproductive to the advocacy for 30% quota for women (as seen from Table 2, women hold only 18% of seats in the People's Assembly as of 2009 year's elections). Further, it is observed that many of the female candidates are chosen based subjective criteria. The three main criteria of women that are endorsed by the political parties are: i) public figures/celebrities, expected to be vote getters for the parties; ii) have familiar relationship with the main circles in the parties; and iii) women with strong financial background, expected that they can give financial contribution to the parties.

> *Party policy to promote women as party members and as candidates for elections*

In Cambodia there is no explicit policy or strategy for political parties to set up quota system or for promoting women in the candidacy list or party list. At the Commune/Sangkat level, improvement of the rank order of women on party lists, decided exclusively by the parties, was the main factor behind the increase in women's representation in Commune Councils between 2002 and 2012 (from 8% to 17.8%).

The country study from Lao PDR stresses that to increase the number of women participating in politics working at the local level is very important for women to prove themselves.

In Malaysia the study concludes that in general promotion in the party hierarchy is rigid and difficult. Normally candidates come from the lower ranks and mature over the years from youth wing to the division level. Female party members can compete with their male counterparts on an equal basis but in reality the quota for men is higher than the quota for women because the overall population in the party contains more male than female members. It is however difficult to verify the total number of members based on gender.

In the Philippines there is a lack of policies, mechanisms, programs and platforms in political parties to include women among their candidates. The selection of candidates to run for office is done basically by the leadership and in the absence of women at the helm, the list of candidates is usually dominated by men. Further, the personality and popularity politics rather than issue-based politics is used as a basis for choosing candidates; it can be argued that one's kinship, whether by blood or marriage, is the single biggest factor in the victory of both women and men candidates. The emergence in the party list system of issue-based and cause-oriented political parties has somewhat changed and improved the scenario for women.

In Thailand, the legislative framework which guides on political party's appointment/selection of candidates includes recommendations to take into consideration an approximate proportion between women and men when preparing the list of candidates. The Thai political parties do however not have clear policies on promoting women's representation.

The country study from Viet Nam notes that like in other countries, the party has been dominated by men since it was formed in 1930. The party is seen as the gateway to political participation and if a representative government is to be formed, the party needs to also be representative. Women's representation in new party members has however increased in recent years and reached 40% in 2011 (as compared to 32,8% in 2010 and 20.9% in 2005).

> *Campaign costs and financing*

In the Philippine study the negative implications of high campaign costs for women who are not members of wealthy families is highlighted. Generally women are in a less advantageous economic position than men.

Family or dynastic politics where money is a big factor thus becomes decisive.

In Singapore the law imposes a limit on the level of spending by or on behalf of every candidate. This is to ensure a level playing field between candidates. The spending may be incurred before, during or after an election. At the end of the Parliamentary or Presidential election, every candidate and his/her election agent must account for all their spending by or on behalf of the candidate in the conduct and management of the election. In addition, the candidate must also submit a post-election donation report, together with a set of declarations, to the Registrar of Political Donations for all donations received during the election period.

2.2.2   Women's representation on party lists in figures

Among the 8 parties which stood for 2013 national election in Cambodia women on the party lists ranged from 9.8% to 44.4% - the lowest being on the party list of one of the two parties winning seats in the National Assembly and the highest on the list of a party which did not win seats. The party which won majority had nominated 16.3% women on its list. Among parties standing for 2012 sub-national elections the share of women on the party lists was generally higher, ranging from 20.7% to 45.8%. The majority party had 22.5% of women among its nominated candidates.

The Indonesia party lists for the 2014 general elections show that there are 37% female candidates.

In Lao PDR there has been a constant increase in female party candidates in the three latest elections, reaching just below 25% in 2011. All candidates must meet the requirement of the party and the party has to approve each candidate for National Assembly elections.

Among the 13 parties standing elections in Malaysia the percentage of female candidates ranged from 0% to 15.4%, reaching an average of female candidates of 10.5%.

The Philippine study concludes that women party members are usually confined to administration, routine finance work and corporate housekeeping. It also notes that 45% of the female legislators were replacements of their male relatives previously sitting in the House.

In Singapore, among the 7 parties that contested in the 2011 general election, the percentage of women candidates fielded by 6 parties varied from 14% to 23%. One party did not have any women candidate.

The country study from Thailand presents the average of female candidates on party lists during 4 elections (from 2001 to 2011) showing a steady increase. In 2011, women representation on party lists stood at 15.2%, implying a sharp increase as compared to 8.75% in 2007. It is however concluded that women candidates were nominated for hopeless contests more often than men. It is further stressed that the political parties ignored to comply with the provision of the Election Commission to ensure approximate proportion between women and men.

The representation of women is low in the main influential decision-making bodies of the Party in Viet Nam. In the Central Committee only 8.6% of the members are women (which is an increase by 4.4% as compared to the previous term), in the Political Bureau female representation is currently 14.2% (the highest rate ever of female representation as compared to previous terms) and in the Party Secretariat 20% are women (unchanged from previous term). At the sub-national level of the Communist Party of Viet Nam the

percentage of women in key positions is also low and unrepresentative of the Party membership (women's representation is 11.3% at provincial level, 15.2% at district level and 18% at commune level).

2.2.3   Women's influence on party decision making

In Cambodia women representatives from the majority party stressed the importance for women leaders and National Assembly members to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed in legislative debates and in the different clauses of all laws and regulations. The ranking of women on the candidate list is very important in Cambodia, as people vote for the party. The study however also points to challenges for women to participate in party working groups, including limited self-confidence and assertiveness coupled with domestic responsibilities.

In Indonesia the parties claim they take into consideration all voices of both men and women but they do not present verification. Female party members suggest that some women become part of the main circles in the parties and their voices can be heard in decision making processes for non-specific gender issues. However, when it comes to specific programs or activities the women's voices are frequently ignored. Patriarchal values and practices are still strong in most political parties despite of abundant efforts done by civil society movement to raise their gender awareness and it is therefore believed that enforcement through laws and regulations (such as affirmative actions) is still the most effective way to force the political parties to consider women's participation.

In Lao PDR it is a requirement to have attended the Political Theory School for being promoted to a higher position. Advancing through this system is a challenge for women given their challenges of balancing family responsibilities with long periods of residential political training. In addition more subtle barriers are present in the traditionally male-dominated political networks. Mechanisms to increase participation of women in decision making are primarily integrated in the poverty reduction work.

Studies on topics about women and politics in Malaysia, and in particularly on women's role and behavior in political parties, are still minimal and none of the available publications can be selected as comprehensive. Studies continue to reflect only numerical achievements, still struggling to achieve at least 30% participation of women. Many studies mapping women's participation in politics are integrated into the socio-economic and developmental contexts. Positions reserved for women in the parties are to simply complement the need for a reliable secretary in keeping the record of meetings, preparing letters etc. while core positions are reserved for men. Most members of the central committees at the party level are dominated by male members and this automatically decreases women's chances to influencer party decision making. Overall, female members in each party, size and positions in the party organization show that women do not have adequate voice to influence the party's decision

In the Philippines the political party scenario has changed somewhat for women with the emergence of issue-based and cause-oriented political parties in the party list system, thus seeing an increasing number of women elected in the party list system in the past three elections.

The selection of potential candidates to stand for election in Thailand involves a process through which individuals are selected by the party in a relatively closed process that is characterized by patronage and led by power brokers at various levels. The patronage-oriented system is built upon either traditional or charismatic authority and it is commonly believed that most of the major parties do not provide women with

opportunities to run for elected offices.

The Viet Nam country study concludes that the implications of having a low percentage of women's leadership in the Party in Viet Nam is that there is a small pool of women to put forward for leadership positions in administrative government and as candidates for election. Moreover, the number indicates that women have very limited voice on direction and creation of policies in the Party.

2.3   Appointment of public decision makers

2.3.1   Overview of structure and mechanisms of appointing decision makers

➢ *Key appointed decision-making bodies/positions (incl. judiciary) – national and sub-national*
The country studies examine a range of decision-making bodies in their investigation of equality of participation.

The Bruneian study highlights the importance of the recruitment and appointment of public service decision makers (Divisions I and II being the Leadership/Decision-making levels).

The Cambodian study highlights the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers together with the vertical line of each ministry (general directorates, technical departments at national level directly under the ministry, departments and technical offices at the provincial level and technical offices at the district level). Sub-national key positions highlighted are governors and deputy governors at province and district levels. There is at least one female deputy governor at both province and district levels. Overall a big gap remains in proportion of women to men in leadership positions in the government structures.

In the Indonesian study the highlight is on judicative with the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court being the two main bodies. Key commissions include: Commission for Corruption Eradication, Election Commission, Human Rights Commission, National commission on violence against Women, and Commission for Children's Rights).

In Lao PDR the President as Head of State assigns the Prime Minister and Ministers with the approval of the National Assembly. The Government is the executive organ and manages state duties in a unified manner with the National Assembly being the legislative authority. The Government positions highlighted are Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers and Chairpersons of the ministry-equivalent committees. Lao PDR has 18 Administrative Provinces, including 1 capital with a Governor assigned by the President to each province. Distinct Governors are appointed by the Prime Minister.

The Malaysian study highlight the Federal Government Cabinet (61 members). Other key positions include Chief Secretary to the government, Secretary and Deputy Secretary General, Director General of Statutory Bodies and Director General of Federal Departments together with Judiciary positions and top management professionals (information about number of men respective women for Cabinet and other key positions is provided in tables).

The information paper from Myanmar highlights the importance of women ministers as well as women's participation in the government's organization and in its ministries.

The Philippine study highlights the 3 levels of civil service: i) clerical, trade crafts and custodial service positions; ii) professional, technical and scientific positions; and iii) positions higher than a chief of division (linked to salary grade).

Singapore's information paper highlights the importance of women diplomats, women in civil service and the judiciary, women on boards as well as women's representation in civil society.

In Thailand the key appointed decision makers cover six bodies at the national level, which are Ministers, Senators, Judges, Attorney General and Independent Organizations mandated by the Constitution (Election Commission; Ombudsman; National Counter Corruption Commission; State Audit Commission; Public Prosecutors; National Human Rights Commission; and National Economic and Social Advisory Council). At the sub-national level attention is brought to Governor and District Chief Officer.

The Vietnamese study has chosen to highlight key government positions: Prime and Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers and Heads of ministerial-level agencies (other members).

➢ *Who are involved in the nomination procedures and who takes final decision*

The Public Service Department holds responsibility for recruiting and appointing public servants in Brunei Darussalam, guided by several laws and regulations, while interviews of potential candidates or nominees are conducted by the Public Services Commission based on the advertised scheme of service.

The Prime Minister in Cambodia is designated by the President of the National Assembly at its first meeting held after national elections. The Prime Minister in turn proposes the members of the Council of Ministers to get the approval from the elected National Assembly.

In Indonesia, some key commissions (Commission for Corruption Eradication, Election Commission, and Human Rights Commission) are selected by the Parliament. Other Commissions (National Commission on violence against Women and Commission for Children's Rights) are selected by independent teams.

In Malaysia Cabinet lists are proposed by the Prime Minister and approved by the King. The appointment of civil servants includes screening which includes sitting for examination and an interview. The same procedure applies to all citizens regardless of gender. The same application procedure applies to judiciary selection. The selection board members from the Public Service Department together with a few officials from relevant ministry or department will review and decide. In reality there are less numbers of qualified women to compete with the men, so men tend to get better positions in the government institutions.

In the Philippines the president appoints 3rd level (see above) civil servants (as per constitution). The 2nd level of civil servants is selected subject to the review and evaluation of the Civil Service Commission.

In Singapore, the Public Service Division of the Prime Minister's Office ensures that there is no structural gender bias in policies and programmes. Women are appointed to leadership and decision-making positions based on the principles of equal opportunity and meritocracy. These principles also apply to selection for talent and leadership development programmes in the public sector.

In Thailand the Council of Ministers is selected by the Prime Minister. Appointed Senators is done through an Election Committee (with members from the President of the Constitutional Court, the Chairman of the Election Commission, the Chairman of the State Audit Commission, a judge of the Supreme Court and a judge

of the Supreme Administrative Court). The appointment of judges is done through an examination or special selection as a judge trainee whereas the appointment of Attorney General is decided by an approval of the State Attorney Commission. A selection committee of seven members selects the Chairman and Election Commissioners and likewise the Ombudsman is selected by a selection committee with seven members. The National Counter Corruption Commission is selected by five member selection committee. The King appoints the persons to members of the State Audit Commission. Public Prosecutors are appointed through a resolution of the Public Prosecutors Commission and upon approval by the Senate. The members of the National Human Rights Commission are appointed by the King through an advice of the Senate. The National Economic and Social Advisory Council include 99 selected delegates from the economic sector, the social sector as well as experts. At sub-national level, the provincial governor is a governmental official appointed by the Ministry of Interior (except for the Governor of Bangkok). The District Chief Officer is a governmental officer under the Department of Provincial Administration of Ministry of Interior and is appointed based on results of an entrance examination.

In Viet Nam the Prime Minister is elected and dismissed by the National Assembly according to the proposal of the President. The Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers, Heads of Ministerial-level agencies are decided by the National Assembly based on the Prime Minister's proposal. The appointment, rotation, dismissal or resignation procedures of other officials are defined in Prime Minister's Decision (2003).

> *Laws, regulations, codes, conventions, declarations or other commitment as regards the share of women when appointing decision makers?*

In Cambodia the Prime Minister launched a drive in 2008 to address gender imbalances resulting in national targets: 38% women in the civil service by 2015 and at least 30% of decision making positions to be held by women. The 2007 Guideline of the State Secretariat of Civil Services suggests that 20-50 percent of new recruits shall be women, resulting in the increase of female civil servants from 34 percent in 2008 to 37 percent in 2013. In addition, the RGC issued a Royal Decree on revision of retirement age of female civil servants and increasing women's retirement age to 60 years, on voluntarily basis, while the retirement age of men is 55 to 60 years based on the level of education and grade. A recent gender audit within the democratic decentralization program shows that female staff tends to be recruited and promoted into administration and finance or gender-related positions.

For the appointment of senators in Thailand there is guidance to consider the gender equality and ratio from different sectors as well as underprivileged groups, while no similar guidance is in place for neither appointment of ministers, judges, attorney general or for sub-national level appointments.

2.3.2   Women's representation in appointed bodies in figures

Key conclusions from the country studies regarding women's representation in figures are summarized below (for detailed figures for each AMS, please refer to the respective country study).

Brunei Darussalam country study shows that the share of women in the highest level of public servants has increased over the years but remains below one third in all ministries except for health. Gender imbalances remain in the public sector and with fewer women than men holding positions as ministers, deputy ministers, permanent secretary and deputy permanent secretary.

The Cambodian country study concludes that there is a positive trend in the number of female appointees

in state leadership positions, although women remain less represented than men. The share of female Ministers has risen to 10.7% (up from 7.1% in the previous Legislature), with female Secretaries of States reaching 20.5% (up from 8.1%), and women holding a share of 17.6% of Under-secretary of State positions (up from16.1%). Women are however rarely found in senior decision-making positions - there are few women from department/division director level and up, with a somewhat higher proportion of women at mid-level management and professional staff levels. Beyond educational constraints lie cultural biases which shape individual and institutional perceptions of 'appropriate' jobs for women leaving women primarily in administrative and finance positions. Affirmative action in promoting women in public administration has however brought about positive change with share of women in civil service increasing to 37% in 2013 (up from 34% in 2008). At the sub-national level, special measures to have at least one women as deputy-governor in all provinces and districts have resulted in positive progress for female representation with females comprising 20% of deputy governors at provincial/capital level, while men hold all provincial governor positions. In the Judicial branch, women represent 14% of judges and 10% of prosecutors in 2013.

In Indonesia there has been a significant increase of women's representation in executive decision making positions. Most recent data from 2013 shows a share of women in strategic positions of 20% in the highest echelon one and 15% in echelon two. In the lower operational positions (echelons three and four) women make up 21% and 33.4% respectively. Corresponding figures in 2007 were only 9%, 7%, 14% and 23% in echelons one, two, three and four respectively in 2007.

In Lao PDR the number of women in decision-making positions is lower than that of men. The highest percentage of women is at the Vice Minister level (reaching 21%) followed by the Deputy General Director and equivalent positions and Minister Assistants (20% and 17% respectively).

In the prominent federal positions in Malaysia (Chief Secretary, Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General, etc) female participation remains low, but on average showed an increase to 20% in 2013 (from 18% in 2012). Additionally, representation of women at the international level also remains low (13.4% of Ambassadors were women in 2010 while 14.3% of High Commissioners were women). The government announced the appointment of the first two female Federal Court judges in 2012. However, since the appointment it was reported that there may be limitations placed on the purview of the female judges. As for civil servants, women's share in top management stood at 27.6% in 2012 (a decrease from 31% in 2011). At the professional and management level, women accounted for 61.5% of civil servants in 2012 (an increase from 60.5% in 2011). Women's share in support level staff remained unchanged at close to 51% in 2012.

In Myanmar there are since 2010 two female Ministers at the Union level (an increase from zero in the previous government). In addition, 14 women are serving as Deputy Ministers at Union level. The ratio of women in the Government Organization and Ministries of the State increased to 52.39% in 2010. The share of women employed as Deputy Director or equal and above posts increased to 36.61% in 2010. There are a total of 52 judges of the High Courts of the Regions and the States, out of which 30.76% are women.

In the Philippines, women comprise 58% of positions in the second level and 43% of positions in the third level. The Philippine's Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act 9710) mandates the adoption of temporary special measures to accelerate the participation and equitable representation of women in all spheres of society particularly in the decision-making and policy-making processes in government. As such, one of the temporary special measures stated in the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of said law is the appointment of a woman candidate in case a woman and a man of equal qualifications have been shortlisted for a third-

level position. This provision of the law is reiterated in the Women's EDGE Plan 2013-2016. More women than men are appointed in Departments performing traditional gender functions, such as Departments of Education, Health and Social Welfare. In the Judiciary, women's representation in the first and second level courts (municipal and regional trial courts including Sharia Courts) is slightly increasing though at the highest court, the Supreme Court, the numbers are still fluctuating between a low of 15% and a high of 43%,

In Singapore the share of women in civil service was close to 57% in 2013 (and has remained so since 2009). In the top two categories, women account for more than 63% (a slight increase by 1% since 2009). Women's representation decreases at higher positions, with women Permanent Secretaries standing at 30% and women Deputy Secretaries at 33.3%. In the Supreme Court 11% of Judges are women, whereas women represent 50% of Judicial Officers in the Supreme Court and 52% of Judicial Officers in State Courts.

Thailand the share of female appointed Senators is 16%. In civil service, women account for a share of 55% in the Independent Organizations mandated by the Constitution, while there are no female Attorney and a low 3% female Judges. At sub-national level, 4% of Provincial Governors are women (2014 - a decrease from 6.8% in 2012), whereas 13% of the District Officers were women (2014 - an increase from 8% in 2012).

The Vietnamese study concludes that although there has been progress in the promotion of women, the ratio of women holding decision-making positions is still not high. There is for instance a significant gap between percentage of women holding vice-director positions and director positions, with women more prevalent in lower levels of government system (26.9% at division level – 19.3% at director level – 15.7% at ministerial level).

2.3.3   Women's influence and voice in decision making in appointed bodies

The University Brunei Darussalam has conducted various studies and research about women, although it remains unspecified in which areas and which are the conclusions. Women in general give their views on air or on television, in national forums, dialogues and the mass media and in seminars, conferences and surveys.

In Cambodia the potential for women's influence and voice has been strengthened with the government's commitment and institutional mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women in place. There is however as of yet no systematic monitoring of how this potential is exploited and how it works in practice.

Indonesian statistics reveal that women's involvement in decision making positions is far behind their male counterparts. No less than 28 out of 33 state agencies have more than 80% men with highest echelon positions. Stereotypes are also visible with work areas such as child protection and administration considered 'women's work' while strategic, moral and spiritual related issues are considered as 'men's work'.

The Laotian study notes that even in the areas where women's share are the highest, women only hold deputy or assistant positions, which means their influence on decisions would depend on their director or minister, who are men.

There is no study in Malaysia that indicates the influence or relationship or association between women in public sectors and politics. Female representation and participation at decision-making levels at both federal and local are persistently low. Moreover, female representatives have not yet been appointed as the Minister

at the core sectors such as Ministry of Finance, Defense, Home Affair and Foreign Affairs. The small numbers of female leaders and the rigorous unfair competition among male and female members would prevent female politicians and civil servants to be appointed at the top decision making positions.

The information paper from Myanmar points to the need for continued awareness raising activities and capacity-building programmes in order to enhance women's participation in politics and public decision making. It further points to the need to record the situation of women's participation at different levels and sectors in terms of age, race, urban and rural areas.

In the Philippines, there is an on-going effort to formulate a human resource policy for all government agencies and local government unit that will promote equal employment opportunities and career advancement for men and women particularly in managerial positions. All agencies are required to ensure that at least 40% of the participants in the formulation implementation and evaluation of government plans and programs are women (as per the Women's EDGE Plan, 2013-2016).

In Viet Nam women leaders are more prevalent in lower levels of the government system with a predominant role for men in leadership at all levels (men holding 84,3% of decision-making positions at ministerial level, 79,8 at director level and 73% at division level). This means that women experience a glass ceiling at the deputy director level and few women are able to attain higher positions, and consequently women have less power in decision making than men in public sector.

2.4   Civil society advocating women's participation in politics and public decision making

2.4.1   Overview of civil society advocating women's participation in politics and public decision making

In Brunei Darussalam there are two main women organizations. One functions as an umbrella body for smaller organizations striving for gender equality and women's role in national development. The other is a women's business council representing the interests and concerns of women in business. Both these women organization are government-linked and are included in national delegations at regional and international meetings.

In Cambodia, the Ministry of Women's Affairs has established a Technical Working Group on Gender as a forum to facilitate dialogue amongst line ministries, development partners and civil society. There are approximately 1034 national and 1431 international NGOs, several of which contribute support to gender equality issues to the promotion of women's voice. The NGOs and international organizations have shifted their focus from women's role in development towards a consideration of gendered relations of power, including women's and men's access to and control over resources and decision-making. Most of the local NGOs play an advocacy role on gender sensitivities in laws and policies and serve as an intermediary mechanism for flow of information from national to sub-national level. A group of NGOs ('Women for All') lobbied the National Election Committee and political parties to alternate 30% of women and men at the top of their respective candidate lists during sub-national (Commune/Sangkat) elections in 2012. Training directed to female candidates was also provided. There is as of yet no law on the establishment of association or private organizations in Cambodia.

In Indonesia, some NGOs actively voice issues related to women's political participation. They release assessment and monitoring results on women's issues including women's political participation in the form of policy papers, annual reports and other publications. Occasionally civil society and government offices work together such as in anticipation of the 2014 general elections.

Apart from the four mass-organizations under the Party, there are also non-profit associations in Lao PDR (as per Decree on Non-Profit Associations in 2009). Following the new legal framework there is an increasing number of new Non-Profit Associations working on women's issues both in central and provincial levels with potential to help government improve gender equality. An umbrella organization (Gender and Development Association) of INGOs working with UNICEF organize forum meetings to coordinate and exchange lessons and experiences on gender and development. The umbrella organization also provides training and consultancy services.

In Malaysia the Societies Act of 1866 (revised 1987) constitutes the rules and regulations for an organization to be legally registered. Most organization working on women's issues operate at both national and state levels and engage in consultations with the government on women and development. A few women advocacy groups assist government in reviewing, assessing and suggesting a framework to be integrated in the New Economic Model.

The Constitution of the Philippines recognizes the important role of NGOs and people's organizations (PO) in promoting citizen's participation in governance. There is a vibrant civil society in the Philippines (an estimated 15.000-30.000 NGOs). Women's organizations (i.e., Pilipina and Gabriela), in particular, have been very active in pushing for gender-responsive laws, policies and programs. Their active participation has been instrumental in the passage of landmarks laws such as the Magna Carta of Women and the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law.

In Thailand some 84 women organizations (government, non-government and civil society organizations) have united together under Women Reshaping Thailand (WREST) to push forward the meaningful involvement of women in politics, in the economic sector and in reform processes. There are also organizations focusing on promoting the human rights of sex workers. The various organizations may agree on certain issues and disagree on some other. They may or may not share certain goals and dreams in relation to women's roles and places in Thai society, These differences of focus manifest the diverse pictures of women in Thai society as well as the distinctive frameworks and explanations among people working on women's issues.

Viet Nam's Women's Union is a mass organization (15 million members). Its mission is to protect women's benefits and legitimate rights. It identifies, monitors/negotiates and trains female candidates. Priority is given to awareness raising about gender equality, to policy innovation and capacity building. It further organizes gender forums and networking opportunities.

2.4.2   Women's representation in civil society in figures

The Laotian study mentions that out of 50 organizations there are only 13 organizations with female director/ team leader, out of which 2 are working with women. There is no further analysis of gender composition of leadership or membership in civil society organizations in the AMS.

The Malaysian study finds that data or figures on share of women in leadership positions in civil society are not available. It is noted that this is a gap that needs to be studied and quantified. Women's representation in civil society and their share in leadership are pivotal to understand women's participation as a whole.

While a scanning has been made of civil society organizations in the Philippines, no analysis is made of the gender composition of their leadership or membership.

The Singapore Council of Women's Organizations (SCWO) is the national coordinating body for local women's organizations in Singapore. The SCWO has 57 member organizations and collectively, they represent more than 90% of women's groups in Singapore.

The Thai study mentions an increasing number of women in civil society and non-governmental organizations since 1997 (with no further details regarding leadership or membership levels or in which sectors of civil society organizations).

The Gender Action Partnership in Viet Nam (GAP) has been strengthened over the years since 2009 with more than 60 members representing line ministries, agencies and development partners, UN Agencies as well as NGOs. GAP is an open forum to discuss and share proposals and activities on gender mainstreaming and the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of women in Viet Nam. It has contributed significantly to the progress of implementation of gender equality in all fields in Viet Nam and also advices to avoid overlapping of funding support on gender equality in Vietnam.

2.4.3   Women's influence and voice

➢ *Women's voice and influence within civil society*
In the Philippines, NGO representatives claim that NGOs and POs have a democratic structure and that women have equal opportunities with men to assume leadership positions as well as an equal voice in decision making. However, a study in the Philippines found that women leaders are more welcomed in NGOs that are engaged in advocacy, service delivery areas, and educational institutions. In organizations where resources abound such as cooperatives, trade unions and businesses one finds fewer women leaders. This raises concerns on rights, access and control of resources. The prevailing gender stereotype thinking that only men are fit to be leaders is one reason why there are few leaders in cooperatives.

➢ *Women's influence on political and public decision making in society/community*
The two national government-linked NGOs in Brunei Darussalam both sit on various national committees within their sphere of interest (social and economic issues and trade-related issues respectively).

The Cambodian study provides a list of NGOs and what they do, thus pointing to potential for influence. The study however concludes that it is not easy to find evidence of women's influence and voice. There has been a large of ad hoc cases indicating influence, but there is as of yet no objective evidence of actual influence on political and public decision making. The importance of women in media is highlighted as a means to lobby and increase awareness about women's rights, to empower women by providing evidence-based information and by given them a voice. The Women Media Center also advocate for the positive portrayal of women in public media and support policy changes on critical women's and gender related issues.

In Lao PDR the legal framework on civil society is very recent (2009). It is noted that it is therefore quite

difficult to measure impact of their work on women's participation in politics. It is also noted that the work of NGOs related to women's issues may play an important role to empower women which can in turn lead to helping women to become more confident in making decisions related to their life. It is concluded that there is a need to more systematically study the work and commitment to gender equality of these organizations at the program level to learn more about their impact on civil society as well as on women in politics.

In Malaysia many women's organizations have displayed a strong standing on women's rights and equality. National networks and the establishment of networks at the international level have help women's NGOs to gain support and to rally demands for changes pertaining to women and discrimination. Evidence about the involvement and influence of women's NGOs can be retrieved from books, journals, articles as well as the CEDAW report.

In the Philippines women's groups have been at the forefront in advocating strongly for the enactment of the Magna Carta of Women and the Reproductive Health Law as well as the enactment of a number of cutting-edge legislation on women's rights and empowerment.

In Thailand the Women Reshaping Thailand (WREST) network has launched many powerful campaigns during 2011-2013 calling for reforms in raising awareness of gender inequality in all aspects of social inequality and injustice. The question has nevertheless been raised whether the status and the active participation of the network and its member organizations is taken seriously other than the common understanding in which civil society organizations have been consulted about policies and are seen as useful partners in the implementation of policies. However, Thai government apparently neither pays enough attention nor provides resources for civil society organizations or assists them in seeking resources to perform their work. Governmental mechanisms continue to take the lead in policy implementation and tend not to give some responsibilities to civil society organizations to share the implementation. Furthermore, the status as being part of the institutional mechanism could turn problematic for civil society activism due to the high demand of accountability. When particular civil society organizations have been designated as the lead of institutional mechanisms, their relationship with the government or state agencies could bring about the exclusion of other organizations. There is thus a need for the regularization of relations between institutional mechanisms and civil society organizations. The approach should enlarge the space for activism by civil society organizations while benefitting from the synergies in relations.

The Viet Nam Women's Union (VWU) must by law be consulted prior to an election regarding the target for women's representation. It is responsible for identification and monitoring (negotiating) and training of female candidates. As a broad-based mass movement, the VWU is an effective lobbying organization as it is present at all administrative levels. In addition, there are NGOs working on gender equality and women's rights at both national and local levels, playing a particularly important role in anti-domestic violence activities. The NGOs also gather and reflect the needs and demands based on practice and detect contradictions in policies, laws, as well as weaknesses in the implementation of these.

3. BARRIERS AND GAPS FOR WOMEN IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC DECISION MAKING

3.1 Commitment to gender equality in existing key policies and strategies

In Brunei Darussalam there is consensus that advancing gender equality and promoting women's empowerment as well as strengthening their participation in economic development is the way forward in order to achieve sustainable development. Women in Brunei Darussalam enjoy the same opportunities and benefits as men in education, health and employment.

In Cambodia the strong commitment to gender equality is consistent in key guiding strategies and policies. The Cambodian MDGs set ambitious targets to strengthen gender equality. The 5-year Rectangular Strategies set the policy agenda for socio-economic development and the implementation of a gender policy is one of four key elements of the capacity building and human resource development component. The National Strategic Development Plan envisions to increase the number of women in decision making at all levels in government institutions, including the development of affirmative actions and quotas, capacity development of female political representatives and implementation of policies and procedures to support promotion and recruitment of female government officials. The Neary Rattannak includes budgets, timeframes and quantifiable targets, out of which three sub-targets to be achieved in the area of women in Politics and Public Decision Making (national level, sub-national level and civil service all levels). The Cambodian National Council for Women has its own supportive five-Year Strategic Plan. The National Plan for Sub-National Democratic Development adopts gender mainstreaming as a means of enhancing gender equality. In addition, necessary laws (in addition to the Constitution) in support of the promotion of gender equality are also in place.

In Indonesia there are significant numbers of national and regional/local laws and regulations related to gender equality. Main international conventions, including CEDAW, have been ratified. In the Constitution commitment to gender equality is expressed. Indonesia is also committed to achieving the MDG target.

The Lao PDR revised Constitution 2003 supports gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is applied in the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy. The second National Strategy for the Advancement of Women (2011-2015) includes targets to increase the share of women in the National Assembly to 30% and share of women in leadership positions at all levels (party, government organizations and mass organizations) to more than 15%. It is acknowledged that it is more difficult for women than for men to rise through the party system. Government however continues its efforts to promote gender equality also in the political area. Mechanisms have been established with Lao Women's Union serving as a bridge between the Party, the Government and Lao women from urban and rural areas. The Lao National Commission for the Advancement of Women at national, provincial and ministry levels was established in 2003 and is the Government's focal point on gender mainstreaming and equality. Its direct line to the Prime Minister Office suggests its potential to be an important gender advocate within government. The Women Parliamentarian Caucus at the National Assembly (established by women parliamentarians in 2002) has developed a strategy and action plan on gender integration and gender capacity building for the National Assembly as well as to develop and improve laws and regulations related to gender equality.

The Malaysian government is committed to empower women in tandem with the international movement to improve women's well-being and to recognize women's rights as human rights. Women's development has been primarily influenced by international events and the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development is pivotal to the endorsement of the platform of action to empower women and has garnered

a lot of activities to ensure gender sensitivity is integrated into government's agenda, rule and regulation. The Ministry has also created a National Policy for Women through endless review and research. This policy promotes strong women's participation in politics with the target of at least 30% women in Parliament. Such representation would enable strategic maneuvering of women's agenda. However, the increased number of women representatives must be consonant with the number of women representatives holding important positions in ministries because increasing number of female representatives alone garners no power. Unfortunately the present percentage of female in parliament is already a setback to the whole objective of the National Policy for Women.

The Philippine Constitution is strong on gender equality. Two additional legislative milestones for women have been achieved: 1) the comprehensive Magna Carta of Women (a women's human rights law that seeks to eliminate discrimination through the recognition, protection, fulfillment and promotion of the rights of Filipino women. It conveys a framework of rights for women based directly on CEDAW particularly in defining gender discrimination, state obligations, substantive equality, and temporary special measures and adopting gender mainstreaming as a strategy for implementing the law and attaining its objectives. The government is mandated to take the following affirmative actions: i) increase incrementally in the next five years the number of women in the third level positions in the civil service to achieve 50-50 gender balance; ii) ensure that at least 40% of the members of all development councils and planning bodies in the regional, provincial, city municipal, and barangay levels shall be women; iii) ensure political parties to integrate women in their leadership, policy-making structures, appointed and electoral nominating processes) - and 2) the controversial Reproductive Health Law (guarantees universal access to methods of contraception, sexual education and maternal care).

The existing key policies and strategies of gender equality in Thailand are found in the latest elected government's policies for Women's Roles Development Fund (2011). Other policies are embedded in the Thai Women Development Plan of the 10th National Economic and social Development Plan (2007-2011) with 4 strategies: i) Promoting the attitude toward gender equality; ii) (not specified in the study); iii) Promoting the right of to reproductive health; and iv) Enhancing the security for women's life and body. The study points to several other policies in relation to violence against women such as policies and strategies by the Ministry of Justice and two resolutions pertaining to violence against women adopted by the Cabinet. At the local level, each provincial Committee on Women's Development (set up in 1995) has developed programmes and activities to deal with violence against women. Nevertheless, the study emphasizes that the Thai Government fails to construct an affirmative action or a strong commitment to the implementation of the gender equality programs, and fails to examine or evaluate the effectiveness of existing programs even though the gender issues have been lobbied to the Parliament for immediate implementation. The Government has further inactively supported the increased participation of women in the decision making process. Women in politics are not recognized as part of the governance as a key tenet of democracy. Specifically, the concerned Government agency (Ministry of Social Development and Human Strategy) has not instructed or issued measurements and guidelines to the Election Commission to regulate the implementation of regulations for political parties to promote gender equality through nominating equal proportions of male and female election candidates.

In Viet Nam, under the leadership of the Viet Nam Communist Party, the emancipation of women has always been included in the policies of national liberation, construction and development since the first Constitution in 1946. With several revisions of the Constitution the perspective on gender equality has developed over time. In 2013 it is stated that the state shall have a policy to ensure equal rights and opportunities with gender equality and shall strictly prohibit gender discrimination. Several gender equality laws, especially promoting

women in politics during the period of international integration, have gradually been institutionalized. In a Polite Bureau Resolution of 2007, specific targets for women's representation in politics and public decision making were set: i) by 2020 the percentage of female participants in the Party committees will reach 25% or above; ii) female members in the National Assembly and People's Councils at different levels will reach 35-40%: iii) agencies and organizations having 30% of female staff must have women among their leaders. The first-ever National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020 set as its first specific objective to strengthen women's representation in leadership and management positions in order to gradually reduce gender gaps in politics and to achieve the set targets. When approving the supporting National Programme on Gender Equality 2011-2015 the Government for the first time committed state budget for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. As a result many ministries, sector agencies and localities have actively developed their own policies, projects and programmes and taken initiatives to increase women's participation in politics. Viet Nam has further actively implemented international commitments on women's advancement (Viet Nam was one among the first six countries in the world to ratify CEDAW in 1981).

3.2   Root causes of remaining gender inequality in politics and public decision making

The Bruneian study notes that women as they progress in their mid-level management career begin to be conscious of the *'glass ceiling'*; an invisible barrier that women face as they climb their career ladders. The qualifications of women will be subject to scrutiny more than men where senior posts are being advertised. The study points to a need to change attitude and mind set of society at large so as not to look at women in their sex *stereotyping roles*. While policies state that it is gender free, cultural norms and the practice of unwritten policy' is a main cause of persisting gender imbalance. There is a lack of men supporting women leaders and in 'recognizing and celebrating women successes'. There is no organization/agency to encourage women to excel and to groom future women leaders, with a considerable gender imbalance in the existing programme to groom potential Leaders/Directors among senior male and female public servants.

The Cambodian study classifies root causes into being structural and functional, with cultural barriers and hindering social norms. The 'Chbaab Srey' moral code establishes a woman's role within the obligations towards family and society, said to help provide security and protection for girls and women from being affected by all types of discrimination. On the negative side are the *remaining traditional and cultural stereotypes* that women have obligations toward family and society and shall study only to certain level and then get married and take on responsibility for family and household chores, while being soft and less assertive in the public/society. Such norms limit the level of women's confidence and capacity. Less women venture into working in public institutions requiring them to speak out in public and taking leadership roles. Gender-sensitive policies and strategies with mechanisms for promotion of women are in place. However, the active participation to implement these policies and strategies is needed. Gender continues to be treated as an 'add on' rather than an integral part of analysis. The IP3 Gender Audit states that Gender mainstreaming tends to be the last priority and there is no specific budget with line ministries for the Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups to implement the approved Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans.

In Indonesia *patriarchal values and practices* are the main barriers of women to get involved in politics and public decision making. Culturally women are expected to be responsible for domestic life while men are in the public life. Since women are marginalized in public affairs, much more efforts are needed for women to survive in the political and public arena. *Social and cultural construction of women and men's roles* and responsibilities in society is seen as the main cause for remaining gender equality. It is noted that no less than 189 discriminatory policies were developed between 1999 and 2010 (50% of these between 2003 and 2009,

and while most are from district and provincial levels 7 were national level policies). A root problem is lack of consultations between the government and civil society groups in developing for instance a regulation. The **regional autonomy** given to the local governments mandate them to create their own policies and many of these local level policies are contradictive to national values and regulations. Lack of **skills and capabilities** frequently appear as a cause when discussing women's participation – but these **cannot be separated** from the discussion about women's **access and control** of the results and benefits of development for women's welfare.

The Lao PDR study points to **cultural and gender stereotype** as a root cause for women being far away from 'equality' in politics and public decision making. There is a deeply rooted attitude among of Lao people that women shall not engage in politics and even among those who are familiar with the concept of gender equality there is an on-going discussion as to whether to base 'equality' on 'the same' or 'differences'. Limited **education** is another root cause pointed to. The **illiteracy rate** among women remains very high, and the number of women who attended higher education is less than men.

The Malaysian study provides a summary of all issues that deter women from participating fully in politics as follows: i) **Social construction** including **culture and patriarchal paradigm** continue to exclude women from politics; ii) The **socialization process** - especially the upbringing that always put girl as secondary to boy continues to deter women from gaining their full potential to participate fully in politics; iii) **Women reproductive roles** limit women to be proactive and flexible in politics. Family values and core roles in children's growth are still carried by women unequally to their spouse; iv) **Lack of support from family members** for women to participate in politics; v) **Lack of self confidence** in women to be visible in the party; vi) **Tasks and job scopes** in politics (members of parliament, party leaders) are too demanding and gender insensitive to women (working hours, late hour meetings, and the culture that always put men first and women second – for example serving for refreshment in political party or political events, women are always the secondary group to be served); vii) The **National Policy for Women** is oriented in improving women in development especially in entrepreneurship, women's rights, access to education, health care system and provision, etc. It has to empower women's participation in politics too with better strategies and incentives; viii) Perception, expectation and **image** of how women are supposed to behave in politics discouraging women to be active or ambitious in politics or in a political party; ix) **Insufficient numbers** of women relative to men who are willing to be at the decision making level. Thus, the bigger size number of man allows them to be selected or appointed likely than women; and x) **Inadequate support** from female members in a political party reducing the chance of women to be elected at the top level in a political party. Female members and leaders at the state level are applying more stringent standards and qualifications for women to be elected or appointed as a leader in a political party. These causes which demoralize women to involve actively in politics have been embedded in society for generations, especially the patriarchal attitude that affect women in politics including the minimal support from family, continuous stigmatization and sexist against women. A temporary quota system can be an advantage in a short term but for a long term the indicators for electing or appointing a person to high rank office will be the good governance of qualification, performance and vacancy regardless of gender.

The Philippines has passed numerous laws and policies promoting gender equality but women continue to be underrepresented particularly in elective bodies, at both national and local levels of government. Barriers that impede women's running and winning elective positions can be categorized into political, economic and socio-cultural. **Campaign financing** is one political barrier. It is expensive and most individual and corporate donors to political campaigns are more inclined to invest in male rather than female candidates. Only affluent

families have the money to spend which leads to perpetuation of ***political families.*** Political analysts in the Philippines believe that it is the family not the political party that chooses and decides candidates for public office. The ***electoral system*** is a barrier in itself – the single ballot plurality system where the candidate who wins the highest number of votes wins the post is not favorable to women except for those who belong to well-known families or are popular personalities. In the single-member district system only one is chosen to represent a legislative district and that reduces the chance of women candidates who while not winning the first place can come as a close second. As women are ***economically disadvantaged,*** or earn less than men, the decision to run for office whether national or local would be more a male prerogative. Women's economic difficulties are made worse by natural disasters as women's unpaid reproductive work increases when they have to stay home as schools are closed, or to fetch water from distant sources as water pipes are broke, or to collect fuel for cooking etc. A woman may win without money if she has inherited massive political capital from her husband or father. ***Gender stereotypes:*** teaching gender roles and responsibilities through agencies of socialization such as family, school, church, media etc influence the extent to which women will play leadership roles – when taught and made believe that women's primary function is reproductive then their right to seek public office and be involved in politics is severely limited and in most cases completely denied. The ***multiple burden of women*** leaves little time to participate in politics. Aside from her 'domestic duties', which are extensions of her reproductive role, she is compelled to earn and augment the household income as part of her productive role and as member of the community she takes part in the village association or the church group as secretary, treasurer, fees collector, record keeper etc. The ***social definition*** of roles is another manifestation of gender biases. Women are pictured as supportive of the 'leader-husband' and tracked into addressing social welfare issues while men deal with 'hard' issues of national budgets, political reforms and security. ***Political violence*** against women is quite rampant in 'machismo politics' where politics is considered a male preserve. Women are vulnerable to bodily harm, psychological or sexual abuse and sexual harassment to prevent them from running for office. In addition, ***women lack the capacity to navigate the electoral arena*** which traditionally is a man's game played by the rules of patriarchy.

The Thai study points to ***stereotypical notions*** that politics is a preserved area for men remain. Thai people believe in the personality-based rather than issue-based politics, the impunity and the lack of respect for the rule of law, the violence and intimidation by male candidates, and limited access to funds for female candidates. There are a small number of women involved in the political parties in the decision making level. Most political parties have not yet incorporated gender equality into their policies. Furthermore, the institutions such as constitutional courts, electoral management bodies and electoral tribunals, and political party registrars and monitoring agencies seemingly fail to enforce the substantive laws concerned with the promoting of gender equality and eliminating gender-based discrimination. The study concludes that the movement for gender equality will not be successful if men do not co-operate, while women should be empowered, change their attitudes towards women's role in politics and enter into the new roles that allow them to exercise their citizen rights by participating in the political arenas and in the decision-making process.

In the Vietnamese study, ***feudal opinions and gender biases*** are pointed to in the social environment, the family environment as well in women themselves. *Women are not promoted* to become leaders despite their good qualifications and experience since many people believe that only men can perform important tasks while women should only do simple work to spare time for family. *Female leaders are mostly found in socio-cultural related jobs* such as healthcare, employment, education and finance, which are considered women's occupation. Meanwhile, in occupations related to public security, defense or information technology, which are considered strategic and significant sectors, there is no female minister or vice minister. *Discrimination found in text books* from primary level; women images are usually used to illustrate simple occupations while

men are described to perform technical and high skills jobs. *Housework and mothering* become obstacles when women apply for jobs; job advertisements show many companies only recruit male despite that jobs are suitable for women as well as men. *Family members' behavior* is an obstacle, such as gender based violence, gender division of labor, boy preference, the husband seeing himself as the most powerful and ruling over all family members. The *double burden for women* and when children are grown up it has become too late for training and promotion at work. *Barriers from women themselves* include inferiority complex; women have resigned to their fate and do not really want to strive and expose their comments at meetings. The **differential age of retirement** is a hindrance for women. With men retiring five years later than women, women loose five years (or equivalent to a term of service) to participate in leadership positions and thus obviously loose opportunities. Women have less **opportunities for rotation and own capacity development.** The rate of rotation to gain hands-on experience is lower for women and women are less likely to participate in refresher and training courses - activities which are considered critical to future promotion prospects. There is a variety of reasons for this, such as: i) gender differences in age of retirement contribute strongly - investments in training male civil servants are considered more efficient use of resources; ii) some regulations reinforce this bias; it is stipulated that men should not exceed 40 years and women not exceed 35 years in order to qualify for training courses; and iii) apparently gender-neutral regulations impact differently on women and men. If women take off their legally authorized maternity leave they are less likely to qualify to training as 3-5 years of uninterrupted work in an office is required.

3.3   Policies, strategies and action plans to address identified root causes and to achieve change

In summary, all country studies indicate that there are only few policies or strategies that specifically address root causes.

The study from Brunei Darussalam refers to the various frameworks already in place but also notes that there is perhaps a call for a more coordinated inter-sectoral commitment by all stakeholders.

In Cambodia it is acknowledged that not all branches within the Government have any specific strategy to address the root causes as described above for Cambodia. Recently Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Cambodia National Council for women have negotiated with the Ministry of Public Functions to get a Royal Decree on the revision of retirement age of female civil servants giving privilege to women. It is proposed that women civil servants at any grades and levels of salary and education can be retained at work up to 60 years of age before being retired – this will help encourage women to work and earn a living longer than men (men retire between the age of 55 and 60 depending on level of education and grade).

Indonesia has officially adopted the policy of gender mainstreaming to address gender inequality in all spheres of society. Four ministries (Ministry of National Development Plan/Bappenas, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection) have issued a national strategy to accelerate the implementation of gender mainstreaming in accordance with the National Development Plan 2010-2014 through a joint circular letter. To follow up the joint circular letter, the Ministry of Home Affairs has instructed all governors in Indonesia to develop a regional Secretariat for Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting. At local level the strategy is to integrate gender equality into all aspects of planning, structuring, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and activities of the local government. Moreover, a new Law on Gender Equality is being drafted by the Minister for Women Empowerment.

In Lao PDR there are no action plans or programs to directly address cultural and gender stereotype, nor

among ethnic women who are more negatively impacted by these stereotypes. There is however some targets aiming for gender awareness-raising in the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women (NCAW) 2010-2015. The NCAW also includes targets aiming at addressing women's low level of education.

In Malaysia mention is of different activities which do address identified root causes. For instance the integration of objectives and mechanisms into Malaysia national development programs; policy and national development agendas as entry points to empower women; CEDAW reporting as providing rich information to be analyzed and considered; forum, round-table discussions and seminars open to public, private and community organizations, etc. A need for media campaign to recognize women's role is acknowledged, i.e. not advertisements to promote valentine, mother's day etc. Changes in the educational system are identified as a tool to gradually change the perceptions of women.

The Philippines has a comprehensive women's human rights law, the Magna Carta of Women, which seeks to "eliminate discrimination through the recognition, protection, fulfillment and promotion of the rights of Filipino women, especially those belonging to the marginalized sectors of the society." It further mandates that at least five percent (5%) of the annual budget of all government agencies and instrumentalities shall correspond to activities, programs and projects supporting gender and development (GAD). In addition, the country has developed four gender responsive plans to address gender issues since 1989. The most recent plan, the Women's EDGE Plan, 2013-2016, is a companion document to the Philippine Development Plan and aims to mainstream gender in government planning and budgeting.

The Thai study emphasizes the opportunities through political structural reforms and gender equality national mechanisms. The study mentions that the reforms should aim at opening up the space for women to be part of and play a major role in the politics and public policy making. It is proposed that political party funding shall be linked to the implementation of gender balance and gender equality in the parties' policies. It further stresses the need for the Election Commission to regulate and put in place the measures to ensure political parties' compliance with national and international commitments for gender-equality and women's empowerment. It is expressed that the national mechanisms should widen their influence and should accelerate performance towards the achievement of gender equality through undertaking specific measures as stated in the Constitution.

3.4   Monitoring of changes in root causes of remaining gender inequality in politics and public decision making

Taken together the findings from the country studies confirm that monitoring is spread across several government and non-government agencies and institutions in each AMS. The extent of centralized coordination does however seem to vary to certain degree.

In Brunei Darussalam there is no national gender monitoring mechanism on women as a whole. Various national agencies are responsible for data collection (e.g. Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Economic Planning and Development, Ministry of Education, Department of Community development). Some data are not sex-disaggregated. The study notes that more baseline studies and surveys on women could be undertaken by the Special Committees to determine areas of concern, so appropriate actions and programmes can be drawn up.

In Cambodia monitoring is organized around main national policies and strategies and distributed across various agencies. For instance, monitoring around Legislative and Judiciary Branches can be found in different reports by the Senate, National Assembly and different levels of the judiciary branch itself. There is monitoring around the Cambodia MGDs and the National Strategic Development Plan (including quantitative indicators and targets for women in public decision making and politics). The Ministry of Women's Affairs monitors around its 5-year Neary Rattanak. The Ministry of Women's Affairs also regularly takes stock of what is available in terms of quantitative and qualitative monitoring from both government and non-government agencies in its regular 5-year Gender Assessments. The Gender Assessment analyzes the gender situation of Cambodia as a whole, including an assessment of gender disparities in politics and public decision making. The assessments provide key recommendations for policy makers and other stakeholders on how to overcome obstacles and achieve improved promotion of gender equality. The Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups in line ministries produce regular reports and reports are also available from the sub-national levels.

In Indonesia there is a monitoring mechanism to follow up on the implementation of gender-responsive planning and budgeting of all government ministries and offices at national, provincial and district levels. The government's commitment to various international conventions is another monitoring mechanism. Different organizations and institutions have their own monitoring mechanisms. All reports from NGO partners are compiled and disseminated for public information. One previous report from 2009 includes database on discriminatory policies, its causes and consequences and also developed monitoring instruments of discrimination against women.

In Lao PDR monitoring is around the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women, under the responsibility of the Lao National Commission for the Advancement of Women, its Secretariat and sub-committees.

In Malaysia there are both public and private organizations as well as individuals that work closely to monitor and report transformation in women and politics. Most units collaborate and share findings but there is no central unit that synchronizes or coordinates the data. Most data is focused on formal representation of women at federal and state levels

In the Philippines, monitoring women's participation in politics and decision making is done at the national level through the following: (1) the Core Gender and Development (GAD) Indicator System being monitored by the Philippine Inter-agency Committee on Gender-Statistics (IACGS), (2) Indicators on women's participation and representation in the Magna Carta of Women Indicator System being monitored by the Philippine Commission on Women' and (3) the Women's EDGE Plan Monitoring Framework.

The Thai study includes no mention of evidence of existing monitoring of changes in root causes.

Viet Nam Women's Union (VWU) plays an important role in monitoring and responding to the implementation of policies and legal documents related to gender equality. The process combines regular monitoring and thematic monitoring, in which perspectives of thematic monitoring provide further evidences and verify the collected information in regular monitoring. Data around identified indicators is collected mainly at local (ward/commune) level and synthesized at district level by specialized staff. Central level of VWU synthesized data at national level and holds responsibility for analysis, drawing lessons learned and providing recommendations to law enforcement agencies to feed into the development of new policies or to adjustment of existing policies. Lessons learned and recommendations can also be used for the Union's own advocacy work.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions and recommendations are presented below, building on the combined findings collected from the eight independent AMS country studies.

⇨ *Progress, but remaining comparatively low representation of women in elected bodies*

The AMS political structures and election systems differ in several dimensions, such as in terms of single/ bicameral national level representation, sub-national vs. no sub-national elections, direct vs. indirect elections, and the number of political parties (single-party, multi-party, no party, or individual representation). A common finding across all AMS is nevertheless that despite progress women's representation in both national-level and sub-national level elected bodies remain below the critical mass of 30%. Moreover, the trend for women's participation in elected bodies across the AMS is unfortunately not unambiguously upward, neither at national level nor at sub-national level.

> **Recommendations:**
>
> ◆ Intensify cooperation with relevant civil society organizations, including media, to lobby, to advocate and to raise public awareness about value of increases in the number of women in elected bodies and in political leadership positions at national and sub-national levels.
>
> ◆ Continue to monitor the progress of women's representation in directly and indirectly elected bodies at national and sub-national levels as relevant.

⇨ *Women's influence and voice in decision-making in elected bodies remains to be objectively analyzed and systematically monitored*

In conclusion it is confirmed from the findings in the country studies that although there are studies on gender in politics and women's participation, the studies do not reflect women's influence on decision making level. There is as of yet no systematic monitoring of women's influence and voice in decision making (besides looking at numbers of participating women) reported in any of the ten AMS. It is consequently not clearly monitored whose ideas and influence national development agendas, and through which channels. It would be deserved to look into the quality of how women voices create the impact for law change, law reform, and new legislation and Government major policies. Performance and achievement of women in politics can be mapped through consistent and continuous research by public and private organizations, such as a Ministry, higher learning institutions, Parliament research institutes, etc. as feasible in context of each AMS.

> **Recommendations:**
>
> ◆ Consider establishing a mechanism to systematically gather primary data to analyze how decisions are taken and to what extent women's expressed views have influenced the final decision
>
> ◆ Ensure that the methodology and tools used are replicable, thus creating a baseline in the first study against which to monitor progress over time through repeated studies.

⇨ *Women remain under-represented as candidates on party lists.*

Women remain under-represented as candidates on party lists, and in particular at the highest ranking on party lists of candidates to stand for election. Seen across the AMS, no country report shows a critical mass of women as candidates standing for election on party lists of more influential parties. There are claims that women influence party decisions but there is no available objective evidence to verify these claims. Several AMS discussed the need for affirmative actions such as quota requirements. The one AMS with legislative regulations to guide political party's appointment of candidates (Indonesia) confirms that this has had a positive effect for female candidates, while also clarifying how other aspects of the election system,

such as the possibility to vote for individuals, have become obstacles for female candidates and in fact been counterproductive to the advocacy for women. Further, it is observed that to fill the quota many of the female candidates are chosen based subjective criteria such as fame, wealth or family relations.

> *Recommendations:*
>
> ♦ Consider to lobby for the introduction of temporary special measures/affirmative actions to fast-track women as candidates for election, at both national and sub-national levels as applicable given the context in each AMS.
>
> ♦ Carefully monitor the results of such potential measures/actions based on careful and objective analysis of how such an action plays out given the country political context (learning from the current experiences from Indonesia).

⇨ *Women's appointment in strategic public decision-making level needs continued attention*

While the country study researchers made different interpretation of which key appointed decision-making bodies/positions to highlight, a common feature is that women tend to be more prevalent at less senior levels of decision making. One AMS (Cambodia) has launched a drive to address gender imbalances in decision making positions to be held by women, putting in place an affirmative action for the recruitment of civil servants stating that 20-50% of all new recruits shall be women. While this has had a positive effect on women's representation, it has also been demonstrated that gender stereotypes influence the organizational placements of women. Female staff tends to be recruited and promoted into administration and finance or gender-related positions. Notably, similar findings are presented from other AMS also without the introduction of special measures.

> *Recommendations:*
>
> ♦ Consider to lobby for the introduction of temporary special measures/affirmative actions to fast-track women's appointment to higher public decision making positions, at both national and sub-national levels as applicable given the context in each AMS.
>
> ♦ Carefully monitor the results of such potential measures/actions to follow to what extent gender stereotypes are influencing the positions to which women are recruited or promoted.

Limited analysis/evidence of gender composition of leadership in civil society

The number and status of NGOs and civil society organizations vary considerably across the AMS. A common feature is that claims are made in all country studies that women have influence and voice within civil society. However, there is little evidence of women's influence outside the areas of advocacy and service delivery. In one AMS (Philippines) a study found that women leaders are more welcomed in NGOs that are engaged in advocacy, service delivery areas, and educational institutions. In organizations where resources abound such as cooperatives, trade unions and businesses fewer women leaders were found. This raises concerns on rights, access and control of resources.

> *Recommendation:*
>
> ♦ Consider co-operating with civil society organizations to conduct a study to better understand to what extent stereotype values dominate also in the structure of civil society.

⇨ *Commitment to gender equality is strongly expressed in laws and policies, but less strongly enforced*

In all AMS a strong commitment to gender equality is expressed in Constitutions and other laws and regulations and in national development policies and strategies. The country studies find that remaining gender inequality is mainly due to weaknesses in enforcement of available laws and in limited commitment in government agencies (other than the respective Women's Machinery) to translate policies and strategies into practice. Several AMS have introduced gender mainstreaming as a means to enhance gender equality, while weak commitment to gender mainstreaming is reflected in practices of government agencies such as

referring gender mainstreaming to an 'add on' activity once the plans and budgeting processes are already drafted and close to be decided - thus leaving limited scope to influence and revise.

> ***Recommendations:***
>
> ◆ Consider placing stronger focus on monitoring enforcement of laws and policies - in addition to the current focus on the adoption of new laws and the development of additional policies.
>
> ◆ Consider conducting participatory gender audits of key government agencies – to raise awareness within the government agency and to establish baseline against which to monitor progress as to how gender mainstreaming and gender equality is applied in practice within the government agency.
>
> ◆ Consider strengthening the role of national machinery for gender equality and women's empowerment to monitor gender equality performance in line ministries and other relevant government agencies - while transferring the direct responsibility for addressing CEDAW recommendations to relevant government agencies (other than the national machinery for women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming).

⇨ *Similar underlying obstacles and gaps across the AMS*

While there are country specific obstacles pertaining mainly to one or few AMS, the findings from the country studies reveal that most underlying causes for remaining gender inequality are similar across the AMS. While the precise terminology in the country studies is at time framed differently, all studies point to the crucial importance of social and cultural perceptions including patriarchal structures; stereotyping roles (women's reproductive role, unpaid domestic workload for women) with consequential economic disadvantages for women; inadequate support from family and from community; lack of self-confidence; and low level of education. There seems to be a general lack across the AMS of more narrowly targeted strategies or action plans to more directly address the root causes that have been identified as hampering gender equality. When such action plans are in place they are typically prepared by the national machinery for women's empowerment, while other relevant government ministries and agencies are lagging behind and not always perceiving it as their responsibility to implement. There are several efforts to empower women but there is little evidence of effectiveness of such capacity development efforts.

> ***Recommendations:***
>
> ◆ Formulate strategies that more pro-actively address the identified key obstacles and in particular patriarchal structures and gender stereotypes – to complement and deepen the national but more general development agenda.
>
> ◆ Lobby with media to present positive images and raise awareness of women's participation in politics (a 'gender audit of media' – i.e. an objective and systematic assessment and gathering of evidence relating to current media coverage may provide the basis for intensified lobbying).
>
> ◆ Critically assess the effectiveness of capacity development / training approach to empower women.
>
> ◆ Share 'best practices' as well as 'not so successful' practices to enhance learning across AMS.

⇨ *Monitoring of changes in root causes of remaining gender equality in politics and public decision making is needed*

Taken together the findings from the country studies confirm that monitoring is spread across several government and non-government institutions in each AMS. The extent of centralized coordination does however seem to vary to certain degree.

> ***Recommendations:***
>
> ◆ Establish a coordinated mechanism to monitor progress in addressing and changing the root of patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes in society which hamper and restrict gender equality.

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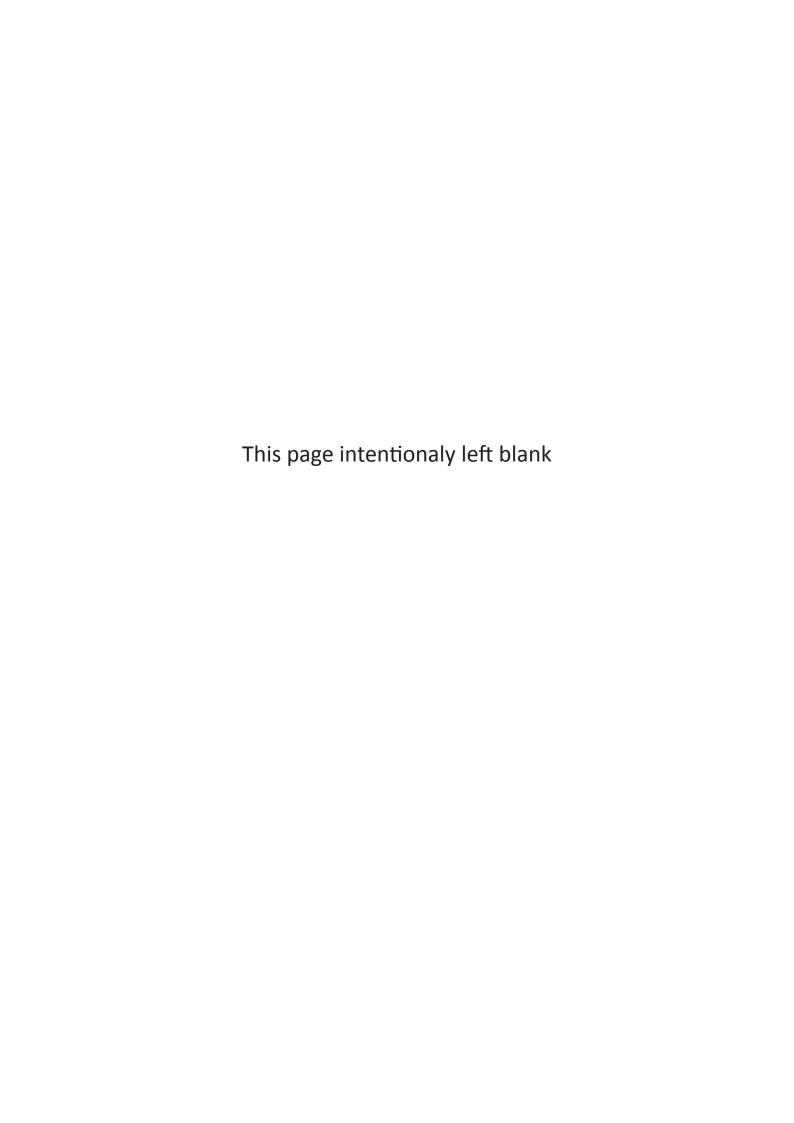
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Public Sector			
Decision making positions	Participation of women in higher level decision making positions (higher level decision making positions as defined by each ACW)	Number of women in decision making hierarchy	Tracking working conditions and whether there are equal opportunities for women and men to prove themselves
Boards of Public Sector		Location of women in public sector boards (Comment from Singapore: Appointees to public sector boards are selected based on their competencies and ability to contribute to their boards.)	
Judiciary			
Judiciary structure		Number of women in different positions in the judiciary hierarchy	Tracking working conditions and whether there are equal opportunities for women and men to prove themselves
CSOs / Unions / Mass-Organizations			
Women's influence and voice across all sectors	Influence and voice of women in civil society	Number of women leaders in NGOs/Labor Unions/Mass-organizations in each area, where applicable (Comment from Singapore: We do not track data on these organizations.)	Tracking the extent of gender stereotype for women's participation and influence in civil society (with focus on CSOs engaged outside women empowerment advocacy and social service delivery sectors)
Media			
Media's reporting	Media gender stereotype reporting	Number of media programmes contributing to transforming mindset	Tracking changes in gender stereotyping/ attitudinal changes in media's reporting

	Implement targeted actions to address identified key obstacles to gender equality, where relevant		Addressing deeply rooted causes of gender inequality to complement and deepen the national but more general development agenda on gender equality
	Establish baseline against which to monitor and track changes in key obstacles to gender equality, where relevant	.	Explicitly monitor over time and disseminate findings to contribute to improving public awareness about structural obstacles in society
Inter-Ministerial Committees (incl sub-national level)		Location of women in inter-ministerial committees (and the 'kinds' of committees) (Comment: Singapore is a meritocratic society and women have equal opportunities as men. We do not track data at this level.)	Tracking/contributing to evidence-based awareness of structural barriers for women to be promoted into 'non-traditional' areas and positions within government agencies
Political Parties (Comment: In Singapore's context, the civil service does not track the work of political parties nor have any influence over them.)			
Party policies	Manifesto of political parties and their documents in promoting women's leadership		Identifying and tracking real barriers for women in political party structures
Party structures	Eagerness of women to be part of political structures	Location of women in political parties and their location in the decision making hierarchy	
Party candidates for elections		Number of women candidates and placement on party list	

	Support by community to women in decision making at local level (regularly repeated surveys)	Tracking changes in gender stereotyping/ attitudinal changes
Executive branches		
National Government	Implementation of temporary special measures/affirmative action (process and policies in place), where applicable	
	Number of women at different decision-making levels in ministries (and the 'kinds' of ministries)	Accelerating and tracking changes in women's representation
		Tracking/contributing to evidence-based awareness of structural barriers for women to be promoted into 'non-traditional' sectors
	Number of programmes in ministries in promoting women's leadership (and the 'kinds' of ministries with programmes), where applicable	Tracking changes in women self-confidence to become leaders (including assessing effectiveness of capacity development programmes for female leaders)
	(Comment: In Singapore, all officers are eligible to apply for talent and leadership development programmes in the public sector. Selection is based on the principles of equal opportunity and meritocracy)	
	Gender-responsiveness in government institutions/agencies, where relevant	Tracking changes in gender-responsiveness in practices in key government ministries/agencies ('gender audits')

Proposed Regional ACW Monitoring Tool
To be applied as relevant and feasible and where applicable

Scope of Indicator	Proposed Indicators		Justification
	Qualitative	*Quantitative*	
Elected Bodies at National and Sub-National Levels			
Parliament and Senate			
Women's Caucus	Enforcement of laws and regulations, where relevant, in support of gender equality	Review of laws and discriminatory clauses in laws and policies, where relevant	Eliminating gender stereotyping in laws and discriminatory and gender-insensitive articles.
	Best practices and lessons learnt in implementation of special measures/ affirmative actions, programmes	Number of women leaders that lead or actively promoted/supported the passing of laws for women	Tracking leadership development, promoting women's influence and voice
	Women's own perception and interest in a role in the political sphere, if available		Tracking negative influences and practices which deter women's participation in decision making
Parliamentary Committees	Identify entry points for gender-responsive programming in policies and strategies, where relevant	Number of women in different positions in parliamentary committees (and the 'kinds' of committees)	Tracking changes in gender stereotyping / attitudinal changes to role of women
Sub-national bodies			
Elected Representatives	Influence and voice in final decision-making	Responsibility area of women in elected bodies (elected bodies as defined by each ACW)	Tracking leadership development, promoting women's voices

Potential Regional Monitoring Tool for
ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW)

The project 'Advancing and Monitoring Women's Political Participation in the ASEAN Region Project' has as one main output to arrive at a proposed Monitoring Tool for ACW to more closely follow the progress of women's political participation.

A regional workshop was arranged in Siem Reap on 29-30 April, 2014. A brainstorming session resulted in a first basic structure of what might be included in such a regional monitoring tool.

A set of eight country level studies have been conducted independently in the AMS (ACWs Singapore and Myanmar provided information papers). The national level studies have all been approved by the respective ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW).

Findings from the approved country level studies have been synthesized into a 'Regional Synthesis of AMS Country Studies', providing a summary of key findings across the AMS and including a set of consolidated conclusions and recommendations.

The below proposed monitoring tool follows the basic structure from the brain-storming session in Siem Reap, while validating against the consolidated recommendations from the synthesis report and including inputs provided by the ACWs.

The proposed monitoring tool represents nothing more than a proposal for the consideration of the ACWs to be applied as relevant and feasible and where applicable.

The proposed monitoring tool does not represent commitments on part of ACWs in the participating AMS.

POTENTIAL REGIONAL MONITORING TOOL FOR
ASEAN COMMITTEE ON WOMEN